

Worthy Sir Knights,

When Blessed Father Michael McGivney gathered a small group of Catholic men in New Haven in 1882, he did not build an organization around a program — he built it around a virtue. The motto he chose — Charity, Unity, Fraternity, and Patriotism — placed charity first, and not by accident.

Charity is not merely generosity. It is the greatest of the three theological virtues — the very love of God poured into the human heart, moving us outward toward our neighbor. St. Paul reminds us that without it, even the most impressive deeds amount to nothing (cf. 1 Cor 13:1-3). Charity is the soul of all Christian action.

This is the genius of the Order: it takes the loftiest theological truth — that God is love — and puts work boots on it. Charity is the first principle, guiding the mission for more than 140 years, with more than 2 million members in 17,000 councils serving as Christ's hands and feet to the vulnerable in their communities.

That same call echoes in every council meeting, every food drive, every hospital visit, every rosary prayed at the bedside of a dying brother. A Knight is called to live according to the virtues of loyalty, charity, courtesy and modesty, as well as "self-denial and careful respect for the feelings of others."

Brothers, charity is not a seasonal effort — it is a state of soul. It begins at home, extends to the parish, and reaches to the ends of the earth. Pope Leo XIV himself has commended the Knights' efforts to bring prayer, fraternity, and charity to their local communities — which has been the Order's mission since its founding by Blessed Michael McGivney more than 140 years ago.

Let charity, then, not be a word on a banner. Let it be the shape of every Knight's daily life.

In Christ,

Fr. PJ Brandimarti

Pastor

Church of the Ascension, Johnstown