

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE WISCONSIN STATE COUNCIL OF THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

VIVAT!

OCTOBER 2026 EDITION

A Quarter Century of Faith & Patriotism



Knights of
Columbus®
Wisconsin
State Council

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October has a way of slowing us down. The maples along the road start turning red and gold. The nights get cooler, and the evenings get shorter. Many of us find ourselves in the backyard around a fire, sweatshirt on, watching the sparks rise and knowing that winter is not far behind. It is a season of beauty, but also a season of preparation.

Part of that preparation happens around the house. The first truly cold night of the year has a way of teaching you where your home is not as sealed as you thought. You feel the draft near the kitchen window. You notice the chill along the bottom of the back door. Suddenly you are walking room to room with a roll of weatherstripping and a tube of caulk, looking for the places where the cold is getting in.

Nobody plans for those gaps. They just show up when the weather changes. And the longer you ignore them, the more they cost you. I have been thinking lately that our councils work the same way.

In every parish and every community across Wisconsin, there are gaps. Some are easy to see. Others only show up when the season changes and the need gets harder to ignore. As the weather turns, those gaps become real for a lot of people in our communities. The vulnerable. The needy. Families working hard and still coming up short. Children who will walk to the bus stop this winter without a warm coat. Students in our Catholic schools whose families are sacrificing to keep them there and wondering how long they can.

Our job as Knights is not to wait for someone to point out the draft. Our job is to walk the house. Go room to room in your own community and ask honestly: Where is the cold getting in? Who is falling through? What need exists here that no one is filling?

The good news is that we already have some of the best tools in the box.

Coats for Kids is about as literal an answer to a cold draft as we have. A new, warm coat for a child who would otherwise go without is a simple thing, but it changes a winter. If your council has not run a Coats for Kids drive in a while, this is the season to bring it back. Talk to your parish school, your local public schools, and your community agencies. They know which children need one.

Food for Families meets another gap that widens as the holidays approach. Food pantries see demand climb in the fall and winter, right when budgets are stretched tightest for families. A council that commits to regular support for a local pantry, whether through funds, food drives, or volunteer hours, is filling a gap that will otherwise stay open.

And do not overlook our Catholic schools. Every council near a parish school should be asking what that school needs this year. Tuition assistance, classroom supplies, volunteers for events, help with a building project. Our schools form the next generation of Catholic families, and many of them are operating with very little margin. That is a gap worth filling.

None of this requires a council to do everything. It requires a council to find something. One gap, clearly identified and faithfully filled, does more good than a long list of good intentions.

So this October, as you sit by the fire and feel that first cold edge in the air, take a moment to think about the gaps in your own community. Then bring that conversation to your next council meeting.

Because where there is a need, there is a Knight. And where there is a Knight, there is a Council ready to answer. ■

Dustin Beth is Head of Content for Vivat! The Official Publication of the Wisconsin State Council of the Knights of Columbus

timely updates. This digital directory will be available to State Officers, Diocese Leadership, District Deputies, Grand Knights, and Financial Secretaries. To ensure secure access, each leader will need to create a login and password on the State website.

I strongly encourage all Brother Knights to visit the State website often. New programs, event updates, training opportunities, and important announcements will be posted regularly—and staying informed helps every council thrive.

Additionally, please follow the Wisconsin Knights of Columbus on Facebook. It is one of our fastest-growing communication channels, offering quick updates, photos, reminders, and highlights from councils across the state.

Together, we continue building a more connected and vibrant Wisconsin jurisdiction—one communication improvement at a time ■ **Ernie Reinhart is State Secretary for the Wisconsin State Council of the Knights of Columbus.**

FORWARD TOGETHER

An earnest invitation.

Make plans now to join Brother Knights, their wives and families and Wisconsin Catholics for our pilgrimage to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion. It is a day set aside for prayer, reflection, fraternity, and renewal at the site of the first and only Church-approved Marian apparition in the United States.

What's the Story?

In 1859, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to Sister Adele Brise in Champion, Wisconsin, entrusting her with a simple but powerful mission: to teach the faith, gather the children, and lead souls closer to Christ. Today, pilgrims continue to come to this holy place to pray, seek intercession, and be reminded of Mary's words: "Go and fear nothing, I will help you."

The Mission of the Order directs us to live our faith and serve our families, parish, community and country. This pilgrimage is an opportunity to step away from the busyness of daily life and spend time at a shrine rooted in faith, courage, and hope. Whether you have visited before or will be making your first trip, you are invited to take part in this grace-filled day.

Pilgrimage Details
Date: Sunday, October 25, 2026
Time: 10:00 a.m.–3:30 p.m.
Location: National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion, Champion Wisconsin
Registration: Open online now at <https://wikofc.org/champion2026>

Register Today

Registration is now open online, and participants are encouraged to sign up early. Reserving your spot helps organizers prepare for the day and ensures you receive any important updates before the pilgrimage.

Invite a friend, family member, or fellow parishioner to come with you. This pilgrimage offers a meaningful way to deepen devotion, grow in faith, and experience the peace of a sacred place close to home. Only in Wisconsin can a Knight find an approved apparition site in the United States.

Don't wait—register online today and be part of this special pilgrimage to Our Lady of Champion.

Thanks to Andy Orgovan, State EFF & Cor Director and team, for organizing this special event.

Vivat Jesus!

Ross Larson is State Deputy of the Wisconsin State Council of the Knights of Columbus.



ArtWork Connect

You might have noticed your District Deputy, Diocesan Director, State Staff, or State Officers with a pin depicting the above artwork.

Each year, the State Deputy is given the opportunity to design a pin which depicts a meaningful representation of a theme or mascot for their jurisdiction.

In his inaugural year, Worthy State Deputy Ross Larson turned to a close source to design his pin: His daughter, Mollie.

We're grateful to God for Mollie and her creativity to create the depiction of our Lady of Champion!

FROM THE STATE SECRETARY:

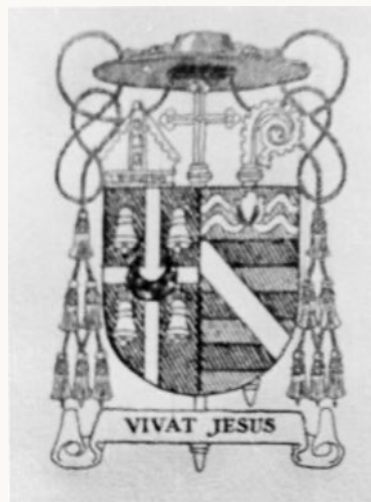


A major advancement this year is the launch of the electronic State Directory, offering improved accuracy, easier access, and

Vivat! and Vivat Jesus!

