Helping African AIDS Orphans

Work has begun on a primary school in Uganda as part of the Knights of Columbus outreach to provide care and shelter for some of the millions of children in Africa who are orphaned because of AIDS.

Former Pennsylvania State Chaplain and now Director of Mission Promotion for the Apostles of Jesus, Father Paul O. Gaggawala, A.J., traveled to the site in Uganda for the ground breaking on the new school. A similar construction project is also slated to begin soon in Kenya.

Through this program, the Order aligned itself with the Apostles of Jesus, an order established in 1968, the first of missionary priests and brothers founded in Africa. The partnership will expand and deepen existing services for orphaned children in Uganda and Kenya. In Uganda a boarding school for children is planned for construction.

Most of the children became orphans when AIDS affected their families, but in Uganda, some families were split by the recent civil war, according to Father Gaggawala.

Knights Urged to Continue Advocacy for Religious Freedom

A new rule issued Jan. 20 by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services gave Catholic institutions until August 2013 before it would begin forcing insurance plans to cover all FDA-approved contraceptive methods and sterilization procedures, including several drugs that induce abortion.

As originally written, the mandate would have forced individuals and groups with religious or moral objections — including Catholic hospitals, universities and charities — to purchase and provide such coverage.

In response to strong and unified opposition from the U.S. bishops and others, the administration announced a revision to the policy Feb. 10, claiming to accommodate the objections. “Contraception coverage will be offered to women by their employers’ insurance companies directly, with no role for religious employers who oppose contraception,” stated President Barack Obama, adding that insurance companies “will be required to provide contraception to these women free of charge.”

Following the Feb. 10 announcement, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops stated that although some details of the revised mandate were unclear,

Second Responders Program Looks to Build Volunteer Base

At the 129th Supreme Convention in Denver, Supreme Knight Carl Anderson announced the creation of the Knights of Columbus Second Responders Program with the goal of building a local council network for disaster response. Under the direction of brother Knight and New York City Fire Department Captain Alfredo Fuentes, the Supreme Council is developing a disaster response team in each jurisdiction. These teams, composed of current and former first responders and volunteers, will provide assistance in the wake of natural or man-made catastrophes.

Knights in every council are asked to consider what they can do in their community to prepare and respond to these types of emergencies. There is an

Reach Out to Potential Knights this Easter Season

Sponsor a Church Drive & Degree

As the Easter season draws to its pinnacle at the beginning of April, councils are urged to reach out to potential Knights among their fellow parishioners by sponsoring a membership church drive. A church drive is an ideal opportunity to reach an audience of qualified prospects. Its success is dependent on carefully planning and carrying out each of the following steps:

- Obtain the pastor’s approval for the membership drive at all Masses on target weekend. Confirm dates/details and get the pastor involved in your recruitment efforts. Your parish priest will be your number one recruiter.
- Order quantities of K of C membership materials from the Supply Department.
- Provide an announcement for the parish bulletin during each of the two weekends before the drive.
- Prepare a tabletop display highlighting

See Orphans Page 6

See Second Responders Page 3

See Church Drive Page 6

See Religious Liberty Page 3
Executive Director for Pope John Paul II Shrine Appointed

Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson appointed Patrick E. Kelly to the position of executive director for the recently established Blessed John Paul II Shrine in Washington, D.C., during the Knights of Columbus Board of Directors quarterly meeting held in early February. Kelly will also retain his title and responsibilities as Vice President of Public Policy for the Order.

“As executive director, Mr. Kelly will continue to manage the day-to-day operations of the Blessed John Paul II Shrine, directly overseeing its staff, operations and activities. He will play a critical role in the Order’s new initiative to preserve and promote the legacy of Pope John Paul II, to celebrate Catholic heritage in our hemisphere, and to advance the New Evangelization.”

In addition to the shrine itself, the preliminary plans for the site include exhibits on the life and legacy of Blessed John Paul II, and an exhibit on the Catholic heritage of North America.

Deadline for Star Council

Now is the time to make sure your council has met all the requirements for the Star Council Award by qualifying for the Father McGivney, Founders’ and Columbian awards. The eligibility requirements for these awards are: conducting and reporting at least four major programs in each of the Service Program categories using the Columbian Award Application found in the Council Report Forms Booklet (#1436) or on the Order’s website by June 30 achieving associate member quota, and achieving insurance member quota. For more detailed information on achieving these awards refer to the Surge ... with Service program manual (#962) or the Grand Knight’s Handbook (#915). To ensure timely processing, all Form #100s must be received at the Supreme Council before noon ET on June 29, to be counted toward 2011-12 fraternal year quotas. All insurance policies must be issued and released by June 30 in order to count for the 2011-12 fraternal year quotas.

