

As we all know, elections are just a few weeks away. Many of us have been talking about who we think should be the officers next year, who we think should be in charge of the everything our council does this next year. This politicking gets a little exhaustive, but regardless of who our officers are next year, we have one leader that they should all strive to emulate in their time wearing a fancy officer's jewel: Pope Francis.

In the short time Pope Francis has been in office he has already done and incredible amount. Many of the stories we have heard about him can teach us a lot about leadership and can be applied by all of us, not just the officers.

Pope Francis is a very simple, very humble man, and this is apparent from all of his actions since becoming Pope. We all have heard the stories of him taking a bus with the College of Cardinals to pay his hotel bill from the Conclave, turning down the papal apartments in favor of a much smaller residence in the Vatican, cooking his own meals, et cetera. The list goes on and on. This is a man who truly leads by example.

This leadership style is something to be admired. It is one thing to tell people how they should live their lives, but it is a completely different thing to teach by showing them. This is what we need as a council next year. We need leaders who can lead by example in the principles of our order: Charity, Unity, Fraternity, and Patriotism. This is not to say that this year's officers have failed to live up to this, because that is not the case at all. Rather that, as we begin a new year in Council 9542, we will need strong leadership to move on to the best year this council has ever had, and Pope Francis makes a great model for us to follow.

This is not something exclusive to our officers though. Each of us plays a role in the way our council is run and whether events are successful. The Knights are a respected group in the world, and we are also respected on campus. We need to keep this example of Francis in mind when we host events on campus, work with different student groups, or just walking around on campus. We are always knights, not just when we're here in these meetings, when we're wearing Knights of Columbus t-shirts, and we need to lead others by example. In the same way Pope Francis is showing the world about humility, we need to constantly show others about charity, unity, fraternity, and patriotism.

Elections are a strange time, and the commitment to these principles is sometimes tested, but we need show them more than ever. Rather than conspiring against each other, we need to work together as a council to find our best candidates for each office. That both makes the election process a lot less ugly and makes everything a lot more open and easy for the council to unite in the coming year.

As we move toward elections and past them, we all need to remember that we are always Knights of Columbus and that we must lead by example with our principles. We always have the ability of looking to Pope Francis as a model of this. In this way we can elect the best possible officer team and can move into the best year this council has ever seen. And remember, in leading by example, "We are not necessarily called to martyrdom, but the key word is 'necessarily.'"