



Knights of Columbus Council 9542

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

Washington, DC 20064

In Service to One, In Service to All

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

With these words, Christ gloriously ascended into heaven, to the amazement of the disciples. They were so amazed, in fact, that it took a gentle reminder from two angels that they had a new and noble work of evangelization before them— it was time to bear witness to Christ and share the Good News of God with the world. Two thousand years later, this great evangelical enterprise continues, and it doesn't seem to have gotten any easier. In a world and time where the concepts of objective morality and truth have been thrown out the window and any adherence to faith is scorned and viewed suspiciously, one can see how desperately society grasps and settles for any semblance of happiness and freedom from the burdens of daily life. Look at the deterioration of the inherent dignity of the human person, family, and marriage. Look at the rise of materialism, the “throwaway culture”, unbridled sexual promiscuity, and ignorance of the poor and helpless in our cities and our streets. Look at the pitiful deification of the self and the demonization of the neighbor. How increasingly critical is the Christian message for the world that “discard[s] whatever proves troublesome” (Pope Francis. [“Address to the Joint Session of the United States Congress.”](#) United States Capitol, Washington. 24 September 2015.)!

Brother Knights, I entreat you to now remember the words of Saint Paul quoting the prophet Isaiah: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news (Romans 10:15)!” Through our concentrated efforts, we spread the message of the love and joy of Jesus Christ to those who are unaware, forgetful, or otherwise ignorant of Him. Bearing witness to Christ, however, was never meant to be easy— Christ Himself promised we would be hated for keeping the Faith— and if it was, we would risk becoming complacent in our deeds (John 15:18-27). So what if our friends become uncomfortable when we talk of faith? So what if our families look at us funny when we pray? So what if people ridicule us behind our backs because of our adherence to the Christian lifestyle? I invite you to find comfort in these words attributed to Blessed Mother Teresa:

People are often unreasonable, irrational, and self-centered. Forgive them anyway.
If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. Be kind anyway.
If you are successful, you will win some unfaithful friends and some genuine enemies. Succeed anyway.
If you are honest and sincere people may deceive you. Be honest and sincere anyway.
What you spend years creating, others could destroy overnight. Create anyway.
If you find serenity and happiness, some may be jealous. Be happy anyway.
The good you do today, will often be forgotten. Do good anyway.
Give the best you have, and it will never be enough. Give your best anyway.
In the final analysis, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway.
(Mother Teresa. “Do It Anyway.” Calcutta. N.d.)

Brother Knights, have you heard of something called [“the New Evangelization”](#)? Our witness, in the words of Cardinal Dolan, “is accomplished with a smile, not a frown! (Cardinal Timothy Dolan. [“‘missio ad gentes’ and New Evangelization.”](#) St. Peter’s Basilica, Vatican City. 17 February 2012.)” Similarly, Pope Francis echoed St. Paul’s words in his [homily](#) given just a few days ago a stone’s throw away from where we are right now: “Rejoice in the Lord always! I

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say it again, rejoice (Philippians 4:4-8)!" Instead of the "glum apathy" present in daily lives, he continues, let us answer the calls of Christ:

Go forth! Proclaim! The joy of the Gospel is something to be experienced, something to be known and lived only through giving it away, through giving ourselves away...

A Christian finds joy in mission: Go out to people of every nation!

A Christian experiences joy in following a command: Go forth and proclaim the good news!

A Christian finds ever new joy in answering a call: Go forth and anoint!

Jesus sends his disciples out to all nations. To every people. We too were part of all those people of two thousand years ago. Jesus did not provide a short list of who is, or is not, worthy of receiving his message and his presence. Instead, he always embraced life as he saw it. In faces of pain, hunger, sickness and sin. In faces of wounds, of thirst, of weariness, doubt and pity. Far from expecting a pretty life, smartly-dressed and neatly groomed, he embraced life as he found it. It made no difference whether it was dirty, unkempt, broken. Jesus said: Go out and tell the good news to everyone. Go out and in my name embrace life as it is, and not as you think it should be. Go out to the highways and byways, go out to tell the good news fearlessly, without prejudice, without superiority, without condescension, to all those who have lost the joy of living. Go out to proclaim the merciful embrace of the Father. Go out to those who are burdened by pain and failure, who feel that their lives are empty, and proclaim the folly of a loving Father who wants to anoint them with the oil of hope, the oil of salvation. Go out to proclaim the good news that error, deceitful illusions and falsehoods do not have the last word in a person's life. Go out with the ointment which soothes wounds and heals hearts.