I really enjoyed reading through the first edition of Vivat! Blessings upon those who are assembling Vivat! as a means of informing the Knights of Columbus here in the great state of Wisconsin!

Years ago, many Catholics had at least a basic formation in the Latin language. After all, until 1965, the Mass was predominately in Latin, along with a scattering of Greek and Hebrew words. Utilizing my own training in Latin, I thought that I would take a few moments to explain the origins and meaning of the word, Vivat! Of course, we should note that the complete expression is "Vivat Jesus!" as I will explain below.



The word *vivat* is a verb. If you looked up this word in a Latin dictionary, you would find a verb containing the following four principle parts: *vivo*, *vivere*, *vixi*, and *victum* (translated: I live, to live, I lived, and having lived, respectfully). The remainder of

the verb is conjugated from these four principle parts.

The indicative present tense includes *vivit*, which means "he, she, or it is living." Thus, "*Vivit Jesus*," means "Jesus lives." or "Jesus is alive." This phrase, in the indicative mood, indicates something that is already in place or something that has already happened. We know that Jesus is, in fact, alive. He was crucified and spent three days in the tomb. He triumphed over death. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father. Jesus is alive; "*Vivit Jesus*." But this is not the same as the phrase, "*Vivat Jesus*."

Let's dive a little deeper into the Latin language. "*Vivat*" is the third person singular of the present subjunctive. There are many ways of translating the subjunctive word *vivat*. Here are a few translations: "He may live," "He should live," "He might live," "He could live," and "Let him live." As you can see, the subjunctive mood expresses a wish, a desire, or an imagined scenario.

With all of this being said, I would like to emphasize that "*Vivat Jesus!*" is a prayer. It is our desire, or our wish: "May Jesus live!" In the course of my research, I discovered that there is a proper response to this prayer. When one person says "*Vivat Jesus!*" the proper response is *Semper* ("Always").

The phrase "*Vivat Jesus!*" originated from St Francis de Sales (1567-1622) and was later adopted as the Episcopal motto of the Most Reverend Charles Greco, Bishop of Alexandria, Louisiana, in 1946.

I invite my brother Knights of Columbus to greet one another with this exchange. One brother says, "*Vivat Jesus!*" and the other replies "*Semper*." This form of exchange helps us to be reminded of our very identity as brothers in Christ working together for the sake of God's kingdom.

*Vivat Jesus! Semper! ■
Peace and good will!*

Rev. D. Joseph Redfern is State Chaplain of the Wisconsin State Council of the Knights of Columbus.



Twenty-Six & In Charge

When the first School Sisters of Notre Dame walked the streets of Milwaukee, the men there jeered. One asked whether they had all lost their husbands, since every one of them wore black.

The woman leading them was 26 years old.

Josepha Friess was born in Bavaria in 1824 and entered the young congregation of the School Sisters of Notre Dame in 1840, taking the name Mary Caroline. In 1847 she crossed the Atlantic with the order's foundress, Blessed Theresa Gerhardinger, to teach the children of German Catholic immigrants. When Mother Theresa returned to Europe the following year, she left the young sister in charge of the American schools.

On December 15, 1850, Mother Caroline arrived in Milwaukee with three sisters and a candidate. Within two weeks they were teaching in a parish school. With money donated by King Louis I of Bavaria, she established the order's first motherhouse in the United States. For 109 years the sisters built their North American work from that corner of the city.

She saw teaching as mission work. Win the heart of a child, she believed, and the child would carry the faith home to the parents. "The purpose of our schools is predominantly missionary work," she wrote.

The work was not safe. Travel meant stagecoaches that broke down at night, lake boats full of rough frontiersmen, and trains halted at collapsed bridges. In 1858, returning from a visit to her sisters in New Orleans, she survived the explosion of her steamship, which killed many aboard. She reached Milwaukee only to learn that yellow fever had broken out at the New Orleans convent and orphanage.

She kept sending sisters anyway. By 1876 they were teaching and caring for children at about 150 missions in Wisconsin and beyond, many of them up and down the Mississippi. The order's own history records that every child was welcome, poor children especially, whatever their origin, religion, or race.



Mother Caroline led the School Sisters in North America for more than four decades, until her death at the Milwaukee motherhouse on July 22, 1892. By then she had built a network of about 200 convents, 2,000 sisters, and 70,000 students. Bishops, pastors, businessmen, and the press credited her with helping make the American parochial school system the largest private school system in the world.

Generations of Wisconsin schoolchildren were taught by the women she formed. **Most of them never knew her name. ■**



ARCHDIOCESE of
MILWAUKEE

Established
November 28, 1843

Archbishop Jeffrey Grob

Diocesan Seat
Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist

Patron Saint
John the Evangelist

Parishes
102

Catholics
509,903

Area
8,070 sq miles

State Officer in Charge
State Secretary Ernie Reinhart

Diocesan Director
Don McInnis

Councils
69

WHERE TO FIND HER: *School Sisters of Notre Dame Cemetery, Elm Grove, WI*



A QUARTER CENTURY OF **FAITH & PATRIOTISM**

By SK Rich Zautcke

For 25 years, I have had the privilege of being a Fourth Degree member of the Knights of Columbus, Our Lady of Holy Hill Assembly 1677, based at Columbian Hall in West Bend, Wisconsin.

When I look back over those 25 years, I realize that the Fourth Degree has been about much more than meetings and officer positions. It has been about faith, patriotism, service, friendship, fellowship, and honoring our Catholic faith and those who have gone before us.

I was exemplified into the Fourth Degree in April 2001. Over the years, I have had the opportunity to serve the Assembly in several positions, including Trustee, Pilot, Captain, Faithful Navigator, and, currently, Faithful Admiral.

I eventually became Faithful Navigator following the sudden death of our Faithful Navigator, Sir Knight Norm Janke, who passed away at Columbian Hall. It was a tremendous shock. I remember that it happened on Hobo Night, and I had just happened to take some pictures of Norm outside Columbian Hall. It was a bright, sunny late afternoon. I never imagined that those pictures would someday become such meaningful memories.

