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## NEWS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS ST. LOUIS COUNCIL 3335



In the photo on the left the Supreme Chaplain Archbishop William Lori of Baltimore pays tribute to Blessed Michael McGivney at his tomb in St. Mary's Church in New Haven, CT, where Fr. McGivney served his people so well and founded the Knights of Columbus in 1882. Brother knight Daniel Schachle, holding his miracle baby Michael, looks on. In the photo on the right, little Michael Schachle presents the reliquary of Blessed Michael McGivney to Cardinal Joseph Tobin, Archbishop of Newark, who represented Pope Francis as the principal celebrant at the beatification Mass at St. Joseph's Cathedral in Hartford, CT on October 31. His time, the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century and our times, the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century are different; yet the human suffering, spiritual needs, and challenges to lead a holy life are similar. We must bear a pandemic today; he died a victim of the 1890 Asian Flu pandemic. He was a priest for his time and ours too.

### **Bl. Michael McGivney: Model of Holiness and Heroic Virtue For Priests and Brother Knights Alike**

**What makes for a saint?** We are all called to be saints. There is a universal call to virtue and holiness. We cannot enter Heaven unless we are holy either when we die or after going through a process of purification in Purgatory. If we choose to reject God, refuse His mercy, and die unrepentant in mortal sin, there is no hope in eternity. What makes for a canonized saint? That is one who is recognized by God of having unusual holiness and heroic virtue through at least two authenticated miracles. Such a miracle is thoroughly investigated,

must be sudden, and have no natural explanation. May Fr. McGivney's beatification inspire us, priests and laity alike, to holiness.

**A Miracle in Utero.** For years the Knights of Columbus, founded by Fr. Michael McGivney in 1882, has been promoting his cause through a postulator. Investigators at the Vatican confirmed his holiness and declared him Venerable in 2008. Beatification requires one miracle; canonization requires an additional one. Brother Knight Daniel Schachle, a 4<sup>th</sup> Degree Knight and former grand knight of his local council, supports his family of 13 children, working as a Knights of Columbus Insurance Field Agent. Over five years ago his doctor discovered that his youngest son in utero had fetal hydrops; 99% of such babies do not survive. Schachle mobilized his family and friends to pray to Fr. McGivney for his intercession. He and his wife named the baby Michael after him. The baby suddenly was healed of the condition and the doctor was dumbfounded.

It did not occur to the family to also pray for the healing of Downs Syndrome which the unborn Michael also had because they considered that condition to be a blessing. Such handicapped children, having an extraordinary innocence, enrich the family. Little Michael is shown in the above photos, really a pro-life poster child whom many if not most mothers today would abort. Schachle observed: Men need to have that masculine call, to step up, to be the good fathers, good husbands and protectors that we're supposed to be.....part of the problem we see in our society is because men aren't doing what they are supposed to be doing in their families and their communities.....I think that's what inspired Fr. McGivney to inspire men to step up." May the beatification of Fr. McGivney strengthen Catholic men in true masculinity.

Fr. McGivney (1852-1890) was the oldest of 13 children of working class Irish immigrant parents. He entered the seminary in

1868, but the death of his father in 1873 left him, the oldest, to care for the family. A scholarship, made it possible for him to resume his priestly studies. Ordained in 1877, Fr. McGivney was assigned to St. Mary's Church in New Haven, CT to assist the pastor. In 1884 he became the pastor of St. Thomas Church. As a young priest, he got to know the members of his parish, their problems, and the conditions under which they lived, be it economic or medical. They were mostly Irish immigrants and their children in an anti-Catholic environment. At the time the secret fraternal Freemasons were vehemently hostile to Catholicism and helped their own obtain the better jobs. Prejudice against the poor Catholic minority at the bottom of the social ladder was very common. The men worked long hours for low wages in often unsafe conditions. Frequently, the father of a family died prematurely and the State would place the children in an orphanage because the widow was unable to support the family.

**Fr. McGivney had a creative entrepreneurial spirit and vision for his people.** He saw an urgent need and did something about it, a great example of pastoral creativity. To help families and keep his men Catholic, he gathered a dozen men of the parish to form a mutual aid society, a fraternity of men to counteract the lure of anti-Catholic secret societies and provide an insurance program to give families financial security in case of the death of the father.....to keep families together. The group named themselves the Knights of Columbus, a historical Catholic figure and national hero that everybody revered at the time. October 12, Columbus Day was a national holiday which is deemphasized today because of "political correctness". Ahead of his time and a precursor of Vatican II, he encouraged the laymen of his parish to be active in the apostolate. Fr. McGivney insisted that the men take leadership of the organization while he would be only chaplain and secretary to help things along.

