

A Christian Education Series



Twenty Second Edition

Alberta/Northwest Territories State Council
KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

**THE FORMATION
PROGRAMME**

2007—2008

“CARING & SHARING”



WHO DO YOU THINK I AM?

THE FORMATION PROGRAM

HOW IT WORKS

The Formation Program, now in its 22nd year, is offered to all councils in the State of Iowa. It is in no way imposed as “official”. Its purpose is to ensure a balance between Knights of Columbus good works and faith, since the former if not nourished by prayerful reflection, can become just another social justice program with little relation to Christ or membership of the people of God.

CHOOSING THE TOPIC FOR THE YEAR

Our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, wrote lately a book “Jesus of Nazareth.” The 1st German Edition was sold out in one day. If the spiritual impact is as deep as the sale successful we all could thank the Lord for it.

The purpose of the book is a personal look at Jesus as shown in certain situations, in the New Testament and the Pope’s personal response to it, what I propose for this Year’s Formation Program is applied the same way. To ask the question: Who do I believe Christ is?

There will be more questions asked, but we all should give our honest answer. If Christ would ask us, like he asked Peter. Who do you think I am? What would you say?

KEYS TO SUCCESS

First, each Council must take ownership of its own program.

Second, a few enthusiastic leaders in each Council (not the Grand Knight or Chaplain) should familiarize themselves with the program and the theme for the discussion the night of the meeting. They can then be responsible for distribution of sufficient copies to members, lead the readings and, when necessary lead or support the sharing and reflection. It may take a little work to get started but the effort is worth it. Many Councils

in our Jurisdiction for years have enjoyed this spiritual component to their busy agenda and welcome the opportunity to learn at each meeting something new about the Catholic Faith. In these days when as *Christi-fideles Laici*, Knights of Columbus often have to stand up and be counted in discussions on controversial issues regarding faith, morals and common decency. The Program, if followed faithfully, may help in doing so.



Prayer of St. Teresa of Avila

Let nothing disturb you. Let nothing frighten you. All things pass. God does not change. Patience achieves everything. Whoever has God lacks nothing. God alone suffices.

Christ has no body now on earth but yours; no hands but yours; no feet but yours. Yours are the eyes through which the compassion of Christ must look out on the world.

Yours are the feet with which he is to go about doing good. Yours are the hands with which he is to bless his people.



STUDY-THEME FOR THE YEAR

WHO DO YOU THINK I AM?

STUDY GUIDE

September	2007	Jesus, Question of his Identity
October	2007	Jesus in his Baptism
November	2007	Jesus being Tempted in the Desert
December	2007	Jesus the Proclaimer of the Kingdom of God
January	2008	Jesus the Proclaimer of the Beatitudes
February	2008	Jesus the Proclaimer of the New Law
March	2008	Jesus the Teacher of Prayer
April	2008	Jesus the Teacher of the Father's Grace
May	2008	Jesus the Beloved Son of the Father
June	2008	Jesus' Identity

THE FORMATION PROGRAM

The Knights of Columbus Formation Program is designed to help us strike a practical balance between faith and good works in our service-oriented projects. These latter, unless continuously nourished by prayer and reflection, can and sometimes do, degenerate into mere humanitarian service divorced from God or any spiritual motivation.

PRACTICAL DIRECTIONS FOR THE PROGRAM

- The program is printed on Quarto sized sheets so that individual pages or the whole program can be easily photocopied for members.
- All present should have copies of the text for the night's Formation Session.
- The Program leader should be appointed at the beginning of the Council Meeting not at the beginning of the Formation Session. Not to be prepared, is to be prepared to fail.
- The Formation Session should be given a regular time-slot in the Council Meeting's agenda.
- The Session should be neither skimmed nor unduly prolonged.
- A 10-minute time-slot maybe sufficient.
- All should join the Opening and Closing Prayers.
- The Period for Silent Reflection should be no more than one minute. The Sharing of Reflections by Council members should keep to the topic of the evening.
- The Session might end with the Chaplain's remarks before the Program's Closing Prayer.

September 2007 Meeting

Jesus, the Question of his Identity

Opening Prayer

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Reading

(To be read by the Leader)

When Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter said in reply, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus said to him in reply, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father. And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Then he strictly ordered his disciples to tell no one that he was the Messiah.