One of my earliest documented years as Navigator was the 2011–2012 fraternal year, and I also served as Navigator during 2014–2015. During those years, I represented Assembly 1677

throughout the community and participated in many of the activities and responsibilities of the Fourth Degree.

Looking back, I feel blessed by the countless opportunities I have had to serve, participate, make friends, and create memories that will stay with me for the rest of my life.

One of the most controversial changes I experienced during my 25-plus years with the Knights of Columbus was the change from the traditional Fourth Degree regalia to the new uniform.

For generations, the Fourth Degree was recognized by its traditional cape, chapeau, tuxedo, sword, and ceremonial appearance. To many Sir Knights, that regalia represented much more than clothing. It represented the history, dignity, tradition, and pageantry of the Patriotic Degree.

In 2017, Supreme leadership announced that the traditional regalia would be replaced by a new, more modern uniform. The reasons given included making the Fourth Degree more accessible to younger members, creating a more versatile uniform, and addressing concerns about membership and the aging of the Fourth Degree.

The new uniform consisted of a navy-blue blazer with Fourth Degree insignia, gray trousers, a Fourth Degree tie, a white shirt, and a black beret. The ceremonial sword remained an important part of Fourth Degree tradition.

The change generated strong feelings among many Sir Knights.

For some members, the issue was not simply whether

one uniform looked better than another. It was about tradition and identity. Some members felt the decision had come quickly and that there should have been more opportunity for the membership to participate in the discussion.

Others were concerned because they had recently spent considerable money purchasing the traditional regalia and now faced the expense of purchasing another uniform.

There were also members who believed the traditional regalia was one of the things that made the Fourth Degree distinctive and memorable. The debate became significant enough that the phrase “Save the Regalia” became part of the public discussion among some members.

Supreme leadership eventually provided financial assistance for certain members who had recently purchased the old regalia, including a \$200 credit for qualifying purchases made after May 1, 2017.

The transition also gave members time to continue using the traditional regalia before the new uniform became the standard.

Looking back on the controversy years later, I understand that the Fourth Degree was trying to balance two important things: respect for its traditions and the need to move forward.

Whatever uniform we wear, the real

meaning of the Fourth Degree is found in how we serve our Church, our communities, our country, and one another.

Some of my most meaningful experiences have involved supporting our Catholic Church and the communities around us.

In 2019, I participated in Coats for Kids at St. Albert Catholic Church in Milwaukee, helping provide warmth and assistance to children in need. Experiences like that reminded me that service is often expressed through simple, practical acts of kindness.

Our Assembly has also remembered deceased Fourth Degree members through memorial Masses. These occasions honor the men who served before us and help keep their memories alive.

The Honor Guard has had the privilege of participating in numerous funerals, standing in respect and solidarity with families during some of the most difficult moments of their lives. Being present during those moments has been both a responsibility and an honor.

We have also participated in priestly ordinations, Eucharistic processions, parish feast days, and other important celebrations of our Catholic faith.

Some of those occasions have taken place at Holy Hill, including the Easter Vigil and special celebrations involving the archbishop.

I especially remember the occasion when Archbishop Jerome Listecki blessed the doors at the entrance of the Basilica at Holy Hill.

Another memorable occasion was when Cardinal Timothy Dolan returned to Holy Hill to celebrate Mass in honor of Holy Hill becoming a minor basilica.

There were also memorable Catholic events at Mother Cabrini Church in West Bend, including the visit of Archbishop Dolan and the presentation of documentation concerning the authority given to him by the Pope to become the next Archbishop of Milwaukee.

The Ten Commandments monument and the monument honoring the unborn at Mother Cabrini are also important parts of our local Catholic history. Archbishop Jerome Listecki also rededicated the altar after the church at Cabrini was remodeled.

I remember the dedication of the statue honoring the unborn in Cedarburg, with Bishop Don Hying presiding. That event was another reminder of the importance of standing for the dignity and sanctity of human life.

Our Assembly has also supported many events at St. Peter Parish in Slinger and St. Lawrence Parish. These included celebrations honoring St. Peter, my mother’s funeral,



and many other parish events dedicated to spreading and strengthening the Catholic faith.

Through all of these experiences, I have seen how the Fourth Degree can support the Church not only through ceremony, but also through presence, service, and fellowship.

The Fourth Degree has always had a special connection to patriotism, and serving with the Honor Guard has given me many opportunities to demonstrate that commitment.

We have participated in parades, including the Memorial Day Parade in Menomonee Falls, Flag Day celebrations, Fourth of July parades in the West Bend area, and events throughout surrounding communities.

We have stood Honor Guard at funerals and memorial services, participated in state conventions of the Knights of Columbus, and taken part in Fourth Degree Exemplifications throughout Wisconsin.

The Honor Guard has also been present for important Catholic celebrations where faith and patriotism come together. Wearing the uniform and carrying the colors is a visible way of showing respect for our Church, our country, and the people who have served both.

The annual Military Appreciation events have been especially meaningful. We have had dinners and guest speakers,

along with opportunities to recognize the men and women who have served our country.

These events remind us that the Fourth Degree is about more than wearing a uniform or participating in a ceremony. It is about showing respect for those who have sacrificed for our country and our freedoms.

Every time we stand at attention, present the colors, or honor a veteran, we help preserve the memory of service and sacrifice for future generations.

Of course, not every memory involved a solemn ceremony.

Alongside the formal occasions, there have been plenty of good times and opportunities to enjoy fellowship with my Brother Knights, our guests, and our many guest speakers.

I remember the Columbus Day parties, the annual Christmas parties, and how those Christmas celebrations have changed over the years.

What once included special meals, music, and dancing has evolved into a more informal party atmosphere.





But the most important part has remained the same: Brother Knights getting together, enjoying one another's company, and building friendships.

There have been countless dinners, speakers, gatherings, conventions, celebrations, and other events over the years. Each one added another memory and strengthened the bonds among us.

And then there were the many little moments that probably meant just as much as the big ones: a conversation before a meeting, a laugh shared during a dinner, a helping hand offered when someone needed it, or simply the pleasure of seeing familiar faces again.

Those ordinary moments are an important part of what makes an Assembly feel like a family.

One of my favorite memories of serving as Faithful Navigator was giving out the door prizes.

Sir Knight Roman Puestow would always look at something I had and say:

"What are you doing, cleaning out your basement?"

