



# Knights of Columbus Council 9542

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

Washington, DC 20064

*In Service to One, In Service to All*

“Remember, you are dust and to dust you shall return”<sup>1</sup> remains one of my favorite reflections of the Faith, especially during the Lenten season. Our first parents heard these words after they had committed that first damning sin of prideful disobedience. And ever since then, the imminent arrival of death upon each of our lives threatens to overshadow the legacies we may wish to endow before our time on earth draws to a close. While this liturgical formula for Ash Wednesday’s distribution of ashes sounds bleak, upon a closer look it is an invitation to embrace God and order our lives in the manner of the second formula option, that is, to “repent, and believe in the Gospel.”<sup>2</sup> As Pope St. John Paul II noted, “We are called to take part in the Resurrection of Christ. For this appeal to resound within us with all its force at the beginning of the Lenten season, let us realize what death means... ‘You are dust’ ... ‘Repent! ... Believe in the Gospel!’”<sup>3</sup>

It is Christ Himself Who continuously calls us to repent and return to love of God, just as He did during His earthly ministry. It is Christ Himself Who faithfully remains at our side at every moment in our lives. It is Christ Himself Who gives strength when we are weak, forgiveness and mercy— oh so much mercy— when we stumble, hope when we despair, and consolation when we grieve. It is Christ Himself Who, in the words of Fr. Paul Scalia, “because of his life, death and resurrection that we do not mourn as those who have no hope, but in confidence we commend [the dead] to the mercy of God.”<sup>4</sup>

My dear Brother Knights, this is the Good News that the world so desperately needs to know! The world becomes ever more enthralled in darkness the more it fears death and seeks to avoid it, the more it seeks pleasure after pleasure only to find each fleeting, and the more it celebrates immorality. Now more than ever we need to be a light for those who dwell in the darkness, not of our own will or strength, but through Christ— always through Christ— that our imperfect actions, imperfect words, imperfect presence, and imperfect forgiveness may be made perfect in the love Christ freely offers each and every person. We know by now that our witnesses will often be regarded as ignorant, pointless, ineffective, and foolish. So what? Let us “be fools for Christ,” as the late Justice Scalia encouraged Council 969 in Baton Rouge, “And have the courage to suffer the contempt of the

<sup>1</sup> See Genesis 3:19.

<sup>2</sup> Mark 1:15 (NABRE).

<sup>3</sup> Pope St. John Paul II (homily, Vatican City, February 21, 1996), EWTN, <https://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/JP960221.HTM>.

<sup>4</sup> Rev. Paul Scalia (homily, Washington, DC, February 20, 2016).

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sophisticated world.”<sup>5</sup> How great a calling, to be anything in selfless service and unreserved love for our Lord and Savior! How better still to be scorned for sticking to our convictions rooted in Truth. How truly “beautiful are the feet of those who bring [the] good news!”<sup>6</sup>

At the Archdiocese of Washington’s Rite of Election the past two Sundays, I was blessed to observe the 1,375 adults, teens, and children who will be baptized or confirmed as Catholics in the Archdiocese of Washington this Easter be presented to Cardinal Wuerl. It’s a beautiful witness to see the participants’ formal public expression of their desire to become Catholic before their loved ones, sponsors, and the rest of the (local) Church, kicking off a final period of intense spiritual preparation much like what we are called to commit ourselves to during Lent. This call to conversion, Cardinal Wuerl noted, “is a visible sign that women and men, young and old, from all walks of life, are continuing to respond to our Lord’s invitation: ‘Come, follow me.’”<sup>7</sup> In other words, “Repent, and believe in the Gospel.” It is now our duty as baptized members of Christ’s Body to offer our support, love, and prayers for these catechumens and candidates as each continues his or her faith journey, that all may strive to remain close to the Lord Who has called them to Himself. Among us, we can see how this can take fruit: our Worthy Sir Deputy Grand Knight Kevin Fowler was at this point two years ago and look at the result of his witness in part due to the support he’s received from his fellow students and Knights. The same applies to those who have already been baptized— we must remain a light for each other, as each of us experiences darkness in our lives. May we always share with one and all the Good News of Christ’s Resurrection: the hope that we share as we receive Communion, as we journey to the Cross, and as we profess— and experience— God’s Love. By the grace of God and the support of each other, may we, at every moment of our lives, join with the whole Church and the heavenly host to praise God for His mercy and goodness: “Our Savior, Jesus Christ, has destroyed death, and brought us light and life!” No wonder we [reply], ‘Alleluia!’”<sup>8</sup>

May God bless you, and God love you!

Faternally,

SK Thomas Wong

<sup>5</sup> Antonin Scalia (speech, Baton Rouge, LA, January 29, 2005), Maze Ministry, <http://www.mazeministry.com/frontpage/scalia.htm>.

<sup>6</sup> Romans 10:15 (NABRE).

<sup>7</sup> Cardinal Donald Wuerl, (homily, Washington, DC, February 14, 2016).

<sup>8</sup> Cardinal Timothy Dolan, (homily, Washington, DC, January 21, 2016).

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