(Matthew 16, 13-20)

The Reflection

(To be read by the leader)

The question which Jesus addresses to his disciples is simple and receives a simple answer by Peter you are the messiah, the Christ. Other people had different answers; a prophet, Elijah who was suppose to announce the coming of the messiah. John the Baptist who did announce his coming or Jeremiah, the prophet of suffering, but Jesus does not want to hear what others believe, he wants to have a statement of their faith. The Pope, in his book "Jesus the Nazareth" asks himself this question and by the size of the book, and there is another to follow, we recognize that our reflection on the identity of Jesus is more complicated when we really reflect on the question.

What is our answer? And here we cannot hide behind the answer of Peter. We cannot say. "I believe the same as my wife." I could say "I believe what the church believes, what the

Methodist down the street believes, what the Anglican or Lutheran believes. I have to answer this question with my personal individual response as a Catholic man, who do I really believe Jesus is? Certainly my answer will be guided by my faith but this faith has to be reflected by my intellect. Think, meditate, pray.

Some fundamentalistic Churches ask their members. Do you accept Christ as your personal savior? We all believe that Jesus saves all who do not reject his salvation. But do I thank Jesus that he saved me as an individual. A favourite hymn of funerals is Amazing Grace and everybody sings with a deep sigh" who saved a wretch like me." Do we believe that when we sing it?

Let us take these questions home. We cannot solve those in a council or assembly meeting. Who is Christ for me? Write your personal answer down.

Meditation Period

(The leader now invites the members to spend a few moments in silent reflection as the above text is not meant to be a ready-made answer but a starter for personal reflection on the theme)

Fraternal Sharing

(The leader now invites the members to share with their Brother Knights any relevant thoughts that came to them during the meditation period.)

Closing Prayer

(Recited by all)

Let us pray. Lord, you gave your apostle Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven, entrusting him with supreme power to bind and to loose, because he acknowledged you as the savior of the living God. By the help of his prayer fill us from the bonds of our sins. We grant this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

October 2007 Meeting Jesus in his Baptism

Opening Prayer

**In the name of the Father and of the Son and
of the Holy Spirit. Amen**

The Reading

(to be read by the Leader)

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. John tried to prevent him saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?" Jesus said to him in reply, "Allow it now for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed him. After Jesus was baptized, he came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened [for him], and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove [and] coming upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

(Matthew 3, 13-17)

The Reflection

(to be read by the leader)

Jesus who is without sin comes to John's baptism, which was given as a cleansing sign (water) to show externally the inner conversion of the baptized. As his dispute with John shows Christ was not in need of conversion, because he had never turned away from God. Jesus wanted to be baptized for righteousness sake. Righteousness means man's answer to the law (Torah). But here as the Pope explains: "this yes the entire will of God also expresses solidarity with men, who have incurred guilt but yearn for righteousness."(p.17)

Christ's kenosis (emptying) goes down to the level of sinners he then goes through the baptismal ritual in anticipation of his death and then is proclaimed the Father's beloved son in anticipation of his resurrection. How do we see Christ in his baptism? Completely dedicated to the Law of God. Accept death for the salvation of humanity and therefore being the beloved child of the father who surrounds his obedient son with the love of the Spirit. The statement

which is being made about Christ is simply that he is the Son of God.

When we reflect upon our own baptism, if we received it as adults or as children, we immediately think of "forgiveness of sins" and so the sacrament of reconciliation is for us "a second baptism" as the Early Church Fathers used to call penance. Are we aware of the many signs in the ritual which connect us with Christ: the oil (Messiah = the anointed one, the water (death and cleansing), the baptismal candle (Christ in his resurrection).

Do we believe that through baptism in Christ we have become the beloved children of the Father? Do we remember our day of baptism? Those of our children? Do we celebrate those of at least on our namesday: The day on which we remember the saint whose name was given us in baptism, for veneration and imitation? Let us renew our belief that in baptism we have become brothers and sisters of Christ, God's beloved family.

Meditation Period

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Fraternal Sharing

(The leader now invites the members to share with their Brother Knights any relevant thoughts that came to them during the meditation period.)