I would always tell him,

"No!"

But the truth was, I really was having fun finding things to give away—especially patriotic items and things that I hoped would remind people of the Fourth Degree.

Those moments brought laughter to our gatherings, and I enjoyed seeing people receive something they could take home and remember the Assembly by.

That is one of the things I have enjoyed most about the Fourth Degree. It has given me opportunities to serve, but it has also given me opportunities to make people smile.

The door prizes were small things, but they helped create a spirit of fun and fellowship. Looking back, I realize that those lighthearted moments were just as much a part of our Assembly life as the formal ceremonies and official events.

From my first years as a Fourth Degree member, to serving as Navigator, and now serving as Admiral and continuing to participate in the Honor Guard, attending Masses and Catholic celebrations, supporting veterans and military events,

taking part in parades and funerals, and simply enjoying fellowship with my Brother Knights. It has certainly been quite a ride.

I am grateful for every Brother Knight, priest, seminarian, bishop, archbishop, cardinal, family member, and friend who has been part of this journey.

Each person has contributed something meaningful to these 25 years. Some offered guidance, some shared friendship, some served beside me, and others simply helped make the gatherings and events memorable.

I am especially grateful for the opportunity to represent Our Lady of Holy Hill Assembly 1677 and to serve our Catholic Church, our community, and our country.

After 25 years, I can honestly say: It has been a fun ride. And I hope, God willing, that I will have the opportunity to participate in many more years of Fourth Degree service, friendship, faith, and patriotism.

As I look toward the years ahead, I know there will be new challenges, new Brother Knights, new memories, and new opportunities to serve. But I also know that the foundation built over these past 25 years will always be a part of me.

I am proud to be a Fourth Degree member of Our Lady of Holy Hill Assembly 1677. I am proud to stand with my Brother Knights. And I am grateful for the opportunity to continue serving our Church, our community, and our country. ■

SK Richard Zautcke is a 25 Year Member of the Fourth Degree of the Wisconsin State Council of the Knights of Columbus.

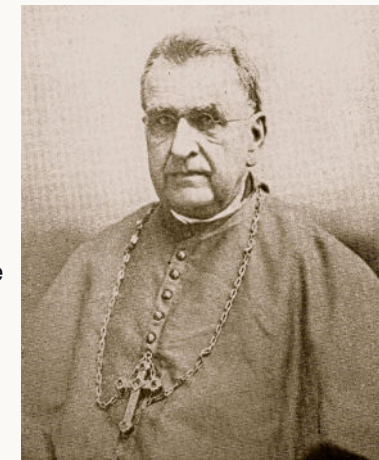


Twenty-Two Priests & Very Little Money

Michael Heiss was confirmed at the age of two. His parents in Bavaria feared that tension between church and state might leave them without a bishop for years, so they did not wait.

He spent the rest of his life building up the Church where it was thinnest.

Born in Pfahldorf in 1818, Heiss studied law at the University of Munich before switching to theology. He was ordained at 22, young enough to need a papal dispensation, and in 1842 sailed for America to pastor German immigrants in Kentucky. Two years later he came to Milwaukee as secretary to Bishop John Martin Henni. He became the first pastor of St. Mary's, the city's German parish, and in 1856 the first rector of St. Francis de Sales Seminary.



In 1868 Pope Pius IX created the Diocese of La Crosse, covering all of Wisconsin north and west of the Wisconsin River, and named Heiss its first bishop. He inherited 22 priests, 23 churches, about 50 mission stations, and a diocese that depended on foreign donations to stay afloat.

He got to work. He laid the cornerstone of St. Joseph Cathedral in 1869. It was dedicated the next year while he was in Rome for the First Vatican Council, where he sat on one of the commissions that prepared its work. He invited the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration to La Crosse, where they built St. Rose of Viterbo Convent and began staffing schools across the diocese. In 1878, with the Ojibwe missions of the far north lacking a resident priest, he offered them to the Franciscan friars of St. Louis, who sent men to Bayfield that fall.

Heiss was an accomplished musician and singer who built a rich tradition of liturgical music in the diocese and promoted it across the country. He was a staunch supporter of workers' rights. He began an annual retreat for his priests.

The numbers tell the rest. During his years in La Crosse, priestly vocations more than tripled, from 18 to 59, and the Catholic population grew from 20,000 to 46,000.

In 1880 he was named coadjutor to Henni, and the next year he succeeded him as Archbishop of Milwaukee. He reduced the archdiocese's debt, created a school board, and pushed for English instruction in parish schools.

He died in La Crosse on March 26, 1890. He was buried at the seminary he had once led, in the chapel he had opened there in 1861.

He started with 22 priests. He left a diocese. ■



DIOCESE of LA CROSSE
Serving the 19 counties of West Central Wisconsin

Established
March 3rd, 1868

Bishop Gerard Battersby

Diocesan Seat
Cathedral of St. Joseph the Workman

Patron Saint
Saint Joseph & Saint Francis of Assisi

Parishes
166

Catholics
156,000

Area
15,078 sq miles

State Office in Charge
State Deputy Ross Larson

Diocesan Director
Scott Fromme

Councils
62

WHERE TO FIND HIM: *Christ King Chapel, Saint Francis de Sales Seminary, St. Francis, WI*

Not a New Program, But Our Founder's Vision



In early September I had the great honor of attending four days of Evangelization and Faith Formation training in New Haven, Connecticut. State EFF Directors and other EFF/Cor leaders came from all over the world to be trained in missionary discipleship and to re-engage with the evangelization mission of our Order.

This notion that we are called as Knights to evangelize and make missionary disciples of Catholic men may seem at first glance to be something "new" to our mission. For example, I have personally heard more than one Knight call the Cor initiative the "latest fad program" by the Order. This attitude is understandable. After all, Knights are known for "putting their faith into action" by our charitable works. Indeed, we are "evangelizing" by helping those in need. And we do that primarily through our FIA programs.

However, the vision that Blessed Fr. Michael McGivney had for the Order was not just to be a fraternity of Catholic men doing good works. It was also to be a fraternity that formed

Catholic men in their faith and equipped them to make other men into missionary disciples of Jesus Christ. You and I are not being called to a new "program." We are being called to "refocus" our mission as Knights on the original vision of our founder, and to see that mission through his eyes, which includes evangelization. The theme of my training in New Haven was: "God wants His world back." May you and I follow the Holy Spirit's lead in making that happen! ■

Andy Orgovan is State Director of Evangelization and Faith Formation for the Wisconsin State Council of the Knights of Columbus.