The organization was based on charity, fraternity, unity, and

patriotism, all of which are rooted in our faith. He told his men to stand tall; be proud of being faithful Catholics and good citizens.....go out into society and make a contribution.....through charity in the spirit of the knights of old. The same goes in confronting the secular discrimination we face today. When the knights were attacked, he answered with firmness and humility, trusting in the will of God. What would he say to the Vice President elect who previously said: “The Knights of Columbus is an all male extreme organization”? The men were supposed to help each other in a spirit of brotherhood and help others in the parish community. Where there is a need, there is a knight. Today the Knights of Columbus are 2 million strong in 16,000 parish councils.

**Bl. McGivney had a great prayer life, but still went out among the people.** His greatest charity was a self-emptying of himself. His ministry was not restricted to only saying Mass and administering the sacraments. He was trained by the Church to consider the whole man.....physical, emotional, and spiritual, including human suffering in general. Many in the flock were poor. He visited people in hospitals and jails. In an ecumenical spirit the saintly priest fostered respectful relationships with other Christian communities and civil authorities. He promoted the Domestic Church, namely the family. He even would take financial responsibility for a widow and her children to keep the family together.

Fr. Michael built parish community as the center of the lives of the faithful.....in addition to the sacraments, but also friendship, picnics, dinners, even a parish baseball team, etc. He used such events to bring people back to the Church. With humility and courage he would help his parishioners in court. One young member of his parish was convicted of murder and sentenced to death. Fr. McGivney accompanied him to the gallows, prayed with him, counseled him, and prepared him to meet his creator. Blessed Michael was a true father to

his flock.

*Archbishop William Lori*, the successor to Fr. McGivney as supreme chaplain, advocated that this saintly parish priest be a force for the renewal of the priesthood, that his beatification fire up the clergy. He was a priest of the beatitudes. As *Cardinal Joseph Tobin* shared, “In Blessed Michael we are reminded that life is not transactional, but a gift to be shared.....Christian unity is more than a simple adherence to a common belief.....God calls each one of us in our own day, and our own way, to be vessels of mercy, and so enter into our heavenly inheritance.” During his Angelus address the next day on the Feast of All Saints, *Pope Francis* recognized Fr. McGivney’s heroic virtue and holiness: “Dedicated to evangelization, he did everything possible to provide for the needs of his people, promoting reciprocal aid. May his example be an impetus for us to always be witnesses of the Gospel of charity.”

**May the priests of today, many of them knights**, follow in the footsteps of this humble 19<sup>th</sup> Century parish priest. Let us be grateful to our priests today. Like Blessed Michael’s flock we have saints among the good and holy priests and bishops who are faithfully carrying out their mission (while struggling to pay parish bills and manage the parish) to bring people to Christ and guide their flocks (us) to eternity amidst the pandemic, handicaps, ailments, problems, and challenges that everyone of us must confront. Priests must foster unity in a divided and suffering Church as a result of persecution by those looking for and pouncing upon scandal. May the pastor and his people grow together in holiness.

**May we as laymen** realize that we can enter places that priests cannot as for example, the workplace. The knight is to be a witness to foster a civilization of love. Blessed Michael McGivney’s feast day was set as August 13.

## For More Detail

[www.fathermcgivney.org](http://www.fathermcgivney.org) – the Blessed Fr. Michael McGivney website for his cause of canonization.

[www.kofc.org](http://www.kofc.org) – Knights of Columbus website

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael\\_J.\\_McGivney](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_J._McGivney) - Fr. Michael J. McGivney bio

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=67yXZ5Pilkc&ab\\_channel=EWTN](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=67yXZ5Pilkc&ab_channel=EWTN) - Interview of the Supreme Knight Carl Anderson by Fr. Mitch Pacwa

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=WfpfS5p2mPo&ab\\_channel=EWTN](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WfpfS5p2mPo&ab_channel=EWTN) - Fr. McGivney: A Priest For Our Time

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jRbjAWHvyy8&t=269s&ab\\_channel=KnightsOfColumbusSupremeCouncil](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jRbjAWHvyy8&t=269s&ab_channel=KnightsOfColumbusSupremeCouncil) - Fr. Michael McGivney: An American Blessed

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c\\_Wqn35iiUk&ab\\_channel=KnightsOfColumbusSupremeCouncil](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c_Wqn35iiUk&ab_channel=KnightsOfColumbusSupremeCouncil) - Prayer Vigil For Priests

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LwjP\\_L599ck&ab\\_channel=KnightsOfColumbusSupremeCouncil](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LwjP_L599ck&ab_channel=KnightsOfColumbusSupremeCouncil) – the Solemn Mass and Beatification October 31, 2020.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQgq\\_xRyPik&ab\\_channel=KnightsOfColumbusSupremeCouncil](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQgq_xRyPik&ab_channel=KnightsOfColumbusSupremeCouncil) - Mass of Thanksgiving