Closing Prayer

(Recited by all)

Let us pray. Heavenly, eternal God, when the Spirit descended upon Jesus at his baptism in the Jordan you revealed him as his own beloved Son keep us, your children born of water and the Spirit, faithful to our calling. We ask this through Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

November 2007 Meeting

Jesus Being Tempted in the Desert

Opening Prayer

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Reading

(to be read by the Leader)

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was hungry. The tempter approached and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread." He said in reply, "It is written: 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.' "

Then the devil took him to the holy city, and made him stand on the parapet of the temple, and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and with their hands they will support you, lest you dash your foot against a stone."

Jesus answered him, "Again it is written, and 'You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.'" Then the devil took him up to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in their magnificence, and he said to him, "All these I shall give to you will prostrate yourself and worship me." At this, Jesus said to him, "Get away, Satan! It is written: 'The Lord, your God shall you worship and him alone shall you serve.' " then the devil left him and, behold, angels came and ministered to him.

(Matthew 4, 1-11)

The Reflection

(to be read by the leader)

There have been many good sermons written for the First Sunday of Lent when we listen to this gospel pericope as a kind of introduction to our Lent. The devil shows himself in the academic robes of a theologian quoting scripture galore. Twice he calls Christ "If you are the Son of God." Son of God although iffy. The Pope in meditation points out the similar words of the bystander on the cross "If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross" (Mt. 27, 40)

We see that Christ's relationship to God is questioned. The words of the baptism still echo in his ears; My son, the beloved, this Christ who is tempted as we are shows himself completely dedicated to the Father here and on the cross. Do we today believe that Christ can give us the grace to dedicate ourselves so completely to God like Christ? The Pope makes a very astute observation he writes, "Do we really know Jesus at all?" Do we not have to make an effort, today as always, to get to know him all over again? The tempter is not so crude as to suggest to us directly that we should worship the devil. He merely suggests that we opt for the reasonable decision, that we give priority to a planned and thoroughly organized world, where God may have his place as a private concern but must not interfere in our essential purpose. Soloviev (Russian Author) attributes to the Antichrist a book entitled "The Open Way of World Peace and Welfare."(page 41)

Certainly as Christ's temptations are all about God, so are our temptations today? What is my major temptation to keep God out of marriage. to keep God out of politics, to keep God out of my personal life. Secularization of life is the great temptation. May we learn like Christ to bring God into the World and our everyday life.

Meditation Period

(The leader now invites the members to spend a few moments in silent reflection as the above text is not meant to be a ready-made answer but a starter for personal reflection on the theme)

Fraternal Sharing

(The leader now invites the members to share with their Brother Knights any relevant thoughts that came to them during the meditation period.)

Closing Prayer

(Recited by all)

Let us pray. Almighty God, our hope and our strength without you we falter. Help us to follow Christ and to live according to your will. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

December 2007 Meeting

Jesus the Proclaimer of the Kingdom of God

Opening Prayer

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Reading

(to be read by the Leader)

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news of him spread throughout the whole region. He taught in their synagogues and was praised by all. He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the Sabbath day. He stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord." Rolling up the scroll, he handed it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at him. He said to them, "Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing." And all spoke highly of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They also asked, "Isn't this the son of Joseph?"

(Luke 4, 14-22)

The Reflection

(to be read by the leader)

What we have heard in this Gospel Message is the proclamation of the gospel that the prophecy of Isaiah had been fulfilled. The word gospel, sometimes translated as Good News, is the English word for the latin Evangelium which was originally a statement of the Roman emperor who as the Pope says, "Understood themselves as Lords, saviors, redeemers of the World."(pg. 46). We see how these titles were easily applied to Christ and his message called Evangelium.

His gracious words in the synagogue were part of his proclamation of the Kingdom of God a term which is used 122 times in the New Testament. The kingdom is present and at the same time something in the future (cf. the

kingdom parables) Christ points out that in him the kingdom is present therefore we have to search for him to gain this kingdom, and as closer as we are united with Christ, the more we are a part of this kingdom. When the apostles after the resurrection of Christ did not preach much about the kingdom they knew that preaching the risen Christ was preaching the Kingdom of God before Christ's death and resurrection they had expected the re-establishing of the Kingdom of Israel certainly as a theocratic state, but Jesus had to teach them a different kingdom a new, universal and all encompassing kingdom in which everyone could find salvation.

How is my membership in this kingdom? Do I see the Catholic Church as an institution in which the kingdom subsists? Do I think all religions are equal? Am I and active member in the kingdom or only a piece of fleetwood carried around by the river of life? Decide who you want to be! Accept the kingdom.