Who will carry the Fourth Degree Forward?

The future of the Fourth Degree will not be secured by waiting for the next generation of Sir Knights to discover us. It will depend upon whether we recognize them, personally invite them, and give them a meaningful place in our mission.

Across Wisconsin, our assemblies include men with decades of faithful service. They have honored veterans, supported clergy, stood beside grieving families, participated in patriotic observances, and represented the Knights of Columbus with dignity. Their example has built a strong foundation—but no generation can carry the work forever.

Who will carry it forward?

Younger Catholic men are searching for something substantial. They want faith that asks something of them, fraternity that extends beyond a meeting, and opportunities to serve a purpose greater than themselves. The Fourth Degree can offer all three. Our challenge is ensuring that these men understand what the Patriotic Degree truly represents.

Catholic patriotism is not defined by a political party, campaign slogan, or the volume of our opinions. It is formed by faith and grounded in truth. It calls us to love our country while recognizing that our highest allegiance belongs to God. It asks us to defend religious liberty, respect the dignity of every person, honor those who have served, and accept responsibility for the communities in which we live.

This is patriotism with a purpose—and it is a mission worth passing on.

But it will not happen through announcements alone. A bulletin notice may provide information, but a personal invitation tells a man that someone sees something in him. Every Sir Knight should be able to identify at least one Third Degree Knight who would strengthen the Fourth Degree. Speak with him. Explain why you became a Sir Knight. Tell him what the Fourth Degree has meant to you, and then invite him to take the next step.

Our responsibility does not end when a candidate completes the exemplification. A new Sir Knight needs to be welcomed into an active assembly, introduced to its members, and invited to participate in a program or leadership role. This is especially important for college Knights and other younger members whose careers and families may take them to new communities. Wherever they go, an assembly should be ready to receive them.

The Fourth Degree also must be presented as more than the uniform. The Honor Guard remains our most visible expression of service, and we need more men willing to join its ranks. Yet there are many ways to live the Fourth Degree: supporting veterans and active-duty military families, promoting civic responsibility, defending religious liberty, assisting with patriotic programs, serving our parishes, and helping lead our assemblies.

There is a place for every Sir Knight who is willing to serve.

On November 14, the Eastern Wisconsin District will hold a college exemplification at Marquette University. It represents more than another date on the calendar. It is an opportunity to welcome younger Knights into the Fourth Degree and begin forming the men who may lead our assemblies, councils, and districts in the years ahead.

The Western Wisconsin District will also hold an exemplification in Tomah on October 17. Together, these events give Knights across Wisconsin two opportunities to advance to the Patriotic Degree.

The question is not whether the Fourth Degree has a future. It does. The question is whether we will personally prepare the men who must carry it forward.

Identify one Knight. Extend the invitation. Welcome him after the exemplification. Give him something meaningful to do.

That is how we build the next generation of Catholic patriots and ensure that the mission entrusted to us continues. ■

Master Jack Wrbandich - Eastern Wisconsin District

Master Tom Elder - Western Wisconsin District

With Faith and Honor, We Serve.

AT A GLANCE

[ANNOUNCEMENT]

Pilgrimage to Our Lady of Champion: Registration is now open. All Grand Knights have received the link for council members. Lunch Deadline: Register by October 8 if you require lunch at the Shrine. Donations to offset costs are greatly appreciated during registration.

[Link Here](#)

[SURVEY UPDATE]

EFF/Cor Participation: The annual survey closed with 152 out of 294 councils responding (52%). Results and takeaways will be published in a future update.

[RESOURCES]

New Cor Session Guides: Updated guidebooks are available to refresh your monthly parish sessions via the state website. [Link here.](#)

[UPCOMING]

KofC Leaders Formation Days: Missionary discipleship training events are heading to your diocese this fraternal year. Watch future Vivat! articles for exact dates and locations.

Upcoming 4th Degree Exemplifications

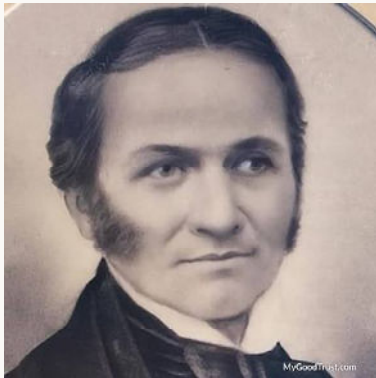
October 17, 2026 — Tomah
Western Wisconsin District
Registration and details: [\[INSERT LINK\]](#)

November 14, 2026 — Marquette University, Milwaukee
Eastern Wisconsin District College Exemplification
Registration and details: [\[INSERT LINK\]](#)



The Village That Walked Out of the Black Forest

In the spring of 1854, a Catholic priest led 113 of his people out of the Black Forest of Baden and across the Atlantic. They sailed on the Feast of Corpus Christi, on two ships. One crossing took 52 days, the other 55. Several of them did not live to reach Wisconsin.



Fr. Ambrose Oswald was 53. Born in 1801 and ordained in 1833, he was an unusual priest: a student of healing herbs, drawn to mysticism, and convinced he had been given a gift of healing. Local doctors called him a quack. The upheaval of the 1848 revolutions persuaded him to build a Catholic colony in America.

He bought 3,840 acres in Manitowoc County at \$3.50 an acre. That August he sent six men ahead. They took a boat from Milwaukee to Manitowoc, went west by oxcart, then cut their way through dense forest until they reached the land on August 27. They named it St. Nazianz, for St. Gregory of Nazianzus. Oswald followed on September 1 with more men.

They built a church by hand, a log building with the priest's quarters below and a chapel above. The first Mass was offered that October.

What followed was one of the most devout and unusual experiments in Wisconsin history. The settlers called themselves the Association. Modeling their life on the first Christians in the Acts of the Apostles, they held everything in common and worked without pay. They gathered daily to pray the Divine Office in German. Celibate men lived in the Loreto Monastery; celibate women lived in a convent the village called the Pink Convent. Within a few years the colony had blacksmiths, masons, weavers, brewers, and mills, and in time a seminary and an orphanage.

From that convent came something lasting. In 1869, five of its women took formal vows and became the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity, whose motherhouse at Silver Lake near Manitowoc still serves the order today.

