

Last week at a meeting of State Deputies and State Chaplains, Supreme Knight Carl Anderson spoke about the Knights living “charity that evangelizes.” A recent Knights of Columbus statement emphasizes one aspect of “charity that evangelizes.”

“The Knights of Columbus supports Catholic Social Teaching, including on moral issues. Our first concern has always been charity, and over the past ten years we have donated more than \$1.4 billion and 664 million hours to charitable causes.”

As Supreme Chaplain Archbishop William Lori notes, though, “charity that evangelizes” is even more expansive than the deeds that some might focused on in the statement. It affects our relationships with one another. The quality of our relationship with God and neighbor is the focal point of Catholic Social Teaching when related to charity. In an address to deacons in the Diocese of Bridgeport he expands our understanding of “charity that evangelizes” in a way that is not only applicable to deacons, but also to Knights. He said,

“It begins with our being radically open, open in the very depths of being, to the charity of Christ, to the love of God poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, such that the Spirit can bear witness through our spirits to the Father’s love. Anything less, say humanitarian love, good as it is, is a pale reflection of the way in which God has passionately and selflessly loved the human family and more specifically the way in which Christ has loved his Bride, the Church, as we read in the fifth chapter of the Letter to the Ephesians. So let us never imagine that we can be radically open to the love of God, revealed in Christ, and poured forth upon us by the Spirit - without loving the Church, the Body of Christ, of which we are members. And not loving the part of the Church we like or just loving the members of the Church we like or loving the Church in some idealized state . . . we have to love the Church as she is – including that concrete, localized manifestation of the Church which we call the Diocese of Bridgeport! It’s no good to say that we love the homeless people under an I-95 underpass while failing to love a fellow deacon or a pastor or some nettlesome parishioner – or the most nettlesome of all, your bishop! Your charity is not your own – it is a charity which originates in the God who is love and which is manifested in the communion of life and love we call the Church.”

Living the first principle of our Order, charity, is done then in a way that evangelizes in word and in deed. Knights of Columbus are called to be models of charity in word and deed always, even when challenged, without compromising the truth. This truth is the truth of Jesus Christ who moves us out into mission as baptized to evangelize a culture that is in need of evangelization and transformation. Pope Benedict in his encyclical letter *Caritas in Veritate*, shows us how charity and truth complement each other when he states,

“Truth needs to be sought, found and expressed within the “economy” of charity, but charity in its turn needs to be understood, confirmed and practiced in the light of truth. In this way, not only do we do a service to charity enlightened by truth, but we also help give credibility to truth, demonstrating its persuasive and authenticating power in the practical setting of social living. This is a matter of no small account today, in a social and cultural context which relativizes truth, often paying little heed to it and showing increasing reluctance to acknowledge its existence” (n. 2).

Chaplain's Message – November 2012 – Rev. Frank Donio, S.A.C.

In our interaction with one another, with fellow believers, and with whomever we encounter, our witness to the truth then must always be done in way that manifests authentic charity. While at times this may be challenging, we are nonetheless called as Knights and faithful Catholics, to live well in word and deed the charity that emanates from the author of truth, Our Lord Jesus Christ. Only then will we truly be living “charity that evangelizes.”

Meeting of State Deputies and State Chaplains

http://www.kofc.org/en/news/releases/detail/state_leaders_dinner.html

Address of Archbishop Lori to Deacons

http://www.bridgeportdiocese.com/index.php/ourbishop/article/deacon_convocation_diocese_of_bridgeport_munus_regendi_a_charity_that_evang

Caritas in Veritate – Pope Benedict XVI

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate_en.html