Meditation Period

(The leader now invites the members to spend a few moments in silent reflection as the above text is not meant to be a ready-made answer but a starter for personal reflection on the theme)

Fraternal Sharing

(The leader now invites the members to share with their Brother Knights any relevant thoughts that came to them during the meditation period.)

Closing Prayer

(Recited by all)

Let us pray. Father, let the light of your truth guide us to your kingdom through a world filled with lights contrary to your own. Christian is the name and the gospel we glory in. May your love make us what you have called us to be. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

January 2008 Meeting

Jesus the Proclaimer of the Beatitudes

Opening Prayer

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Reading

(to be read by the Leader)

He began to teach them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you [falsely] because of me.

(Matthew 5, 2-11)

The Reflection

(to be read by the leader)

Like Moses brought the law to the Israelites so Jesus proclaims the new dimension of the Law. He sits down to teach his disciples, on the mountain. He is sitting on the Cathedra of Moses, a new Moses. But the beatitudes are not new commandments they are words of solace, of consolation, peace and quoting the Pope: "Jesus brings joy into the midst of affliction." (pg. 72) He is not only teaching he is healing the human condition.

The beatitudes are certainly statements what it really means to follow into the footsteps of Christ, to imitate his life. The Pope points out that the beatitudes unveil a portrait of his own inner life (cf pg. 74 sequ) He is the poor (no home or riches), he is meek, he is the peacemaker, he suffers for righteousness sake.

What does that mean for me? The closer I am to Christ the closer I participate in these blessings. This is true discipleship.

But the Poor in Spirit are also referring to the anawim, the poor of the Lord and there is a whole theology, a piety of the poor. They consider themselves the true remnant of Israel. In the infant narratives of Luke (chpts 1&2), John the Baptist and his parents, Mary, Joseph, the Shepherds, Simeon and Hannah in the Temple. They were the poor in spirit. The Pope quotes a statement of St. Thérèse of Lisieux which perfectly describes this attitude and we should try to imitate her" They come with empty hands; not with hands that grasp and clutch, but with hands that open and give, and thus are ready to receive from God's bountiful goodness." (pg.76) We have the great examples throughout the history of the Church from Anthony, , the hermit over St. Francis of Assisi to Mother Theresa. Where do I fit in?

Meditation Period

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Fraternal Sharing

(The leader now invites the members to share with their Brother Knights any relevant thoughts that came to them during the meditation period.)

Closing Prayer

(Recited by all)

Let us pray. Father, help us to seek the values that will bring us lasting joy in this changing world. In our desire of what you promise make us one in mind and heart. Grant this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

February 2008 Meeting

Jesus the Proclaimer of the New Law

Opening Prayer

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Reading

(to be read by the Leader)

Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. Amen, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven. I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven

(Matthew: 5, 17-20)

The Reflection

(to be read by the leader)

While the beatitudes show us Christ as the perfect servant of God the second part of the sermon on the mount show as Jesus as the new Moses who not only explains the old Law in new and exacting ways but also gives his own law. "You have heard that it was said to those of ancient time. But I say to you." (Mt 5, 21,22) Straight forward How willing are we to except the Law of Christ? Do we accept the ten commandments in the Old Testament as the basis for our moral behaviour? Jesus was crucified and died under the punishment of blaspheming, because he made himself God. This was the judgement of the High Priest.

Here we can recognize that he is the Son of God who fulfills and wants everybody to fulfill the Law. But then he wants more, to go beyond the physical action. Death can be inflicted by physically killing, by word of mouth, by how we look at others. Every

transgression begins in the mind and heart before it is acted out and so Jesus invites us to control our mind and senses to avoid evil-doing as the Apostle Paul tells us "the Law of Christ makes you free (Of Galatians). "Freedom from sin is Christ's desire for us. Perfection, being holy is the aim of Christ's Law" Be perfect as your father (God) in heaven is perfect." (Mt. 5, 48). We all know that our striving for holiness is subject to all the pitfalls of our human weakness and Christ knows this but still he asks us to go for it. Why? Because he wants to help us as our brother, to walk with us, remember the poem "Footprints": he walks with us and he carries us. He sends us the Holy Spirit, the advocate, who teaches us everything, who assists us in our problems. What is your decision: Do you want to be perfect and run your own life in the freedom of Christ? Or do you want to let life run you in slavery and you will become the least in the kingdom of heaven?