Please send in Fraternal Survey Immediately!

If your council hasn’t done so already, please complete the 2011 Annual Survey of Fraternal Activity (#1728) and submit it to the Supreme Council office as soon as possible. This form can be filed electronically by going to kofc.org/forms or by mailing in the form from the Council Report Forms Booklet (#1436).

Submit Family of Year and Service Program Entries to Your State Council

If you haven’t done so and your jurisdiction’s deadline hasn’t passed, please submit your Family of the Year entry and Service Program entries to your state council immediately. Do not send these entries to the Supreme Council.

Family of the Month/Year

Families are the foundation upon which our Order is built. Because of the importance that the family holds for the Knights of Columbus, councils regularly participate in the “Family of the Month” and “Family of the Year” programs. Each month, your council should choose an exemplary K of C family to honor as the “Family of the Month.” Select a “Family of the Year” from your “Family of the Month” recipients. The “Family of the Year” for each council is eligible for entry into the state council’s “Family of the Year” competition. Entry forms are in the Family of the Month (#1993) booklet and at kofc.org/forms. These forms should be submitted to your state deputy, program director or family activities director by the deadline set for each state council competition. Contact your district deputy or state program director for your state’s entry deadline and where to send entries. Note: Local councils should not send their “Family of the Year” entries to the Supreme Council. State “Family of the Year” winners are traditionally announced at state council conventions. State and provincial winners are then entered in the Supreme Council’s International “Family of the Year” competition.

Ordering Supplies

To order any of the items mentioned in this newsletter or listed in the Supply Catalog (#1264), complete a Requisition Form (#1) and send it to: Supply Department, Knights of Columbus, 78 Meadow Street, New Haven CT 06519. The Supply Department also accepts fax orders at 1-800-266-8340. Only orders that are to be charged to a council, assembly, circle or agency account are accepted. Use the Requisition Form (#1) for fax orders. Include the council, assembly or circle number on all requisitions. Please be sure the return address on the form is written legibly. Do not mail in orders that have been faxed. Send in separate forms for promotional, gift and print orders.

‘Be Not Afraid!’ Membership Campaign

As a way to thank recruiters and honor the beatification of Blessed John Paul II, the Knights of Columbus is continuing the “Be Not Afraid!” membership campaign. Here are the campaign incentives:

As begun on July 1, 2011, recruiters that bring in at least one new member per month receive a Blessed John Paul II Medallion for that month. An additional incentive began on Dec. 1, 2011 and will run through the end of the campaign on June 29, 2012 at noon (EDT): Recruiters who bring in a minimum of four new members will receive a large, specially struck Blessed John Paul II medallion with a display stand. When a council recruits a minimum of six new members during the “Be Not Afraid!” membership campaign, their council chaplain will receive a specially struck Blessed John Paul II medallion with display stand.

A member degree certificate (#268) is available from the Supply Department to present to new members that have taken their First Degree in honor of the Beatification of Blessed John Paul II.

MEMBERSHIP IN THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS is open to men 18 years of age or older who are practical (that is, practicing) Catholics in union with the Holy See. This means that an applicant or member accepts the teaching authority of the Catholic Church on matters of faith and morals, aspires to live in accord with the precepts of the Catholic Church, and is in good standing in the Catholic Church.
Tell Us About Your Successes

Has your council conducted an outstanding project? If so, we'd like to hear about it. Please send information on your project (including the when, where, what, who, why and how of the activity) and photos to knightline@kofc.org. If you have any questions about sending in photos, please feel free to contact us at 203-752-4264.

In addition, if you think your council has an event or program that is an outstanding example of one of the six “Surge ... with Service” categories — Church, Family, Pro-Life, Youth, Community or Council — let us know. We would like to produce a listing of upcoming events that we can pursue for possible promotion with local media and/or for use as a feature article in one of our publications. Please send a brief description of your upcoming event (one or two sentences describing it, the date, the location and contact information) to knightline@kofc.org or call 203-752-4264. We look forward to hearing from you.

Check Us Out Online

If you like what you see in this issue of Knightline then check out the online version and an archive of past issues at kofc.org/ newsletters. Also use this link to access online versions of Chaplain’s Report, Squires Newsletter and other publications.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY from page 1

serious concerns remained unresolved.

