



## State Deputy Speech

### Solidarity with Life Prayer Gathering



Worthy Brother Knights, ladies, friends,

I am the State Deputy for the Knights of Columbus in Oregon, where we are 9,500 strong. I bring you greetings.

We have gathered here today because, in light of the current cultural and societal climate, and the close proximity to the Feast of St. Joseph, the Oregon Knights of Columbus have determined that now is the time for us to pray together next to our State Capitol building such that our government leaders and the community at large may clearly know our pro-life stance. We live in a State where abortion is not merely allowed or tolerated, but it is praised and celebrated. This is an utter abomination in the sight of God. The Oregon Knights of Columbus always has and always will support the respect for life with unwavering loyalty. Therefore, it is our duty to stand up and publicly express to the world that we are protectors and defenders of the unborn.

Abortion is the willful murder of unborn children in the womb. We all know this to be true. The lies that society spreads to deceive people into thinking that it's just a clump of cells has distorted the minds of so many in society and led many astray. Society has brought forth phrases and slogans such as “choice” and “reproductive rights” in order to make abortion sound acceptable. This is without a doubt, the work of the evil one.

The devil seeks to promote the culture of death. We have seen it take many forms throughout history. King Herod sought the lives of innocent children during the time of Jesus. The Aztec Empire celebrated human sacrifice. Today, in our modern world, we see a new sinister form of human sacrifice, those who are torn limb from limb inside the womb of their mother. The devil rejoices in seeing such human sacrifice take place. If you wish to serve God, you must abhor such practices.

Oregon is one of the least restrictive states in the nation when it comes to abortion. This is why the State of Oregon needs us to peacefully demonstrate our pro-life stance and to spread the message of life to all. We need to demonstrate that a large contingency of us advocate for life and our numbers are growing. Our government leaders need to see this and recognize it. If they wish to adequately represent their constituents and enact laws and proclamations that are in accordance with the common good, they need to see our numbers and the passion with which we advocate for what we hold deep within our hearts.

The Knights of Columbus is an organization that serves God, the Holy Catholic Church, the community, and the common good. We are characterized by the noble deeds and virtues seen in the knights of old, during medieval times. Medieval knights were renowned for their virtuous life of piety, self-sacrifice, chivalry, defense of others, and pursuit of justice. They would protect and

defend the most vulnerable and sacrifice their lives if needed. The common folk felt well protected when in the presence of a knight.

The Knights of Columbus continue to exemplify those same virtues today. Although times are different, the Knights of Columbus adapt to apply this same way of life to meet the needs of today. Times have changed and will continue to change and the Knights of Columbus will continue to be an enormous force for the good, according to the condition of the time.

When the Knights of Columbus were formed, widows and orphans were most vulnerable. When the breadwinner of a family died, the rest of the family would be broken apart and sent to other families or institutions. Fr. Michael J. McGivney formed the Knights of Columbus to protect these widows and orphans and keep families intact.

Today, the most vulnerable are the unborn. Society does not recognize the dignity or rights of unborn children. This is an offense against justice and a failure to defend these precious lives. They cannot speak for themselves nor defend themselves. Only through prayer to God and the protection offered from knights and champions of life can they be defended from the evil of abortion. Therefore, the noble deed for Knights to do is to stand for justice and the defense of the vulnerable.

Our Founder, Fr. Michael J. McGivney, was beatified in 2020. In order to be beatified, a miracle needs to be approved and attributed to his intercession. The miracle approved to move forward with his beatification indeed pertained to the unborn. An unborn child had a zero percent chance of survival per doctor's diagnosis. And yet, the prayers of the parents and many others made through the intercession of Fr. Michael J. McGivney, were heard and Mikey was born miraculously. Our very Founder recognizes the dignity of the unborn to the point where God Willed that his miracle pertained to the unborn. We are pro-life to the very core of our existence as an organization.

This is what Knights do. We are men of action. We see a breach and we charge full speed ahead into the breach. When we see an act of injustice made in our society, we cannot simply sit idly by. We must respond. It is our duty. We must respond charitably, peacefully, prayerfully, and we must truthfully convey and communicate where we stand. A wise man once said, "The only thing that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."

As Knights, we are devoted to a strong prayer life. We also look to our great role models among the saints. One in particular stands out during this time: St. Joseph. We recently celebrated his Feast Day. St. Joseph is an exemplary model for us as a protector and defender. In his book for 33 Day Consecration to St. Joseph, Fr. Donald Calloway refers to St. Joseph as the First Knight for Our Lady. St. Joseph was every bit a knight in the way he lived his life. He was always ready to protect and defend the Christ-Child. When King Herod sought his life, St. Joseph, per instruction from the angel, led his Wife and Child to safety. In doing so, he thus safeguarded the life of Jesus. One of the titles St. Joseph is known by is "Guardian of the Redeemer." He recognized and understood that life is precious and he was willing to defend it with his own life. As Knights of Columbus and pro-life advocates, let's call upon St. Joseph to help us and intercede for us. Ite ad Joseph (go to Joseph).

Knights of Columbus are also dedicated to the principle of Patriotism. Patriotism means that we love our country and are devoted to our country and that we want to see our country thrive and prosper. This means that we hold the best interests of our country and the common good in our hearts and that we advocate for our country to adopt laws and cultural practice that comply with the well-being of the country and its citizens. Patriotism does not mean loving every decision that our government leaders and lawmakers enact. Rather, it means willing the good of our country such that in times when our leaders act against the common good, we advocate for them to act differently and redirect their efforts towards what will make this country a Godly nation. We must pray that our government leaders would be led by the Holy Spirit and listen to what is placed in their hearts by God.

To me, one of the most important aspects about being a Knight is to have the heart of a knight. Not only do we do noble deeds and acts of chivalry because a need arises, but because there is a deep longing and yearning in our hearts to pursue a life of virtue and honor. We will not rest until we have been able to carry out such chivalrous deeds. Only then, can our hearts be satisfied.

This is what it means to have the heart of a knight. You must incline your heart towards what God wants. You must have a longing and yearning in your hearts to serve God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Therefore, I am calling upon all here to allow the Holy Spirit to place God's Will into your hearts and to listen to what is in your heart. Only then can you do what is right. This is what we need to encourage all in society to do. So many people who actively celebrate abortion have just completely closed their hearts off to the truth. They have hardened their hearts. In order to make abortion unthinkable, we need everyone in society to open their hearts to the Holy Spirit and listen to what is placed there in their hearts.

To be a Knight means to stand true to the end. We will continue advocating for life until the very end. We need more heroes in the world. Be a hero! Be a champion for life!

Vivat Jesus!

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*"It is an honor to be a Knight!"*