Meditation Period

(The leader now invites the members to spend a few moments in silent reflection as the above text is not meant to be a ready-made answer but a starter for personal reflection on the theme)

Fraternal Sharing

(The leader now invites the members to share with their Brother Knights any relevant thoughts that came to them during the meditation period.)

Closing Prayer

(Recited by all)

Let us pray. Father in the rising of your Son, death gives birth to new life. The sufferings he endured restored hope to a fallen world,. Let sin never ensnare us with empty promises of passing joy. Make us one with you always, so that our joy may be holy, and our love may give life. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

March 2008 Meeting Jesus the Teacher of Prayer

Opening Prayer

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Reading

(to be read by the Leader)

In praying, do not babble like the pagans, who think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them. Your Father knows what you need before you ask him. "This is how you pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and do not subject us to the final test, but deliver us from the evil one."

(Matthew 6, 7-13)

The Reflection

(to be read by the leader)

"If being human is all about relating to God, then prayer as speaking and listening to God is an essential part of it." (p. 128) Most spiritual writers would certainly agree with the Pope and their constant dealing with prayer and particularly the Our Father has filled pages over pages. The Catechism of the Catholic Church when it deals with prayer expands on the Our Father. The Our Father is a short prayer to the point as the Pope says "The other false form of prayer the Lord warns us against is the chatter, the verbiage, that smothers the spirit." (p. 129) It seems to be very masculine a few words to connect with God. How often do we pray the Our Father? I count at least 8 times a day. But often we feel that it has not the effect it should have, because we are too much distracted or our heart is not open to submit to God. The Pope advises us again; "The first thing we must do is step outside ourselves and open ourselves to God. Nothing can turn out right if our relation to God is not rightly ordered. For this reason the Our Father begins with God and then, from that

starting point, shows us the way towards being human." (p. 134)

- Our Father – God has us all created individually – we are unique
- Hallowed be thy name – Man may misuse God's name
- Thy kingdom come – May you become the true ruler of all nations
- Thy will be done – How do we recognize God's will in our personal life? Meditation
- Our daily bread – In the last analysis a gift for God, even when it comes from man's labour.
- Mutual forgiveness – God is always ready, are we?
- Help & deliverance in temptation – God does not tempt but he wants us to deal with temptation as Jesus did.

May the Our Father always be our best prayer because it comes from God himself. (cf. St. Cyprian).

Meditation Period

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Fraternal Sharing

(The leader now invites the members to share with their Brother Knights any relevant thoughts that came to them during the meditation period.)

Closing Prayer

(Recited by all)

Let us pray. Father of everlasting goodness, our origin and guide, be close to us and hear the prayers of all who praise you. Forgive our sins and restore us to life. Keep us safe in your love. Grant this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

April 2008 Meeting Jesus the Teacher of the Father's Grace

Opening Prayer

**In the name of the Father and of the Son and
of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

The Reading

(to be read by the Leader)

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and everyone that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit. You are already pruned because of the word that I spoke to you. Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear fruit, because without me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my father's commandments and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy might be in you and your joy might be complete.

(John 15, 1-11)

The Reflection

(to be read by the leader)

The story of the vine is already a parable in the Old Testament to signify the people of Israel. In Jesus' discourse the vine is not Israel anymore but Jesus "I am the true vine". Jesus has entered the vine, became man, and identifies himself with the new Israel. What this vine and all people connected with Christ need is purification – "The Church and the individual need constant purification," (p. 260) Renewal is painful. If the vine grows wild it becomes useless. Christ has cleansed his disciples by his word. Do we feel when we hear the words of God that we are cleansed? We do not hear it but the priest says silently after the reading of the Gospel, "May the

words of the Gospel wipe away our sins." (Roman sacramentary) "Abide in me", vine and branches have to be one. Again Christ is the channel of the Father's love. But the love Christ refers to is expressed in the disciples obedience to his commandments. Fulfilling a command means that I do the will of someone else, a reaction of a friend, a lover who wants to do what pleases the other, rather oneself. And at the end all these experiences become pure joy.

