

## Charity In Terms of Fraternity

There are many people in this council, many people in this order (the Knights of Columbus), in this city, this country, this world. It is impossible for us all to see everything in exactly the same way. We all have a tendency to look at our opinion as right, and many times object to any challenge against it. This is not how we, as Knights of Columbus, as members of the Church, or as human beings are called to act.

The website of the Knights of Columbus describes the four principles of the order (Charity, Unity, Fraternity, and Patriotism) in a clear and concise way. When the messages of all these principles, as taught in the degrees, are combined, we receive a message that is very strong and also very relevant to our society and current events.

Charity, it says, is taught through our Catholic faith, where we learn to “love thy neighbor as thyself.” With this thought, “Knights recognize that this mission, and our faith in God, compels us to action.” Describing Unity, the website says that “no one of us is as good as all of us...together we can accomplish far more than any of us could individually. So we stick together, we support one another.” The description of Fraternity mostly discusses the insurance program, which of course isn’t as strongly related to college Knights as to others, but the message it describes is the same: when something happens to a brother Knight, we all must be there to help pick him up and to support his family. “In the Knights of Columbus, we watch out for and take care of one another.”

Especially in the wake of Hurricane Sandy, where many members of this very council have been affected, we can see the way these principles come together. When we see someone who has been struck down, whether it be through a lost loved one or a destroyed house, we as human beings, and especially as Knights of Columbus, are called to follow what we have learned about Charity, Unity, and Fraternity and take action.

This is something that transcends our order. This past week the news was flooded with stories and pictures of President Barack Obama and Governor Chris Christie of New Jersey taking in together the devastation this hurricane brought to so many. These two politicians, who have often been at great odds in their ideas of how this great country should be run, put all their differences aside and are working together (Unity) to take action to rebuild the beloved New Jersey coastline (Charity) and to help those who have been affected to get back on their feet (Fraternity). Although many may write it off as being a consequence of the roles the two are in, the fact remains that they are able to work together when it really matters.

Patriotism, of course, cannot be left out of our order’s teaching, even though many choose not to take the fourth degree (which you all should do with me in the spring). We all love this country, and we are lucky enough to go to school in our nation’s capital, especially in an election year such as this. Many at this university are very politically active, studying politics, interning on the Hill, et cetera, so many heated debates over issues can arise. However, in the face of these disagreements, we are called to remember the principles I have already described. Unity stands out the most to me in instances such as this since it is that principle which dictates that we must not let these differences of opinion divide us.

Whether we vote blue, red, green, orange, or whatever other color you can fill in a state with, we must always remember that we are brother Knights and that we still must work together.

This same thought can be applied to many other aspects in life than what I have mentioned: the bitter rivalry between our football team and that fielded by GW and Georgetown, and other disagreements we may have, or any situation we may find ourselves in, we are always still Knights of Columbus. In the eternal words of Pink Floyd, "Together we stand, divided we fall."