Oswald died on February 27, 1873, and was buried beneath the altar of the monastery church. The Association did not long survive him. Disputes over his will and his chosen successor ended in court. In 1896 the remaining members handed the property over to the Salvatorians, a young religious order from Rome, who built St. Ambrose Church and ran a seminary there for many years.

His remains now rest in a shrine near the Loreto Chapel in the village his followers carved out of the woods.

The commune did not last. The village, and the sisters, did. ■



Diocese of
Green Bay

Established
March 3rd, 1868

Bishop David Ricken

Diocesan Seat
St. Francis Xavier Cathedral

Patron Saint
Saint Francis Xavier

Parishes
193

Catholics
361,500

Area
10,724 sq miles

State Office in Charge
State Advocate James
Vosters

Diocesan Director
Raymond Berres

Councils
71

WHERE TO FIND HIM: *Oswald shrine near the Loreto Chapel, St. Nazianz*

GO AND DO LIKEWISE: Your state charity raffle at work

The meaning of "Charity" goes a very long way to the average Catholic Christian and even further with the Knights of Columbus. Everything that we do as Knights gives the word a very special meaning, not just in monetary ways but in ways of showing care and respect to our neighbors. Who are our neighbors, you ask? Our Lord made it very clear in the parable of the Good Samaritan: our neighbor is anyone in need, and He tells us, "Go and do likewise" (Luke 10:37). We are called to love our neighbor as ourselves. We do this every day as Knights of Columbus, and as a collective group, the impact is even greater. The Order does a tremendous job of providing charity throughout the year, and that is confirmed by the annual report of our Supreme Knight, Patrick Kelly. If you have not listened to or read the Supreme Knight's Report from this past Supreme Convention, I strongly encourage you to do so. Share his report and the awesome stats presented, and simmer in joy for all the great work that WE do. That "WE" includes you, Brothers.

With the support of very generous people participating in our State Charity Raffle, we are able to provide support to those who are in need. From fires to tornadoes to medical services to seminarian and novice support, the list goes on and on. Some examples of

that generosity:

- \$2,000 to a farmer who was injured in the field due to a mechanical breakdown;
- \$2,000 to a family who lost their home to a fire, with the wife working part-time and the husband on SSI;
- \$3,000 to a retired permanent Deacon who experienced a third relapse of cancer;
- \$2,500 to an active Diocesan Priest who needed to replace vision guidance equipment.

We can't forget about all the emergency fire checks that have gone out to families and individuals in times of immediate need. What a great reminder to all of us that there is a separate charity fund set up for fires! Reach out to me and/or the State Office Administrative Manager for more information and how to apply. Consider also the devastation from the tornadoes in Menasha. We supported those efforts through the State Charity program in partnership with the State Disaster Relief Team.

With the Diocesan Huddle meetings under our belt, the State Charity Raffle tickets are in the hands of the councils. Let's get to work on making this ticket season the best yet for your council and the State overall. Each council needs to put its best effort into the program to make it successful and to make funding available for all!

If your council needs additional tickets, please reach out to your District Deputy. He will have extra tickets on hand. When he is sold out (which is great!), contact your Diocesan Charity Coordinator for more.

Turn-in dates are listed on the Deposit Forms included with the ticket packets. At a minimum, deposits need to be turned in during those periods. However, feel free to send in deposits frequently, especially if your council is larger and sells more tickets. Best accounting practices make it

safe for everyone!

The Individual Charity Grant Request Form has been updated and must be used effective August 1, 2026. Older forms are obsolete and will not be accepted. New forms are available on the state website under "Resources."

Rebate checks have been completed and distributed to those councils that completed their Council Charity Grant Form last May. If your council did not receive a rebate check, either your council did not participate in the program last year or it did not complete the Grant Form. Reach out to me with any concerns on that matter.

Thank you, again, for all the kind support and care your council puts into CHARITY throughout the year, and may God bless you for your generosity! ■

SK Michael Haight is State Raffle Coordinator for the Wisconsin State Council of the Knights of Columbus.



Need Help With Ultrasound Fundraising Campaign?

There is a great pro-life organization out in Yelm, Washinton called 4US. They will help with 25% of the cost of the ultrasound. Yes! Half of your council's obligation! [Here's their website.](#)

We have no Ultrasound Projects going on at this time! Thank you for your support in this area! If you are thinking about heading one up, I have one for you to do in Uganda! Contact me here.

Want to get involved in purchasing a Baby Box for a Milwaukee Firehouse?

Contact Dan Miller, dan.m@prolifewi.org for more information.

ASAP GRANTS

We pray that the month of September left your council's checking account empty after giving away all your money to pregnancy centers in your area. For every \$500 your council or assembly donates to a pregnancy resource center or maternity home (up to \$2,000), the match it with \$100. But, you have to [apply for it!](#) You only need two forms, a Donation Receipt Letter and a [W9](#).

Any pro-life pregnancy center or maternity home can apply for a grant from Choose Life Wisconsin, the Choose Life Plate People! Apply here any time.

You can also purchase Pro-Life license plates. The more plates we have on the road, the more the pro-life message will be shared, and the more money there will be for the Pregnancy Resource Centers. The extra \$25 you pay for the plate is tax deductible if you itemize on Schedule A. More information here. *Vivat Jesus!* ■



Dan Miller is Life Director for the Wisconsin State Council of the Knights of Columbus.

JOIN US: Working&Winning Wisconsin

Join us for an interactive and engaging meal & town hall with Supreme Regional Growth Specialist Bill Chassé in select communities in our jurisdiction. Take a look at the dates on the left and find an event that is near you! **RSVP through your Diocesan Director or District Deputy.**



He Thought They Were Dogs

Somewhere along the Chippewa River, about two in the morning, a Franciscan friar set out alone through the woods with a borrowed lantern. The loggers at one camp had told him another camp lay three miles off, and that if he got there in time the men might give something for his churches.

About a mile in, he noticed a dozen dogs circling him, some ahead, some behind, some running through the trees on either side. Something told him to keep swinging the lantern. He



walked the last two miles that way and stepped inside the camp. A moment later a logger came in from outside and wondered aloud why there were so many wolves around. "Wolves!" said Fr. Casimir Vogt. "I thought they were dogs." The story comes from his fellow friar Chrysostom Verwyst, who set down his memories of the northern missions for the

State Historical Society of Wisconsin in 1916. It is a fair picture of the life.

