



KNIGHTLY NEWS

A Quarterly Digest

September 2020

Ridgewood Knights of Columbus, Council 1736

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**We're Not Alone
in the
Storm:**

Reflections on Gratitude

by **Deacon Bob Liwanag**

September 2020

Pope Francis in his book *The Joy of the Gospel* writes:

“A small step in the midst of great human limitations, can be more pleasing to God than a life which appears outwardly in order but always moves through the day without confronting great difficulties.”

How does his message impact you and me? What are we supposed to take away from it?

The storms of life that confront each of us daily can be overwhelming and discouraging. Health, financial, family, work, and many other challenges can paralyze us with fear, helplessness, and even hopelessness. But we know that the answer is always in Jesus Christ. We simply must focus our gaze on our Lord and Savior for us not to be distracted by the constant temptations. We must submit our will and trust and believe in him.

However, that is easier said than done. But we must try and pray.

How are we going to find the emotional strength to even show gratitude if we are in the midst of the storms of life? Is this easy to say? “Lord, thank you for your blessings that I lost my job during the economic crisis.” That may be one of the last things that we may have in mind. We are in survival mode just trying to make it one day at a time.

Then how do we cope when the tranquil life that we know of is turned upside down and crushing us with the weight of stress? Perhaps we can look at simply giving back a small gesture of our gratitude toward God who loves us unconditionally. We may not feel like saying it and we may not hear a response of reassurance. But as Pope Francis stated that it is in the small steps that resonate loudly with God.

Why thank God when He has no need for anything—even us? In a way, He does. Because He loves us and, in return, He wants our love. He wants that divine relationship with us so we can know that we are not alone in those storms of life. He wants us to depend on Him. And we will know His love in our minds but most importantly in our hearts. Expressing gratitude is like giving someone a smile. It takes less effort to smile than to frown. It takes less effort to express gratitude towards God than to wallow in misery.

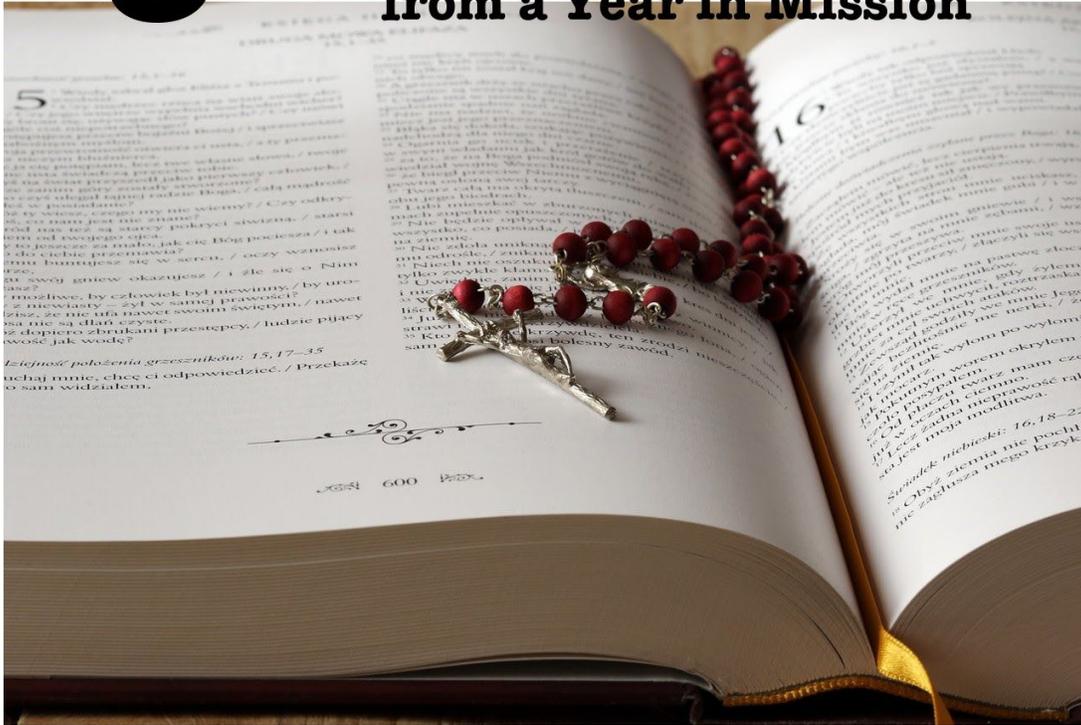
Spend a quiet moment and reflect on [Matthew 6:25-34; 7:7-8](#). Do you hear God speaking to you in your heart?

