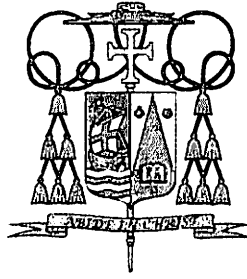


DIOCESE OF SALT LAKE CITY
27 C STREET
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84103-2302



TELEPHONE (801) 328-8641
FAX (801) 328-0324

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

BISHOP'S REFLECTION

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

From time to time I am asked why I belong to the Knights of Columbus. The short answer is that I was invited to join and I said yes! While this may seem like a superficial answer, in fact, it really gets to the heart of the matter. It is affirming to be invited into an organization or a community of people who want you to be a fellow member. I suppose we all have a little insecurity and may sometimes feel that we may not find ourselves welcome. As Groucho Marx once said, "I don't want to belong to any organization that would have me as a member!" There is embedded in that sentiment the notion that we all live in fear of being rejected. In any case, I said "yes" to the Knights of Columbus and I'm glad I did. I have always respected the Knights and their great work; becoming a member has deepened that respect even more. On a more personal note, my membership in the Knights of Columbus has had an impact on my life, my ministry and my spirituality.

For one thing, I feel at home in the Knights. Utah is not my place of birth, so belonging to the Knights deepens my sense of community here in this wonderful diocese. There is a real camaraderie within the Knights of Columbus and it is clear to me that our members really care about each other. There are all kinds of activities for which the Knights come together. Whether praying, raising funds, serving the community or just sharing a meal together, the Knights always find a reason to enjoy each other's company. Every time I gather with the Knights, e.g., at my residence every three or four months for a potluck dinner, I have the distinct sense that everybody wants to be there. There is a sense of real joy in coming together to deepen the bonds that unite us. And what is more, the Knights look out for each other. When a fellow knight has come upon hard times or is sick, his brother Knights are there for him. You may have seen the recent pictures in the newspaper of the Knights fitting children for their winter jackets as part of their *Winter Coat Program*. Aside from the obvious benefit of helping children to keep warm during the winter, it is clear that the Knights just enjoy being with people -- talking to them, helping them and getting to know them. St. John of the Cross reminds us that at the end of our lives, God will judge us on how well we loved. I have a feeling that the Knights of Columbus have nothing to fear when that time comes -- they demonstrate their love for others day in and day out.

Another reason I enjoy being a member of the Knights of Columbus is that the Knights have their priorities straight. God, family and country are at the center of their lives and everything else flows from these priorities. As Mr. Covey says, "The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing." The Knights of Columbus know what the main thing is and they are constantly reminding themselves and others of what really matters in life. It is very easy for me to get caught up in a society that tends to be overly materialistic and secular but my association with the Knights continually reminds me of where my priorities lie. As one observes what the Knights do it is clear who is at the center of their lives: Jesus Christ!

I also am proud to be a member of the Knights of Columbus because they put their priorities into action. As Jesus reminds us in the Scriptures, "By your fruits you will know them." It is not difficult to get to know the Knights of Columbus. They are performing works of service throughout our diocese all the time and they do so with great humility and joy. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin reminds us that joy is the infallible sign of God's presence. There is no doubt about God's presence in the Knights of Columbus as they reach out to so many and offer them assistance through their self-sacrifice and their desire to help. Their smiles and their inner joy are truly contagious.

I suppose I would be less than honest if I did not admit that I also enjoy being a Knight because it is fun. I caught my first fish in Utah with the Knights of Columbus; I've had many an enjoyable meal with them; we have joked after Mass in the parking lot and I have been to my first professional soccer game, all with the Knights of Columbus.

It is my fervent prayer that many more will join the ranks of the Knights of Columbus here in the diocese of Salt Lake City. The Knights are proud to be "in service to one, in service to all." They are clearly dedicated to the service of Christ and through him, to all their brothers and sisters throughout the world. I thank God always for my membership in the Knights of Columbus as I continue to find a warm welcome in this extraordinary Catholic fraternity.