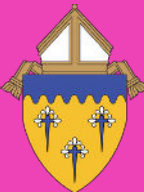
Vogt was born in Germany in 1846 and ordained in 1870. He joined the Franciscans in 1875 and came to America that same year, one of a wave of German friars seeking refuge in the United States. In the summer of 1878, Bishop Michael Heiss of La Crosse offered the friars his Ojibwe missions along Lake Superior, which had gone three years without a resident priest. That October, Vogt, Fr. John Gafron, and Brother Juniper arrived in Bayfield.

From there the friars served nearly fifty white and Native missions across northern Wisconsin. While one stayed in Bayfield, the other set out on a circuit Verwyst put at 400 miles round trip, mostly on foot and on snowshoes in winter, in a worn brown habit he did not change until he got home. They slept in wigwams, log houses, or the open air, and ate what their hosts ate: fish, venison, muskrat, bear.

One spring Vogt tried to cut ten miles through the flooded bottomlands from Big Bend to Flambeau Farm. The water was icy and sometimes over his knees. He climbed a tree to get his bearings, slipped, and hurt himself badly, then vaulted a creek on a long pole and waded on until he arrived. The people there marveled that he had made it at all.

He built as well as traveled. He finished the church at Ashland in 1879. And when the church on Madeline Island that Frederic Baraga had built in 1838 burned in 1901, Vogt built its replacement on the same site the next year. That 1902 church is the one that stands in La Pointe today.

Baraga planted the parish. A German friar made sure it still had a roof. ■



DIOCESE OF
SUPERIOR

Established
May 3rd, 1905

Bishop James Powers

Diocesan Seat
Cathedral of Christ the King

Patron Saint
St. Augustine of Hippo

Parishes
106

Catholics
78,826

Area
15,715 sq miles

State Officer in Charge
State Treasurer Dr. David Kreutz

Diocesan Director
Mark Rasmussen

Councils
40

WHERE TO SEE HIS WORK:
Madeline Island Ferry from Bayfield. St. Joseph's, La Pointe. Confirm Mass times with the Diocese of Superior.



JOIN THE

FATHER MICHAEL McGIVNEY GUILD

Honor His Legacy. Advance His Cause. Strengthen Your Faith.

Blessed Michael J. McGivney gave his life to strengthening families, building parish communities, and bringing hope to those on the margins. By joining the Father McGivney Guild, you can:

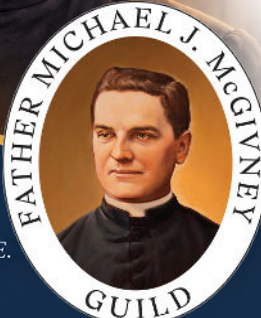
Support his cause for sainthood and pray for his canonization.

Deepen your spiritual life through his intercession.

Publicly witness to our Catholic hope as a member of his spiritual family.

Membership is free and open to all who believe in his mission. Guild members receive inspiring newsletters, spiritual reflections, and invitations to special devotions honoring Blessed McGivney. Let's help make our founder a saint.

A FOUNDER.
A VISION.
A SAINT FOR OUR TIME.



McGivney Guild Chairman
Jack Wrbanich, PSD

16 | OCTOBER 2026

WISCONSIN STATE COUNCIL | 17



The Priest the Irish Called Father Kelly

STATE PROGRAMS

PUNT, PASS, KICK

Council: July 1–September 30, 2026
Results due to DPC by October 1
Diocesan: October 3–October 24, 2026
Results due to State by October 25
State: November 7, 2026

Soccer – Fall

Council: July 1–October 1, 2026
Diocesan: October 3–October 24, 2026
State: NO State Competition (explained at Diocesan Meetings)

Catholic Citizenship Essay Contest

Going multimedia: (explained at Diocesan Meetings)
Write: October 1–November 30, 2026
Councils collect: December 1–December 15, 2026
Judging: December 15–December 31, 2026
Due to FIA Chairman: January 1, 2027
Winners announced: February 1, 2027

Hockey – Only Local Competition

Window: October 1, 2026–May 31, 2027
State: NO State Competition (explained at Diocesan Meetings)

Free Throw

Council: November 23, 2026–March 1, 2027
District: March 5–March 21, 2027
Diocesan: March 22–April 19, 2027
State – TBD (April 24 or May 1, 2027)

Knowledge Contest

Council: December 1, 2026–March 21, 2027
Results due to DPC by March 24, 2027
Diocesan: March 25–April 18, 2027
Reports due FIA Community Director: April 21, 2027
State – TBD (April 24 or May 1, 2027)

Keep Christ in Christmas Poster Contest

Council: December 5–December 31, 2026
Council winners due to DD: January 1, 2027
District winners due to DPC: January 15, 2027
Diocesan winners due to State: February 1, 2027
State winners announced – Feb.–Mar. 2027

Culture of Life Essay

Going multimedia – explained at Diocesan Meetings
Writing: January 1–March 19, 2027
Councils collect and judge: March 27–March 31, 2027
Deadline for Councils to submit to Diocesan level: April 4, 2027
Council Participation Report due: April 15, 2027
Deadline Diocesan winners submitted to State: April 30, 2027
Diocesan winners announced: May 9, 2027
State winners announced: May 16, 2027
Recognition – State Convention

Soccer – Spring

Council: March 1–May 23, 2027
Diocesan: June 5–June 20, 2027
State: NO State Competition (explained at Diocesan Meetings)

Three Months Out:

Mapping the year in programs

By the time you read this we will be into early October. I hope your Councils are well into planning your programs and events ahead of time. Remember, you should be planning 3 months out from your program and/or event date.

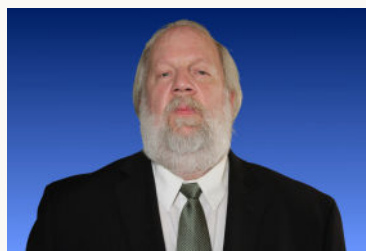
I hope the information on programs that was presented at the Diocesan Meetings was helpful and explained why we made some changes to some of the programs. As always, if you have questions please talk to your DD, DPC, Diocesan Director, FIA Chairman, or me.

Please keep sending in your 10784s after every program and/or event. It is how the State Officers and State Directors know how we are doing as a state and how your Councils are succeeding with your programs and/or events.