Vivat Jesus!

***Editor's Note:**

Our regular Grand Knight's Report will return in the December issue of Knightly News.

3 Things I Learned About Faith from a Year in Mission



From August 2019 to July 2020, [Anthony Tokarz](#) served as an itinerant catechist and missionary in Minnesota and North Dakota through the Neocatechumenal Way. Here, he shares the spiritual lessons he learned.

Rejection leads to learning. That's one thing I discovered quickly on the mission. Every time I was told no, I learned more about people, about myself, and about our relationships with Christ. And I was told no quite often.

If you're unfamiliar with the itinerant mission work in the Neocatechumenal Way, it's centered on establishing communities that meet each week to celebrate the Eucharist and a Liturgy of the Word, and once a month for a one-day retreat called a convivence. Communities begin with a series of catecheses on topics ranging from the philosophical currents underpinning modern society, to the situation of the Church today, to the ways in which God intervenes in our lives to manifest Himself. Ideally, these meetings allow people to discover or even rediscover their Christian identity.

My primary role was to break new ground in our region. I visited local priests and went door-to-door to announce my experience of Christ in life. Similar to what St. Paul writes in [Romans 8:19-23](#), the mission made me take seriously and act upon the fact that the souls of

many people—baptized Christians and others as well—are groaning in anticipation for someone to announce to them the love of Christ, and the fact that He has come to save them from death, not only at the point of physical death, but also in the daily sufferings that make them feel dead.

It was a beautiful experience, especially in the many, many rejections we experienced that made the experience real for me.

Here are the three lessons about faith I learned during the mission that perhaps you'll find interesting or useful in your own lives.

1. You can't white-knuckle faith.

Daily life in the mission reminded me at every moment that I could not do anything to give myself more faith. I had to ask God for it almost constantly.

On an intellectual level, I knew this prior to the mission. I had studied the difference between the cardinal virtues which are natural and attainable on a human level, and the theological virtues which are supernatural and God-given. But living this difference made me see how deeply corroded I am by the sin of pride, since having to ask God for faith requires a humility of which I didn't always find myself capable.



Brother Knight Anthony Tokarz

I cannot white-knuckle faith, let alone hope or charity, and so I have to pray constantly, especially when I least want to pray. However, the realization that faith comes from God and that I have none of my own grounded my relationship with Him. As a result, my prayer has become more honest and direct, and for the first time I feel that I am speaking to God as a living person, and not offering incantations in vain to a mute abstraction.

2. Faith is transformative.

We often went out in pairs to knock on people's doors, either to invite them to the catecheses at the parish or just to announce to them the love of Christ. One day, we went to visit with a man who has advanced ALS—he could only move from the neck up, plus one finger. We thought we'd try to encourage him but he started speaking about how his condition brought him closer to Christ than ever before. He compared it to becoming a father in the way it changes how you see things, or like growing up blind and in adulthood finally being able to see color. ALS forced him to seek out and cry out to God without relenting, always asking for faith and the protection of his relationship with God.

Before we left we asked him for a blessing. We saw Christ in him and his broken body, and left in tears of joy. (He died on Tuesday August 11th. I'm sure he died a holy death.)

