

CAUSE FOR FATHER MCGIVNEY

WHO IS THE VENERABLE MICHAEL MCGIVNEY, THIS SON OF POOR IRISH IMMIGRANTS, WHO LIVED AND DIED MORE THAN A CENTURY AGO? WE KNOW THAT WERE IT NOT FOR HIM, WE WOULD NOT BE GATHERED HERE TODAY, BUT WHAT ELSE DO WE KNOW?

BY ALL ACCOUNTS HE WAS A SIMPLE PARISH PRIEST. WE KNOW THAT HE WAS DEEPLY LOVED BY HIS CONGREGATION FOR HIS GENEROUS SPIRIT AND HIS GENTLE DEMEANOR. YET HIS MILD MANNER MASKED UNRELENTING DETERMINATION TO ADDRESS THE DIFFICULTIES AND FRUSTRATIONS OF CATHOLIC FAMILIES OF HIS DAY.

TO BE CATHOLIC IN NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT, IN 1877 WAS DIFFICULT AT BEST. WHEN FATHER MCGIVNEY ARRIVED THAT YEAR TO ASSUME HIS POST AS CURATE AT ST. MARY'S CHURCH, ANTI-CATHOLICISM WAS A STRONG FORCE IN SOCIETY.

IN THE FACE OF SUCH PREJUDICE, FATHER MCGIVNEY WAS PARTICULARLY DEVOTED TO THE YOUNG. IT WAS TO THIS "UP AND COMING" GENERATION THAT FATHER MCGIVNEY

ADDRESSED SO MANY OF HIS WORDS OF INSPIRATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT.

THEY NEEDED THOSE ENCOURAGING WORDS. IT WAS A TIME WHEN MANY YOUNG CATHOLIC MEN WERE TEMPTED TO ESCAPE THEIR POVERTY BY ABANDONING THE FAITH IN FAVOR OF SOCIAL STANDING BY JOINING ONE OF THE CONDEMNED SECRET SOCIETIES! OTHERS TURNED TO DRINK. AND NOT A FEW DIED YOUNG, LEAVING BEHIND FAMILIES WHO WERE SUDDENLY DESTITUTE. THE YOUNG FATHER MCGIVNEY MADE UP HIS MIND TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

HE CONCEIVED AN IDEA FOR A SOCIETY OF CATHOLIC LAYMEN THAT WOULD UNITE ITS MEMBERS IN A BROTHERHOOD TO:

1. STRENGTHEN EACH OTHER IN THEIR FAITH;
2. PROVIDE FOR THE WELFARE OF A MEMBER'S FAMILY IN THE EVENT OF HIS SERIOUS ILLNESS OR DEATH;
3. RESTORE A SENSE OF PRIDE IN THE NATION'S CATHOLIC HERITAGE;
4. SERVE THE CHURCH AND THE COMMUNITY;
5. SUPPORT THE BISHOPS AND PRIESTS.

WITH THAT DREAM IN MIND, IN THE FALL OF 1881, HE CALLED A GROUP OF YOUNG PROFESSIONALS AND WORKING MEN TO A MEETING IN THE BASEMENT OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH. WITH THEM HE SHARED HIS VISION.

FATHER MCGIVNEY CAPTURED THE MINDS AND HEARTS OF THESE YOUNG CATHOLIC PARISHIONERS. A MAN OF BROAD VISION, HE WAS NOT CONTENT WITH SIMPLY PROVIDING FOR THE IMMEDIATE NEEDS OF CATHOLIC FAMILIES. HE LOOKED TO THE FUTURE, TO POSSIBLE TRAGEDIES AND DEATH, WHICH WOULD OFTEN LEAVE A WIDOW DESTITUTE, AND CHILDREN ORPHANED WITHOUT A BREADWINNER IN THE HOUSE.

