



Our Founder: Venerable Father Michael J. McGivney

Why We Offer Insurance

KNIGHTS of COLUMBUS
YOUR SHIELD FOR LIFE

LIFE DISABILITY INCOME LONG-TERM CARE RETIREMENT LIFE DISABILITY INCOME LONG-TERM CARE RETIREMENT LIFE DISABILITY INCOME LONG-TERM CARE RETIREMENT LIFE DISABILITY INCOME



St. Mary's Church, New Haven, Conn.

It may seem counter-intuitive that a Catholic organization, and one of the world's largest charitable organizations, would be in the life insurance business. But it's not odd at all. Providing financial protection for Catholic families has been at the core of the Knights of Columbus mission since the beginning.

Two Problems, One Solution

In the drive to offer financial protection for Catholic families comes from our venerable founder Father Michael J. McGivney. On numerous occasions in his life, Father McGivney witnessed the devastation wrought by the untimely death of a breadwinner.

As a young seminarian, Michael was forced to leave theological studies and return home to aid his family after the sudden death of his father, Patrick. Without his father's income, the family was unable to support Michael financially, and he was only able to continue his studies after receiving a scholarship from the local bishop.

Less than a decade later, Father McGivney, then an associate pastor at St. Mary's Church in New Haven, Conn., faced a similar situation. One of his parishioners, Edward Downes, Jr., was also forced to quit the seminary and return home to New Haven to support his mother and twelve siblings after his father died unexpectedly.

In those days, the court had the right to assign children to public institutions if it had reason to believe that their families could not properly care for and support them. The Downes' were able to account for most of their family members, but were facing the very real prospect of losing their three teenage boys unless each had a guardian to sponsor and stand for him in court, and provide \$1,500 to back the claim to guardianship.

On Feb. 6, 1882 – the very same day as the first organizational meeting for what would become the Knights of Columbus – Father McGivney appeared in court to stand as guardian for Edward’s brother Alfred. The court accepted, and Father McGivney was satisfied with the outcome, but not with the recurring nightmare of financial hardship.

“Even though he was only a young man,” his biography, *Parish Priest* says of Father McGivney, “he was filled with a lifetime of anger and frustration at the sense of doom that settled over nearly every family that lost its wage earner... On the afternoon of February 6, he was more determined than ever that what had happened to the Downes family need not happen to anyone else.”

The Mission Begins – And Continues

In that spirit, Father McGivney set off with “entrepreneurial zeal” to found the Knights of Columbus. In his own words, Father McGivney wanted the organization to “unite the men of our Faith throughout the Diocese of Hartford, that we may thereby gain strength to aid each other in time of sickness; to provide for decent burial, and to render pecuniary assistance to the families of the deceased members.”

The initial system of “life insurance” designed by Father McGivney was a simple one, a pass-the-hat system through which each member could help support his brother Knights.

As the organization grew so too did the insurance program. The pass-the-hat system was transformed into one of the largest* and superior rated life insurance programs in North America.**

The Knights of Columbus has passed many milestones and received many accolades along the way: \$113 billion of life insurance in force; over 40 years of superior ratings from A.M. Best; and 18 consecutive years of sales growth, but all that is secondary.

What matters most is that we continue to fulfill Father McGivney’s mission of offering and providing financial protection for Catholic families.

2020 is not 1882. Times are different. But even for those families who may have slightly more than next-to-nothing, insurance protection can be the difference between getting by and getting evicted. In its role as the premier Catholic life insurer, the Knights of Columbus continues to provide a valuable and noble service.

*Ranked in the top five percent of life insurers in North America according to assets under management by *Best’s Statistical Study*

**As of January 2020, rated A+, Superior for financial strength by A.M. Best



That's why we offer life insurance.

It's not for the \$8 billion in annual sales volume, or the \$113 billion in force, or the two million policies on the books. It's not the amount that counts, but the impact of those dollars.

It's the homes saved, the college tuitions provided, the Catholic funerals paid for, and the families shielded that create the legacy of protection that would make Father McGivney proud.

It's those things that are the hallmark of the Knights of Columbus Insurance program.

Contact your dedicated Knights of Columbus field agent – who is himself a brother Knight – and see what we might be able to offer to you and your family.

To find him, visit
kofc.org/findagent or
call **1-800-345-5632**.

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