“We note at the outset that the lack of clear protection for key stakeholders — for self-insured religious employers; for religious and secular for-profit employers; for secular non-profit employers; for religious insurers; and for individuals — is unacceptable and must be corrected,” the bishops’ statement said. “And in the case where the employee and insurer agree to add the objectionable coverage, that coverage is still provided as a part of the objecting employer’s plan, financed in the same way as the rest of the coverage offered by the objecting employer.”

The bishops warned that the proposal continues to “threaten government coercion of religious people and groups to violate their deeply held convictions. ... The only complete solution to this religious liberty problem is for HHS to rescind the mandate of these objectionable services.”

As the situation develops further and debate continues, Knights and their families are asked to continue sending a clear message to their representatives in Congress and urging them to co-sponsor the Respect for Rights of Conscience Act (H.R. 1179/S. 1467). This bi-partisan legislation would ensure that federal mandates do not penalize or discriminate against any Catholics.

Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson, in a recent message to state deputies, said, “Our 129th Supreme Convention in Denver last year unanimously passed a resolution pledging our support for freedom of Rights of Conscience act (H.R. 1179/S. 1467). This bi-partisan legislation would ensure that federal mandates do not penalize or discriminate against any Catholics.

Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson, in a recent message to state deputies, said, “Our 129th Supreme Convention in Denver last year unanimously passed a resolution pledging our support for freedom of conscience in health care. Now is the time to make that pledge of support a reality.”

For more information and resources, visit kofc.org/rights and usccb.org/conscience.

SURVEY FINDS UNITY AMONG AMERICANS ON ABORTION RESTRICTIONS

Nearly 8 in 10 advocate significant restrictions

As the United States marked the 39th anniversary of the Supreme Court’s Roe v. Wade decision, a new survey was released showing that the vast majority of Americans support significant abortion restrictions.

The Knights of Columbus-Marist Poll found that 79 percent of Americans say that they would not allow abortion after the first three months of pregnancy. Fifty-one percent would only allow abortion — at most — in cases of rape, incest or to save the life of the mother — or would not allow it at all.

The survey was conducted nationally by landline and cell phone interviews with 1,000 adults, aged 18 and older, from March 2—5, 2017. The margin of error is ±3.1 percent.

Knights of Columbus members and their families encourage the members of your council to consider future involvement. Members should go to www.kofc.org/responders and fill out the on-line form. By signing up Knights will be entered into the Second Responders database currently in development and be among the first contacted to help organize in their state as the program expands.

2011 Soccer Challenge International Winners

Congratulations to the international winners of the 2011 Knights of Columbus Soccer Challenge for outstanding athletic ability and sportsmanship. Knights of Columbus Soccer Challenge is open to boys and girls ages 10 to 14. The competition highlights one of the most basic of soccer skills — the penalty kick. For more information on the competition please visit the “youth activities” area of kofc.org/service. Here are the winners:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCORE</th>
<th>CONTESTANT</th>
<th>COUNCIL - CITY - STATE</th>
<th>AGE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>380</td>
<td>Hannah Flemming</td>
<td>753-Bellows Falls, VT</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>450</td>
<td>Max Sun</td>
<td>1785- Corvallis, OR</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>455</td>
<td>Casey Sullivan</td>
<td>12263- Bluffton, SC</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500</td>
<td>Nicholas Muchow</td>
<td>6076-Spartanburg, SC</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>410</td>
<td>Lizzie Schlangen</td>
<td>10540- Gilbert, AZ</td>
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<td>405</td>
<td>Saul Contreras</td>
<td>1785- Corvallis, OR</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>425</td>
<td>Paige Wase</td>
<td>7324- Ludlow, VT</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
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<td>445</td>
<td>Blake Sylvester</td>
<td>10540- Gilbert, AZ</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>370</td>
<td>Montana Letourneau</td>
<td>7324- Ludlow, VT</td>
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Survey Finds Unity Among Americans on Abortion Restrictions

Nearly 8 in 10 advocate significant restrictions

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SEE POLL PAGE 4
at all. The numbers have held up over time as well and are almost unchanged from two years ago.

“Almost four decades after the Supreme Court’s decisions in Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton, which resulted in the almost totally unrestricted abortion regime of today, these decisions continue to be out of step with the vast majority of Americans,” said Supreme Knight Carl Anderson. “Far from being settled law, the inadequacy of the Court’s reasoning on abortion in Roe and Doe is readily apparent to most Americans. Once a survey moves beyond the labels of pro-life and pro-choice, we see a fundamental unity among Americans in favor of significant abortion restrictions.”