3. Jesus is the conversation of our lives.

Author Henry Miller wrote harshly of contemporary American society in the 1940s and 1950s, which he referred to as an “Air-Conditioned Nightmare” in his book of the same name. One passage that I often think about regards conversation. He wrote:

The most difficult adjustment an expatriate has to make, on returning to his native land, is in this realm of conversation. The impression one has, at first, is that there is no conversation. We do not talk—we bludgeon one another with facts and theories gleaned from cursory readings of newspapers, magazines, and digests.

Today, that list might include Facebook, Twitter, or any number of popular apps. No one today speaks of Christ, in whom there are no divisions, no boundaries, no exclusions. Facts grow stale and narratives change, but Christ is always fresh, always new, and always revolutionary.

During the mission, many people turned us away when we spoke to them of Christ, but many of those same people either called us back or met us again at some point with a different attitude. Jesus in the Gospels never speaks of facts or theories, but always of why people suffer and what they must do to live forever in perfect joy. The significance of those topics blows away most of the topics people usually talk about, and resonates in a way nothing else can.

That holds true for the conversations we had with random people, with parishioners, and with the Bishops we met as well. Even non-Christians from our neighborhoods respected us—not for who we were as individuals, but because of the Savior we announced.

Hopefully, Brother Knights, returning home will not dampen my zeal, because there is a mission everywhere, and we all have our own. I’m praying for our council. Please pray for me, too!

Knights of Columbus 2020 Annual Report

Due to the COVID-19 health crisis, the Knights of Columbus produced this year’s 138th Supreme Convention virtually from its headquarters in New Haven, Conn.

Watch Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson’s address to the Supreme Convention [here](#).

To read the full 2020 annual report, [click here](#).

[Full Convention coverage can be found here](#).

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What is a Life Insurance Policy to You?

A Message from Your KofC Insurance Agent



Knights of Columbus
INSURANCE
YOUR SHIELD FOR LIFE

You and your life insurance policy have similar purposes in this world. It's your job to provide food, clothing, shelter, medicine, and schooling for your loved ones while you are alive. It's the job of your life insurance to do that for your family, when you pass.

Your family has faith and trust in you to provide for them out of your earnings. Someday, and only God knows when, your insurance policy will trade places with you and provide the money your family needs to survive. When you are laid to rest and go to your eternal reward, your policy comes alive to do your job for your family.

You may feel the price for keeping the life insurance policy is a burden when you are alive, but think about the burden you will put on your family if you die without life insurance, and without your earnings to sustain them.

Here are some statistics that shocked me when I heard them:

- Only 3 in 10 people have insurance at work (and usually no more than twice their salary).
- Only 4 in 10 people have personal insurance.
- Seventy-five percent say the reason that they don't buy life insurance is they don't know how much they need.
- Eighty percent say the reason that they don't buy life insurance is they can't afford it.
- Ninety-one percent of people say that they want to have, at least, their final expenses covered.

How many of you think nothing of spending \$100 a month, or more, on a cell phone bill? How many of you think nothing of spending \$150 a month, or more, on cable TV and streaming services? How many of you think nothing of dropping \$100 on going out to dinner every week and \$50 a week on takeout, (pre-pandemic)? Is it really that important to be the first to have the new phone or technology? Is it really that important to put things ahead of your family?

Put what's truly important in your life at the top of your priority list. As Catholic men, as Knights, it is our moral duty to protect our families. If this pandemic has taught us nothing, it has reminded us that life is fragile and fleeting.

Take the time to do what you are called to do as a Catholic husband, father, and man. Meet with your Knights of Columbus insurance agent, (virtually, over the phone, or where feasible, in person), to make sure that you have protected your family, short term and long term.

That's who we are and what we do; faith, family, and financial security. Knight of Columbus, protecting Catholic families since 1882.

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“True and certain is that Hope which is accompanied by good works. But if it goes alone, it ought to be called presumption.”

~ St. Lawrence Justinian

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