



January 18, 2016

Dear brothers in Christ,

As Catholic men, we are called to a life of loving service responding to the Love & Mercy God has shown to us. We are called to care for our families, to attend to the poor and to defend those in our care especially the weakest among us. By these actions we bring to life a realization of God's Kingdom and a New Evangelization as we serve our faith communities for it is through the witness of the lives of believers that a renewal of the Church and our world is possible. I am delighted to share with you that a great and wonderful opportunity exists for Catholic men to answer this call to serve by becoming a member of the Knights of Columbus.

This exemplary Order of Catholic men was founded in 1882 by the Venerable Servant of God Fr. Michael J. McGivney, a Diocesan parish priest who had a vision and foresight to conceive of an organization which would provide Catholic men the opportunity to live their Faith through charitable works, caring for their families, and defending their Catholic Church. Today, the Knights of Columbus are 1.9 million members strong in 17 Countries, and provide an example of faith lived publicly and for others. Each year, this organization of practical Catholic men donates more than \$160 million and 70 million man hours to charity, in addition to providing its members with the opportunity to share a fraternal brotherhood with men of similar values. While the Knights combined efforts are impressive it is the impact at the local and family level which is most impressive.

As a Fourth Degree Knight of Columbus, I have personally witnessed the tremendous work that these men have accomplished in our Diocese of Des Moines. However, there is much work which needs to be done in the name of charity. From defending the least among us in the pre-born, caring for the dignity of the intellectually disabled, upholding the value of marriage as a lifelong bond between one man and one woman, feeding the hungry or clothing the needy there is some task to which each of us can join our heart and hands in charitable service even if only for an hour or two. Membership in the Knights goes beyond the charitable activity as important as that is. Yes, as Knights we can do more together; but the most valuable benefit is in supporting and encouraging each other in faith starting in our own families.

I strongly encourage each man in the Diocese of Des Moines to prayerfully consider joining the ranks of this fine organization. You must be at least 18 years old and a practicing Catholic. Should a member of the Knights of Columbus contact you and invite you to learn more about this Order, please take some time to visit with him so that you may make an informed decision to join us in our mission to promote Charity, Unity, Fraternity and Patriotism. I promise you and your family the experience of a lifetime.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

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The Most Reverend Richard E. Pates
Bishop of Des Moines