In addition, the survey found that Americans (84 percent) believe that laws can protect both the life of the unborn and the health and well-being of women. That number was consistent with — and slightly higher than — findings two years ago when the number who said both could be protected was 81 percent.

The questions on abortion were part of a broader survey, which will be released in February.

This report details the findings from a telephone survey of 1,053 adults residing in the continental United States. Data were collected from Dec. 15, 2011, through Dec. 27, 2011, using an online, probability-based panel from Knowledge Networks, Inc. Reports for adults have a margin of error within +/- 3 percentage points.

Supreme Chaplain Offers Mass at Cardinal O’Connor Conference on Life

Bishop William E. Lori served as principal celebrant and homilist during Mass on Jan. 21, as part of the 13th annual Cardinal O’Connor Conference on Life held at Georgetown University prior to the 39th annual March for Life.

“It is not enough for us to be pro-life intellectually and politically,” Bishop Lori said in his homily during the Saturday evening Mass. “We must embrace the Gospel of Life in the depth of our souls in such a way that it continually transforms us: bringing us to our knees in repentance for our own failures against human dignity; filling us with joy and gratitude for God’s gift of human life; permeating our minds and hearts with bedrock convictions, born of faith and reason, about the inviolable dignity of human life at every stage.”

The conference has been annually held at Georgetown University since 2000 as a vehicle to connect and educate college and high school students from around the country during the days prior to the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C. The conference was named for the late Archbishop of New York, His Eminence Cardinal O’Connor a Georgetown alumnus, in recognition of his dedication to defending the sacredness of all human life.
The annual conference is co-sponsored by Georgetown University Council 6375.

On Jan. 22, the conference continued with a keynote address from Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap., of Philadelphia.

“The task you need to take home with you today is this, never give up the struggle that the March for Life embodies,” Archbishop Chaput told the conference attendees. “No matter how long it takes; no matter how many times you march — it matters, eternally. Because of you, some young woman will choose life, and that new life will have the love of God forever.”

Several members of Congress participated in panel discussions during the conference.

Across town, the Supreme Council hosted a “Pro-Life Leadership Mass” at the Blessed John Paul II Shrine for the leaders of various pro-life groups. In addition, the “You and Me” pro-life exhibition created by the Sisters of Life (first shown at World Youth Day 2012 in Madrid), was featured at the shrine and viewed by hundreds of people throughout the weekend.

Knights from the District of Columbia served as ushers during the Mass opening the National Prayer Vigil for Life on Sunday evening at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. They also helped assemble and distribute thousands of “Defend Life” signs that are carried by participants in the march.

Coats for Kids Helps Children in Need

With many families with young children continuing to struggle in these challenging economic times, there has never been a better time for Knights of Columbus councils to help by providing warm winter coats to children in their communities through the Order’s Coats for Kids program.

For the 2011/12 winter season to date, 698 Knights of Columbus councils purchased and distributed 26,508 coats. In addition, the Supreme Council purchased 5,500 coats that were sent to several state councils for distribution, for a total of 32,008 coats given out. This is a significant increase over the 2010/11 number of 17,626 coats distributed.

Since 2009, the Knights of Columbus has distributed more than 70,000 coats to kids throughout the United States and Canada.

At an event held in Salt Lake City on Dec. 17, Utah Knights gave out 200 coats to children in need. The Knights distributed an additional 200 coats at a local food bank and 200 more by other councils at other locations on the same day.

“The look on the children’s faces as well as the parent’s faces is priceless because they are so appreciative,” said Andy Airriess, Utah State Council program director, in an article appearing in the Intermountain Catholic newspaper by Christine Young. “This could be the first new piece of clothing they have ever received and the feeling is fantastic.”

All Knights of Columbus councils are invited to participate in Coats for Kids this winter. Simply complete and submit the Coats for Kids order form, and you’ll get your coats in about two to three weeks. The minimum order is one case of 12 coats, and the cost is $195 per case ($16.25 per coat). Shipping charges are added to each order, but the Supreme Council works with our supplier to ship via the most economical means possible, and the Supreme Council will pick up half of the shipping costs on every order placed by a Knights of Columbus council. Each case of high-quality coats will contain either boys’ coats or girls’ coats, both of which come in a variety of sizes (4-16 for girls, 4-18 for boys), styles and colors.

Jamie Taras, a former professional football player with the BC Lions, was on hand to autograph mini footballs for the children.