This is the great experience of a God who gives us grace and fruitfulness in our lives. As Jesus went through his Father's pruning in his suffering and death to come into the joy of the resurrection, so we to have to go through suffering, pain and the pruning of our senses to reach the final joy in union with the father, son and spirit. Ask yourself am I ready to be pruned; to get sick, to lose a loved one wife, child, parent, brother or sister, friend? Am I ready to be despised, suffer social setbacks, lose my job, don't get the position in the council or assembly which I wanted? There are more: Pick your own.

Meditation Period

(The leader now invites the members to spend a few moments in silent reflection as the above text is not meant to be a ready-made answer but a starter for personal reflection on the theme)

Fraternal Sharing

(The leader now invites the members to share with their Brother Knights any relevant thoughts that came to them during the meditation period.)

Closing Prayer

(Recited by all)

Let us pray. Father in heaven, ever-living source of all that is good, from the beginning of time you promised us salvation by the coming of you son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Help us to drink of his truth and expand our hearts with joy of his promises, so that we may serve you in faith and love and know forever the joy of your presence. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

May 2008 Meeting

Jesus the Beloved Son of the Father

Opening Prayer

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Reading

(to be read by the Leader)

After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no fuller on earth could bleach them. Then Elijah appeared to them along with Moses, and they were conversing with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here! Let us make three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." He hardly knew what to say, they were so terrified. Then a cloud came, casting a shadow over them; then from the cloud came a voice, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him." Suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone but Jesus alone with them.

(Mark 9, 2-8)

The Reflection

(to be read by the leader)

Six days later, ie. After Peter's answer as to the identity of Christ, which we have considered last September as the opening reflection. Now six days later the Transfiguration. In between Jesus had told them about his passion and that discipleship meant losing one's life. Experts have speculated that Peter's confession and the transfiguration might have coincided with the Jewish Feast of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles. On the Feast of Atonement (Yom Kippur) the high priest would pronounce God's name Yahweh which was usually read as Adoni, the Lord. This certainly would give new meaning to Peter's confession of Jesus being the Christ, connecting the Feast of Tabernacles with the transfiguration would explain Peter's words "Let us build three dwellings." (cf. 306 sequ) To connect the life of Christ with the calendar of the Jewish festivals is quite acceptable, because they are always mentioned in the Gospels. The place is a mountain, like Mt. Sinai where God appears

to Moses. Here Jesus appears in his glorified state while at prayer (cf. Luke 9, 29). People have noticed that when they look at people in prayer they look different. The law and the prophets represented by Moses and Elijah indicate that the whole history and life of the people of Israel leads up to Christ who will suffer, die and be resurrected for the fulfillment of all of Israel's expectations. The disciples although they feel good they are at the same time terrified. Like Moses speaks with God and builds the Tent in which God lives in a cloud. Maybe Peter wanted the Lord to live in this new tent, to be always present. Then comes God's voice "This is my beloved Son, Listen to him."

Do we listen for God's beloved son? Do we not rather listen to the voices of others, for our own voices? Do we expect the fulfillment of the world from Jesus or have we given up on his kingdom? Let us try to answer for ourselves all these questions and recognize that we too have become the beloved children of the Father.

Meditation Period

(The leader now invites the members to spend a few moments in silent reflection as the above text is not meant to be a ready-made answer but a starter for personal reflection on the theme)

Fraternal Sharing

(The leader now invites the members to share with their Brother Knights any relevant thoughts that came to them during the meditation period.)

Closing Prayer

(Recited by all)

Let us pray. Father of light, in you is found no shadow of change but only the fullness of life and limitless truth. Open our hearts for the voice of your word and free us from the original darkness that shadows our vision. Restore our sight that we may look upon your Son who calls us to change of heart for he lives with you forever and ever. Amen.