So let us go out, let us go forth to offer everyone the life of Jesus Christ (Evangelii Gaudium, 49). The People of God can embrace everyone because we are the disciples of the One who knelt before his own to wash their feet (ibid., 24).

One of the most striking images I came across when sorting through the "popeapalooza" on social media was that of the Holy Father blessing the consecrated religious and seminarians just before exiting the east portico of the Basilica to celebrate the canonization Mass. The caption, as I recall, read, "The Holy Father blessing the future of the Church." Brother Knights, we're not just the future of the Church, but its present members! The calls of Christ are for real action now and action from each of us! The world isn't going to get any easier to evangelize while we wait (cf. Matthew 8:18-22). There is real pain, real suffering, real injustice, real apathy, real longings, and real evil being caused and experienced all around us— we cannot afford to wait to address them!

Thus, we cannot afford to put off our Christian witnesses. At a time when others are freely giving their lives rather than abandon the God who refused to abandon them, how dare we worry about the personal cost to us! How dare we shrug off their trials as merely something unfortunate occurring in a distant land! How dare we feel ashamed or hesitant when an opportunity to bear witness to Christ causes us to value the threats to our worldly comforts and prestige! For the twenty Coptic Christians beheaded in Libya back in February— for Milad Makeen Zaky, Abanub Ayad

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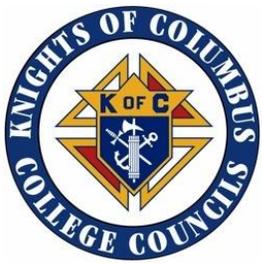


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Atiya, Maged Solaiman Shehata, Yusuf Shukry Yunan, Kirolos Shokry Fawzy, Bishoy Astafanus Kamel, Somaily Astafanus Kamel, Malak Ibrahim Sinweet, Tawadros Yusuf Tawadros, Girgis Milad Sinweet, Mina Fayez Aziz, Hany Abdelmesih Salib, Bishoy Adel Khalaf, Samuel Alham Wilson, Ezat Bishri Naseef, Loqa Nagaty, Gaber Munir Adly, Esam Badir Samir, Malak Farag Abram, and Sameh Salah Faruq— their witnesses echoed those of the countless Christian martyrs before them: giving their lives back to the One who first breathed life into them, these men refused to curse God or their soon-to-be murderers (cf. Job 2:9). Their final prayer of “Lord, Jesus Christ” sets the bar for how fully we must devote ourselves to our mission of evangelization. We cannot worry about the effectiveness of our witnesses: when demanded to renounce Jesus Christ as God, Mathew Ayairga, a non-Christian from Chad, reportedly looked at his dead companions and replied, “Their God is my God”, thus becoming the twenty-first martyr on that Libyan beach.

As members of the Church, we “rejoice with those who rejoice” but also “weep with those who weep” (Romans 12:15). As Knights, we rally to show our solidarity with the poor, the afflicted, and the marginalized. Each of us has the means to do this through our baptism in the Holy Spirit! Remember, for example, the powerful weapon of prayer! But a weapon is useless if it is not wielded or maintained. Here I once again make the plug to join your Brother Knights and the faithful of the CUA campus community in our weekly Monday Mass and Rosary. If you cannot attend, I entreat you to please join us in the other spiritual and service opportunities sponsored by our Council and the University to give Christian witness. We cannot hope to make an impact on society if we remain apathetic or unengaged!

I end with a few thoughts on the newly canonized Junípero Serra, who, in the words of our Holy Father, was the quintessence of “‘a Church which goes forth’, a Church which sets out to bring everywhere the reconciling tenderness of God.” He remains a model for the rest of us:

Junípero Serra left his native land and its way of life. He was excited about blazing trails, going forth to meet many people, learning and valuing their particular customs and ways of life. He learned how to bring to birth and nurture God’s life in the faces of everyone he met; he made them his brothers and sisters. Junípero sought to defend the dignity of the native community, to protect it from those who had mistreated and abused it. Mistreatment and wrongs which today still trouble us, especially because of the hurt which they cause in the lives of many people.

Father Serra had a motto which inspired his life and work, not just a saying, but above all a reality which shaped the way he lived: *¡siempre adelante!* Keep moving forward! For him, this was the way to continue experiencing the joy of the Gospel, to keep his heart from growing numb, from being anesthetized. He kept moving forward, because the Lord was waiting. He kept going, because his brothers and sisters were waiting. He kept going forward to the end of his life. Today, like him, may we be able to say: Forward! Let’s keep moving forward!

God bless you, and God love you!

Fraternally,

SK Thomas Wong

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