Knights from the British Columbia State Council in Canada held a Coats for Kids distribution in Vancouver Dec. 18, 2011. More than 300 new winter coats were provided free of charge to needy families.
council activities and member benefits; include handouts and copies of the council newsletter and place in the church’s vestibule.

- Post teams of two to three Knights at each church door at every Mass to hand out flyers and Prospect Cards.
- Collate materials and hand them as each man enters the church. Leave sharpened pencils in each pew for completing Prospect Cards.
- Arrange for the pastor, grand knight or membership director to make a brief announcement prior to or after Mass, explaining the Knights of Columbus, encouraging men to complete and hand in Prospect Cards as they leave church. Use a letter of support from the bishop (if available from state council) or sample pupilit announcements (#2678) available from the Supply Department.
- Position Knights at exits to answer questions from prospects, assist in completing Membership Documents, or collect completed Prospect Cards for follow-up.
- Make sure tables/supplies are visually appealing and are restocked for each Mass.
- Deliver all Membership Documents, and completed Prospect Cards to the membership director.
- Assign prospect names to recruiting teams for personal follow-up visits.

Along with your council’s church drive, schedule a couple First Degree exemplifications to bring your new members into the Order as quickly as possible. Time, and location of the degrees. Make sure each candidate has a current member qualified Catholic men they may know about joining the Knights of Columbus. Get them involved immediately in council activities, and ask them to talk to other new and current members. Once these new members are part of the Order, get them involved in council activities, and ask them to talk to other qualified Catholic men they may know about joining the Knights of Columbus.

Here are some steps to follow:

- Get your pastor’s approval for a “Father (fill in his name) Invites You to Join” campaign. Also, get his input on the invitation letter to use in the campaign (see sample to right).
- Obtain a head and shoulders photograph of your priest to include on the invitation letter.
- Acquire a parish membership roster.
- Build a team of five or six members from the council. These Knights should be very active in the parish and know many parishioners.
- Set up a meeting and ask each team member to review the parish roster and to highlight those men that he knows and would recommend for membership.
- Using the parishioner list, make a new list of prospects. Include the prospect’s name, address, phone number, e-mail, and wife’s name.
- Take the completed list to your priest and ask him to review it and validate each prospect as a practical Catholic. Also, ask him if there are any parishioners he would like to add to the list.
- Schedule an open house and ask your pastor, the recruitment team, council officers, your field agent, other members, and the prospects and their wives to attend.

### ‘Father Invites You to Join’

Parish priests are our spiritual leaders, and our Order has always sought to support and share a close relationship with them. As part of your council’s recruitment strategy, meet with your pastor about the possibility of conducting a “Father Invites You to Join” membership campaign in your parish.

Here are some steps to follow:

- Send out the invitation letters (with a list of other Knights in the parish). In a few days follow up with a phone call to encourage the prospect to attend. If he cannot attend the open house due to another commitment, ask if a member of the council can visit his home.
- Conduct the open house.
- Provide snacks and beverages for the guests.
- Choose a master of ceremonies (such as the field agent, grand knight, or membership director).
- Start with an opening prayer.
- After the greeting the grand knight should explain the purpose of the meeting.
- Make a presentation on the council’s activities.

**Sample Invitation Letter**

Father (fill in his name)
Invites You to Join the Knights of Columbus

Dear [parishioner’s name]:

I am recommending you for membership in our honored Order, the Knights of Columbus. I believe that you have all the qualifications organization. The Knights of Columbus is the main source of

In the next week or two you will receive a phone call from one of my brother Knights to personally invite you and [wife’s name] if both of you would attend the event scheduled for [time and date]. The open house will be held at [location, address, and directions if needed].

I am also enclosing a list of all the Knights of Columbus members here at [parish name]. Through this list you will see the quality of men and their families that you will be associated with in the Knights of Columbus.

God Bless,
Sincerely Yours,
(Pastor’s Name)
Plan Now: World Day of Prayer for Vocations
Sunday, April 29th

Support for vocations has always been a priority for the Order, and observance of the World Day of Prayer for Vocations is one way we can encourage people to answer the call to priesthood and religious life.

By providing support and prayer for those who answer God’s call to priesthood and to a life of consecrated poverty, chastity and obedience, we serve as a much needed resource enabling them to continue their vocational discernment. One way to support these men and women is to stand with the entire Church and celebrate the day dedicated to religious vocations throughout the world.