June 2008 Meeting Jesus' Identity

Opening Prayer

**In the name of the Father and of the Son and
of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

The Reading

(to be read by the Leader)

When the ten heard this, they became indignant at James and John. Jesus summoned them and said to them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you, Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

(Mark 10, 41-45)

The Reflection

(to be read by the leader)

Christ often called himself the son of man and one wonders what that really means. We have no trouble if he is called the Son of God, but this Son of man. We find this expression first in the Old Testament in the visions of Daniel. After the beasts "with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man. And to him was given dominion (Daniel 7:13) A new kingdom dawns, the beasts are changed by the son of man who makes them human, a new humanity. Jesus could certainly build on this image of Daniel. Jesus, the son of man, is also the Great Judge and here again he becomes the poor and downtrodden humanity who is either helped or not by the people to be judged "What you did to them you did to me." Jesus and the Judge are the same. The suffering Jesus is the same who comes in glory. The kenosis (self emptying) of the son of God to the son of man reverses itself in his resurrection and returns to glory. After he became man he brought true humanity into the

world. Jesus is God and man. Two natures in one person. So we come through the scriptures to the dogmatic statement of the creed "We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God.... For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven and was made **Man**" and we have asked many questions. We might pose many more. We have used the guidance of the Holy Father how he has tackled that question as a Catholic and a theologian. But we have to give our own answer, as Catholic men, as Knights of Columbus, as married or single men, as lay, priest or religious. Who do you say I am?

I hope through these meditations that our love and friendship with Christ, true God and true man is renewed and strengthened. That through actions as friends of Christ we change the world of strife to a world of peace: The kingdom of God.

Vivat Jesus!

Meditation Period

(The leader now invites the members to spend a few moments in silent reflection as the above text is not meant to be a ready-made answer but a starter for personal reflection on the theme)

Fraternal Sharing

(The leader now invites the members to share with their Brother Knights any relevant thoughts that came to them during the meditation period.)

Closing Prayer

(Recited by all)

Let us pray: Lord our God, all truth is from you, and you alone bring oneness of heart. Give your people the joy of hearing your word in every sound and of longing for your presence more than for life itself. May the attractions of a changing world serve only to bring us peace of your kingdom which this world does not give. Grant this through Christ our Lord.

Amen

Prayer for the Canonization of Father Michael J. McGivney

God, our Father, protector of the poor and defender of the widow and orphan, you called your priest, Father Michael J. McGivney, to be an apostle of Christian family life and to lead the young to the generous service of their neighbor. Through the example of his life and virtue may we follow your Son, Jesus Christ, more closely, fulfilling his commandment of charity and building up his Body which is the Church. Let the inspiration of your servant prompt us to greater confidence in your love so that we may continue his work of caring for the needy and the outcast. We humbly ask that you glorify your servant Father Michael J. McGivney on earth according to the design of your holy will. Through his intercession, grant the favor I now present (*here make your request*). Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Father Hail Mary Glory be to the Father



Please Report All Favors Received:
The Father McGivney Guild
One Columbus Plaza
New Haven, CT 06510-3326 U.S.A.

Vocation Prayer

Loving God, source of life and goodness, we rejoice in the gift of your Son, who dwells constantly in our midst, revealing to us the splendor of your love. We pray that you will call to your service faithful followers of Jesus, who will offer themselves to the ordained ministry and consecrated life. Imbued with your love and mercy, may they offer their lives generously to the Church a living witness of your love for all people.

Lord Jesus Christ, Master of the Harvest, the true light come to the world, grant an increase of workers for your harvest. We ask for grace to preach the Gospel that brings hope of eternal life to every human being.

Holy Spirit, you open the heart and mind to the divine call, you make effective every impetus toward good, toward truth, toward charity. Bless and inspire the faithful of North America with zeal and generosity to encourage and support those you call to the ordained ministry and consecrated life especially those who are friends or family members.

O Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, help those whom the Master invites to the service of the Gospel to echo your own trusting "YES" that the work of evangelization may inspire every tongue to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the Glory of God. Amen.

COUNCIL PRAYERS

OPENING PRAYER

Christ Jesus, the Way, the Truth and the Life...Teach us to live the charity, unity, fraternity and patriotism required of us as Knights of Columbus. During this meeting, guide our discussions so that we may thoroughly understand the matters in hand – judge them with knowledge and wisdom and prudence, and make decisions that will truly give glory to our Father in heaven. **Amen.**

CLOSING PRAYER

Christ Jesus...You commanded us to love our neighbour as ourselves. Strengthen us now as we leave this meeting. Help us to live our lives as an expression of our love for You and our brothers and sisters. Give us the courage and generosity to act with perseverance. Bless our actions so that our influence is felt within and beyond this Council. Make renewal within the Church and the work of the Knights of Columbus instruments of your love for all mankind. **Amen.**



Knights of Columbus
Alberta-Northwest Territories State Council