



Iowa State Council Knights of Columbus

Our Lady of Charity Marian Prayer Program Frequently Asked Questions

(Q) Who is Our Lady of Charity?

(A) Our Lady of Charity of El Cobre, Cuba (Nuestra Señora de la Caridad del Cobre) may not be as well known in American culture as Our Lady of Guadalupe. But one can find Our Lady of Charity's image in churches around the world.

After the 1959 revolution that brought Fidel Castro to power, the first Cuban exiles in America sought an image of their Mother to be sent to Miami. On Sept. 8, 1960, on the feast of Our Lady of Charity, thousands converged at Miami stadium to receive an image smuggled out of the country by the Archdiocese of Havana through the Italian Embassy, which then passed it to the Panamanian diplomatic office, and finally to the United States.

More information on the story and history of Our Lady of Charity is in the September 2007 issue of *Columbia* magazine. A link to the article is on the Marian Prayer Program site on the Iowa State Council website.

(Q) Why has the Order chosen this Marian devotion?

(A) Our Lady of Charity has special significance to our Order, given our first principle of Charity, which was also the theme of Pope Benedict XVI's first encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*. Although the Virgin of Charity has her origins in Cuba, devotion to her is altogether appropriate for Knights of Columbus and Catholics everywhere. Some also recognize "K of C" as Knights of Charity.

This yearlong, began Orderwide on September 8, the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This rosary-centered event is being offered for the intentions of Pope Benedict XVI. As a sign of spiritual solidarity with Pope Benedict XVI, the Holy Father and his intentions are remembered during each prayer service.

Since 1979, the Order has sponsored Marian Hour prayer programs devoted to Mary under various titles. Each new knight receives a rosary at his First Degree, a tradition since 1978. Past Supreme Knight Virgil Dechant's administration was under the protection of the Virgin Mary. In 2000, SK Carl Anderson placed his administration under the protection of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

(Q) Why has the Order chosen this Marian icon?

Our Lady of Charity was declared the patroness of Cuba by Pope Benedict XV in 1916 at the request of the nation's bishops and the faithful, with a special appeal by the veterans of Cuba's War of Independence from Spain.

Pope John Paul II crowned the original image as queen and patron saint of Cuba on January 24, 1998, during his historic pastoral visit.

At the Supreme Convention in August 2007, Cardinal Jaime Ortega Alamino of Havana Cuba exhorted the KC's "to pray to the sacred Virgin of Charity to bring peace and harmony to the people of Cuba, and that the Gospel of her Son, Jesus Christ finds open hearts among us".



(Q) How long does the prayer service take?

(A) Plan for 45 minutes to one hour for the Marian Prayer Service. The program includes the Liturgy of the Word, Homily, Intercessions, the praying of the rosary, a Litany to Our Lady of Charity and two hymns.

(Q) The “Our Lady of Charity” Marian icon is not scheduled to be in my District for several weeks. What advance planning should be done?

(A) Advance planning is important to the success of your prayer service. Contact your council chaplain and/or parish pastor at least six weeks prior and ask for his permission and support to conduct a service in the church. Keep him informed throughout the planning process. Council planning includes: scheduling the church or site location; publicize the event in your council newsletter and parish bulletin; post materials in church. While the icon is quite large, ensure it will be visible to all. Procure an easel or make other arrangements to elevate the icon, perhaps on a small table near the altar.

(Q) My Council covers more than one parish. Are we to hold a prayer service in each parish?

(A) The Supreme Council is judging the success of the Marian Prayer Program by the number of participants. Councils that cover more than one parish should strive to conduct a prayer service in each parish to provide an opportunity for all parishioners to participate.

(Q) Are their Spanish versions of the Prayer Booklet and keepsake Prayer Card available?

(A) Yes. The Supreme Council has printed both the Prayer Booklet and the Prayer Card in Spanish. Contact Marian Prayer Program Coordinator, Ken Bauer for more information.

(Q) Can participants keep the Prayer Booklet?

(A) No. The prayer booklets need to travel with the icon for the benefit of future participants. They are not to be kept by participants. Prayer cards (supplied by Supreme, #E4746) accompany each icon and may be handed out to participants as a keepsake. An electronic version (PDF file) of both the prayer booklet and cards are available for download from either the Supreme or State Council websites.

(Q) I did not receive enough Marian Prayer Booklets with the icon or are worn beyond use. Can new ones be ordered?

(A) Contact Ken Bauer if there are not enough booklets / prayer cards or if some are missing. Replacement booklets can also be ordered free-of-charge through the Department of Fraternal Services (203-752-4247) or the Supreme Council website.

(Q) My council would like to conduct a special prayer service but the occasion does not coincide with the icon schedule for my area.

(A) There may be a desire to hold a prayer service in a parish, school or Religious Education program. For example, a school may have a special day planned to honor Our Lady.

Iowa has two additional icons and materials to accommodate special requests. Contact one of the Marian Prayer Program Coordinators for availability and to make arrangements for your special event.

Other Questions? Contact:

Marian Prayer Program Coordinator

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Regional Marian Prayer Program Coordinators

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