In closing, remember strong programs lead to strong membership, and strong membership leads to having more Brother Knights participating in our mission.

May God guide us in all that we do! ■

Scott Frome is State Program Director for the Wisconsin State Council of the Knights of Columbus.



**Knights of
Columbus®**
**Wisconsin
State Council**



DIOCESE of MADISON

Established
January 9th, 1946

Bishop Donald Hying

Diocesan Seat
St. Bernard Catholic Church

Patron Saint
St. Raphael

Parishes
102

Catholics
166,923

Area
8,070 sq miles

State Office in Charge
State Warden Justin Knapp

Diocesan Director
Dale Emmerton

Councils
66

WHERE TO FIND HIM: *St. Patrick's Cemetery and the Mazzuchelli Rectory Museum, Benton, WI*

On a bitterly cold February day in 1864, a 57-year-old priest in Benton, Wisconsin, answered a call to give the Last Rites to a dying parishioner. He did not dress warmly enough for the trip. He came home with pneumonia and died in his rectory about a week later.



He had come a long way to die in a lead-mining town in Lafayette County. Samuel Mazzuchelli was born in Milan in 1806, one of 17 children of a prominent family. He joined the Dominicans at 17, and while still a seminarian answered a plea from the Bishop of Cincinnati for missionaries to the American frontier. His father, unsure he would ever see his son again, asked him to sit for a portrait before he left. He landed in New York in 1828 speaking no English.

Ordained in 1830, he was sent to the far edge of the diocese. In 1831 he reached Green Bay, where he founded St. John the Evangelist, today the longest continuously used church in Wisconsin. He learned the languages of the Menominee and Ho-Chunk well enough to publish texts for them. Then he moved west to the lead country along the Mississippi, where he spent the rest of his life.

The scale of it is hard to take in. He founded more than 30 parishes across Wisconsin, Iowa, and Illinois and served as architect for several of their buildings. When the Wisconsin Territory was organized in 1836, its overwhelmingly Protestant legislature chose this Italian friar as its first chaplain. He named the streets of Shullsburg after virtues: Faith, Charity, Mercy, Truth. His Irish parishioners called him Father Matthew Kelly.

In 1844 he bought Sinsinawa Mound, and there he founded a college for men and a community of women religious, the Sinsinawa Dominican Sisters. Their academy for young women became Dominican University outside Chicago. The sisters still keep their motherhouse on the Mound.

He was not a comfortable preacher. Invited to Galena in 1863 to give a Thanksgiving sermon for the Union victory at Vicksburg, he instead condemned the national pride that had led to the war. The congregation was shocked.

In 1852 he built St. Patrick's in Benton and stayed on as its pastor until the end. He is buried in the cemetery beside the church, and his rectory is now a museum.

A century after his death, the Diocese of Madison opened his cause for sainthood. In 1993 Pope John Paul II declared him Venerable. One approved miracle would make him Blessed.

This October, as the country marks Italian-American Heritage Month, Wisconsin Catholics have one of their own to remember: a Milanese friar who built much of the Church in this corner of the Midwest, and who died, as he had lived, on the road to someone who needed a priest. ■



**Knights of
Columbus®**
Wisconsin
State Council

INTRODUCING: OUR NEWEST PROGRAM

Wisconsin's newest program: A very special Christmas

- Qualifying Faith in Action Program
- Applicable for Charity Raffle Grant dollars!
- Makes for a great Christmas Fundraiser Program.

Support a Family in Need
Partner with your Parish Priests
Promote Family & Unity

- Meet with your priest to identify a family experiencing need.
- Ask Father for anonymous details only: ages, gender, needs, and wishes.
- Include gifts for children & parents. *Remember, parents often go without.*
- Plan for food support including Christmas dinner and additional meals while children are off at school.
- Coordinate a drop-off location and time with Father
- Ask Father to deliver gifts and meals to family.
- Always respect the privacy of the family and the anonymity of giving.

Don't Be a Blueberry

Growing up, my brother and I liked to watch VeggieTales. We loved the colorful and memorable characters and the many catchy songs. The episode that stood out to me this month was the one when they visited a woman by the name of Madame Blueberry, a single woman who thought the solution to her unhappiness was to buy more and more things.

When a local Costco—I mean, Stuff Mart—opens up, a duo of cunning salesmen convince her to go and buy all this stuff she didn't need. Ultimately, the amount of stuff she got was too much for her tree house to bear and she lost it all. I'm sure the theme of my brief monthly column is abundantly clear: Don't live in a treehouse.

Sorry.

No, what I am saying is that it is important to take stock of the things in life that you truly need. Material items are

nice, but they are not everything. Those with everything and those with nothing will all lose everything at some point. What do you want to leave behind when your time on this globe is up?

In the meantime, be thankful for the things you do have. Spend your time focusing on the things that are truly important. Your reward in heaven will be infinitely greater than anything you can get here on Earth.

Don't be a blueberry. ■

Joshua Hopper is Editor of Vivat! the Official Publication of the Wisconsin State Council of the Knights of Columbus.



Do you wish to submit a column, recommend a news story, or propose a story?

- Email the content team at publication@wikofc.org with your idea, news story, press release OR use our virtual submission form, www.wikofc.org/badgerbulletin.
- Articles must be submitted by the **15th of the month** to be considered for the next month's publication.

HELP WANTED: Join the State Training Team

GREEN BAY DIOCESE

TRAINING COORDINATOR

FINANCIAL SECRETARY
TRAINER

MADISON DIOCESE

FINANCIAL SECRETARY
TRAINER

SUPERIOR DIOCESE

FINANCIAL SECRETARY
TRAINER

LACROSSE DIOCESE

TRAINING COORDINATOR

MILWAUKEE ARCHDIOCESE

FINANCIAL SECRETARY
TRAINER

To learn more about the State Training Office, visit www.wikofc.org/training or reach out to Pat Reiff, State Training Director.



Knights of Columbus® Wisconsin State Council

The Back Cover Artwork:

In a recent visit to the Canary Islands, Spain, Pope Leo XIV was handed a child to offer his apostolic blessing. As we think about the role children play in our lives, in our families, at our parishes, and at the heart of the work Blessed Father McGivney started - it should create great joy within us. Let us continue to be great champions for the family, for life, and for the foundation at the heart of everything we do: building for His glory!