OUR TOP-RATED INSURANCE PROGRAM WAS BORN OUT OF THE TENDER COMPASSION OF A PRIESTLY HEART AND THE CLEVER DETERMINATION OF AN INTELLIGENT MIND. IT WAS A WINNING COMBINATION. THE CHARITY OF CHRIST URGED FATHER MCGIVNEY ON. HIS DREAM BECAME REALITY WHEN ON MARCH 29, 1882, THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS RECEIVED ITS CHARTER AS A FRATERNAL ORGANIZATION FROM THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT.

THE YEARS SINCE HAVE BEEN MARKED BY STEADY

GROWTH. WHILE OTHER FRATERNAL BENEFIT SOCIETIES ARE SHRINKING AND FADING AWAY, THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS CONTINUES TO INCREASE ITS MEMBERSHIP. THAT SMALL GROUP WHICH FIRST GATHERED IN THE CHURCH BASEMENT OVER 130 YEARS AGO, HAS GROWN INTO AN INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY WITH 1.9 MILLION MEMBERS IN OVER 16,000 LOCAL COUNCILS. THAT HANDFUL OF MEN, LED BY FATHER MCGIVNEY, LAID THE FOUNDATION FOR WHAT HAS BECOME THE LARGEST LAY ASSOCIATION FOR CATHOLIC MEN AND THEIR FAMILIES IN THE WORLD.

THROUGH THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS, FR. MCGIVNEY LIVES ON. INTEREST IN THE LIFE AND HOLINESS OF OUR FOUNDER HAS INCREASED STEADILY SINCE THE ORDER CELEBRATED ITS CENTENNIAL IN 1982. THE MOMENTUM OF DEVOTION TO FR. MCGIVNEY AND OUR SERIOUS HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION INTO HIS LIFE AND VIRTUE HAVE GIVEN BIRTH TO WHAT HAS LONG BEEN A DESIRE FOR MANY OF OUR MEMBERS: THE PROMOTION OF HIS CAUSE FOR CANONIZATION.

DECEMBER 17, 1997, MARKED THE MOMENT WHEN THE

CHURCH HERSELF, HAVING CONSIDERED THE MERITS OF THE CASE, FORMALLY INAUGURATED THE CAUSE FOR CANONIZATION OF THE VENERABLE MICHAEL MCGIVNEY, IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF HARTFORD. UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF ARCHBISHOP DANIEL A. CRONIN AND WITH THE ENTHUSIASTIC ENDORSEMENT OF OUR THEN SUPREME CHAPLAIN, BISHOP THOMAS V. DAILY, A PROCESS OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH AND THEOLOGICAL EVALUATION WAS BEGUN IN EARNEST. THIS PAINSTAKING PHASE IN THE CANONIZATION PROCESS WAS CONCLUDED AND CARRIED TO ROME BY DOMINICAN FATHER GABRIEL O'DONNELL, POSTULATOR FOR FATHER MCGIVNEY'S CAUSE. THE SACRED CONGREGATION HAS MOST RECENTLY CONCLUDED ITS CONSIDERATION OF FATHER MCGIVNEY'S CAUSE WITH A FAVORABLE JUDGMENT.

MANY GRACES AND FAVORS ATTRIBUTED TO THE INTERCESSION OF FR. MCGIVNEY HAVE BEEN REPORTED TO THE FATHER MCGIVNEY GUILD IN NEW HAVEN. THERE ARE REPORTS OF SEVERAL MIRACULOUS HEALINGS THROUGH HIS INTERCESSION AND THEY ARE PRESENTLY BEING INVESTIGATED.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FATHER MCGIVNEY GUILD WAS CERTAINLY A MILESTONE MARKING THE PATH TO OUR FOUNDER'S CANONIZATION. IT OPERATES OUT OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL OFFICE IN NEW HAVEN.