You and your fellow council members can join Catholics from every nation in observing the World Day of Prayer for Vocations on Sunday, April 29, in a variety of ways. Here are some suggestions:

- Invite seminarians, postulants and young religious to your council or assembly’s community events or social gatherings as guests of honor to speak and give witness to their lives of dedicating themselves fully to the service of God and neighbor. Continue the event with an appreciation dinner to honor your guests.
- Promote a “Vocations Day” event such as a vocations’ fair, a presentation by various seminarians, postulants and/or young religious, or a drive to raise funds for a needy seminarian or religious.
- Work with your pastor to celebrate the ordination or religious profession of a parishioner.
- Make the Order’s scholarship and student loan information available to seminarians and postulants.
- Sponsor a trip for local youth groups to a nearby seminary or religious house to explore the idea of priesthood or religious life.
- Pray for the Lord to prompt young people’s hearts to respond to His call to a priestly or religious vocation at the beginning and end of your council and assembly meetings.
- Design an ad for vocations and place it in your parish bulletin or local newspaper.
- Hold an open house within your council for families and friends of your parish with a vocations theme.
- Schedule a retreat for those contemplating a priestly or religious vocation. Retreats often enable an individual to recognize his or her vocation.

Vocations Materials Available

To help you promote your vocations programs, the Supreme Council Supply Department offers a variety of vocations-related materials:

- The DVD, Everyone Has A Vocation to Love, (#50046) includes the Order’s four vocations titles:
  - “The Vocation of the Laity,”
  - “The Vocation to Marriage,”
  - “The Vocation to the Priesthood” and “The Vocation to Religious Life for Women.” It also includes a 16-page study guide that features discussion questions, notes and memorable quotes from each segment.

- Order and distribute the “Prayer for Vocations/Prayer to Know One’s Vocation” prayer card (#1874); the full-color vocational bookmarks (featuring, respectively, Pope Benedict XVI [#4200], a religious brother [#4201], and a religious sister [#4202]); and a vocational “Keep the Faith Alive” poster (#2959).

- Not to be Served, but to Serve (#827) is a booklet outlining the various religious vocations and how to begin one’s journey. The booklet contains accounts of personal experiences. It is available in reasonable quantities.

- Columbia Magazine Vocation Profiles (#4719) tell the story of those who have answered the call, explaining their path to the seminary or religious formation, and the fulfillment they have found in following God’s will. Packaged as a set of six 8-by-10.75-inch posters, these are great for parish and school bulletin boards.

These items are all available from the Supreme Council Supply Department in reasonable quantities. Please use a Requisition Form (#1) when ordering.
During our field agents’ training school held here in New Haven, we routinely cover all aspects of an agent’s job. As we make our way from Monday to Friday, we try to impart as much wisdom as possible to these new agents so that when they return home, they return better at the job of servicing our membership.

Of course, one of the most critical elements of becoming successful is the ability to make appointments with brother Knights to either introduce them to our insurance program, or to review existing, previously purchased policies. So, on the Monday evening of our week together, we bring all of our students into the Home Office to make phone calls to members seeking appointments while our Home Office staff watches, listens, and critiques.

Thankfully, our percentage of success hovers in the neighborhood of 50 percent. By that I mean that about half of the members contacted that Monday night agree to see their agent. I can go home that night and sleep well knowing that this half is going to at least engage in a conversation with these enthusiastic, knowledgeable agents. It’s the other half I worry about.

As I walk around and listen, I hear the agent on the phone politely asking for an appointment, at a time convenient for the member and his wife, to introduce himself as the new agent in the area. While there, he’ll say, they can review existing coverage, or talk about what the Order has to offer. I don’t hear high-pressure tactics or false claims about the purpose of the visit. I hear a member of the Knights of Columbus asking another member of the Knights of Columbus for some fraternal time together. It can be disappointing to hear the resistance on the other end.

To be clear, once in the home, we can’t “make” a member buy anything. And we won’t, once in, refuse to leave until the member gets out his checkbook. We understand that everyone’s situation is unique and that every night, at every kitchen table, will be different. What is difficult to understand is the fact that so many members simply refuse to talk to us.

Father McGivney founded the Order to care for widows and orphans, and our agents carry on that legacy, on his behalf, today. We feel obligated to at least have a conversation with every member of the Order about that bedrock principal of the Order. If, at the end of the visit, you are comfortable with where you are, or if you have adequately prepared yourself prior to our visit, so be it. We’ll leave — as a new friend and brother.

Let us in…and make a new friend.