THE GUILD SERVES AS A CLEARINGHOUSE FOR INFORMATION REGARDING FATHER MCGIVNEY, PROMOTES DEVOTION TO HIS MEMORY, DEVELOPS AND DISTRIBUTES MATERIALS ABOUT HIS LIFE AND VIRTUE, RECEIVES REPORTS OF FAVORS RECEIVED THROUGH FATHER MCGIVNEY'S INTERCESSION, AND RECEIVES NEWS OF POSSIBLE MIRACLES.

MEMBERSHIP IN THE GUILD IS OPEN TO ANYONE INTERESTED IN FATHER MCGIVNEY AND HIS CAUSE, INCLUDING MEMBERS OF THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS AND THEIR FAMILIES. A GUILD NEWSLETTER IS SENT TO MEMBERS SEVERAL TIMES A YEAR. ALL MATERIALS PRODUCED TO PROMOTE INFORMATION AND DEVOTION TO FATHER MCGIVNEY ARE AUTOMATICALLY DISTRIBUTED TO MEMBERS OF THE GUILD AND, ONCE A MONTH, A MASS IS OFFERED AT ST. MARY'S CHURCH IN NEW HAVEN FOR THE INTENTIONS OF ALL

GUILD MEMBERS. PRAYER CARDS HAVE BEEN PRINTED TO WHICH ARE ATTACHED RELICS OF FATHER MCGIVNEY. YOU, YOUR FRIENDS AND CO-WORKERS CAN JOIN THE GUILD BY CONTACTING:

FATHER MCGIVNEY GUILD

1 COLUMBUS PLAZA

NEW HAVEN CT 06510

WWW.FATHERMCGIVNEY.ORG

THE GUILD SEEKS TO FOSTER INTEREST IN FATHER MCGIVNEY AND GROWING DEVOTION TO HIM HAS BECOME PART OF THE SPIRITUAL RENEWAL OF MANY KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS AND THEIR FAMILIES. TO HEAR AGAIN OF THE VISION OF FAITH WHICH INSPIRED OUR FOUNDER SHOULD LEAD US TO BECOME TRUE KNIGHTS OF CHRIST AND KNIGHTS OF MARY.

AS IN ANY CANONIZATION CAUSE, THE CHURCH WAITS FOR GOD'S BLESSING ON THIS PROJECT IN THE FORM OF MIRACLES. ONE MIRACLE IS REQUIRED FOR BEATIFICATION AND ANOTHER FOR THE CANONIZATION OF ANY SERVANT OF GOD. ONLY THROUGH FAITH AND PRAYER CAN WE EXPECT

GOD TO HEAR OUR PETITION THAT FATHER MCGIVNEY MIGHT ONE DAY BE RAISED TO HONORS OF THE ALTAR.

POPE EMERITAS BENEDICT'S DECISION TO PERMIT A DECREE OF "HEROIC VIRTUE" TO BE PUBLISHED AND TO BESTOW THE TITLE "VENERABLE" UPON FATHER MCGIVNEY WAS A CLEAR SIGNAL FROM THE CHURCH THAT OUR CAUSE IS MOVING FORWARD.

FATHER MCGIVNEY'S CONCERN FOR THE FAITH OF HIS PEOPLE SUSTAINED HIM IN HIS EFFORTS TO CARE FOR THEM. HE WAS ESPECIALLY DEVOTED TO THE MOST VULNERABLE MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY OF HIS DAY, WIDOWS, ORPHANS AND THE WORKING MEN WHO WERE STIGMATIZED AS THE "LEAST" AMONG GOD'S CHILDREN BECAUSE OF THEIR POVERTY, IMMIGRANT STATUS OR ETHNIC ORIGINS. FATHER MCGIVNEY'S DEDICATION AND DEVOTION TO CHRIST AND THE CHURCH MANIFESTED ITSELF IN SERVICE TO THEM. OUR FOUNDER EXPECTED NO LESS OF HIS KNIGHTS. WE CAN EXPECT NO LESS OF OURSELVES. VENERABLE MICHAEL MCGIVNEY, PRAY FOR US.

VIVAT JESUS!