



The Columbian Gazette

Of Ashburn

VOL. 5 ISSUE 4 - DECEMBER, 2025

ASHBURN, VA

A Message From Deacon Renzette

Leading Others to Christ This Advent: A Call to Intentional Spiritual Leadership

As we enter the season of Advent, we stand at a threshold that offers more than just preparation for Christmas. This sacred season presents us as husbands, fathers, and Knights with a profound opportunity: to lead those around us into a deeper encounter with Jesus Christ.

In our roles as leaders – whether in our homes, workplaces, or community – we often focus on providing, protecting, and guiding in material ways. But Advent reminds us that our primary calling is spiritual leadership. The question each of us must answer this Advent is simple yet challenging: How can we help others experience Christ more fully during these four weeks?

Our first contribution is presence itself. In a season often dominated by busyness and distraction, our deliberate choice to be spiritually present speaks volumes. When we prioritize attending weekday Mass, spending time in Eucharistic Adoration, praying the Rosary as a family, or taking advantage of the many opportunities afforded to us for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we don't just strengthen our own faith – we model what it means to make space for God. Our wives, colleagues, and most especially, our children notice when we prioritize our relationship with Christ rather than offering Him whatever random time slots remain in our busy lives.

Consider inviting a friend, or even better, your wife or children to join you for an early morning Mass during Advent or simply sharing with a colleague

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From our Grand Knight

Putting Faith into Action: A Strong Start to Our Fraternal Year

As we reach the midpoint of the fraternal year, our Council continues to live out the mission of the Knights of Columbus with strength, generosity, and fraternity. Together, we have built real momentum – momentum rooted in service, united in prayer, and directed toward lifting up those who need us most.

Through the dedication of our volunteers and the generosity of our parish community, our pancake breakfasts have already generated **\$4,200 in charitable donations**, supporting the Archdiocese for the Military Services, Agape Pregnancy Resource Center, and Virginia Special Olympics. This spirit of charity has been matched by our ongoing commitment to fight food insecurity in our community: our Council has **organized, sorted, and delivered more than 30,000 pounds of food** donated by our amazingly generous parishioners, impacting hundreds of local families over the year, ensuring that no neighbor is forgotten.

We've also expanded our outreach to **support and honor our veterans**, strengthening partnerships and increasing visibility for the men and women who have bravely served our nation.

And throughout all our efforts, we have remained anchored in prayer. Each month, partnering with the Legion of Mary, our virtual Rosary gatherings have brought Knights, families, and parishioners together to honor **our Blessed Mother**, asking for her intercession, and deepen our unity as Catholic men striving for holiness.

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that you're praying for their intentions during this season. These small acts of witness plant seeds that often bear fruit in ways we never see.

As fathers and husbands, we have a unique opportunity to establish spiritual rhythms in our households. This might mean leading an Advent wreath prayer each evening (we add ours to our grace before meals prayers), reading the next Sunday's readings together before bed, or choosing to turn off screens an hour earlier to make room for silence and reflection. When we take initiative in these practices – not delegating them entirely to our wives or the Church – we communicate that faith is not peripheral but central to our family's identity.

The key is consistency over perfection. Even five minutes of intentional prayer together, offered faithfully each day, shapes the spiritual atmosphere of a home more than sporadic grand gestures.

Our charitable works take on deeper meaning when explicitly connected to Christ. As Knights, we already serve our parishes and communities. During Advent, we need to articulate the "why" behind our service. When volunteering in any of our council's great works – the parish food drive, our famous pancake breakfast, serving as an extraordinary minister visiting the homebound members of our parish – take a moment to explain to your families, fellow volunteers, or even those you serve that we do so to follow the model of Christ Himself who "came not to be served but to serve."

This season also calls us to examine whether our service extends beyond comfortable boundaries. Who in our lives feels isolated, forgotten, or far from God? A difficult family member, the coworker going through a divorce, the neighbor who stopped coming to Mass – Advent is the time to reach out as an ambassador of the coming Christ's love.

Perhaps our greatest contribution is vulnerability about our own spiritual journey. Men often hesitate to discuss their faith deeply, fearing judgment or inadequacy. But when we honestly share our struggles with prayer, our need for the sacraments, especially Reconciliation, or how Scripture has challenged us, we give others permission to be authen-

tic too. Real spiritual growth happens not in pretending we have it all figured out, but in inviting others into our spiritual journey.

Advent is not merely about waiting for Christmas Day. It's about preparing hearts – ours and others' – for the coming of Christ. Through our presence, our leadership at home, our purposeful service, and our authentic witness, we can help those God has placed in our lives encounter Him more deeply.

Let us embrace this Advent with renewed intentionality, asking our Lord: "How can I lead others closer to You during these four weeks?" The answer will look different for each of us, but the calling remains the same – to be men of faith who point others toward Christ, not just through our words, but through the testimony of our lives.

Vivat Jesus!

- Deacon Renzette

(Continued from page 1) GK

These accomplishments are not just numbers – they are signs of a vibrant, engaged Council committed to living out our faith in concrete, meaningful ways. Thank you to every Knight who has stepped forward, lifted a box, flipped a pancake, logged in for a Rosary, or offered their time and talent. Your witness makes a difference.

As we approach 2026, let's continue to build on this foundation – always ready to serve, always united in prayer, and always putting faith into action – being the hands of Christ to those in need.

Merry Christmas to you all – and may God continue to bless our Council.

Vivat Jesus!

Eric Ciliberti, Grand Knight

The Only Gift that Matters

Everyone loves Christmas. We gather for parties, exchange presents, share big meals, and decorate our homes. We reconnect with family and friends, and we recognize—at least for a moment—how many gifts we enjoy in our lives.

But as you celebrate this Christmas, remember that all these good things point to something far greater. The beauty of Christmas we enjoy comes from the One who created this beauty itself. We must appreciate God's blessings, but we are called to love and worship God Himself (and God is Love and Mercy itself).

Let us remember the greatest gift of all: Divine Love and Mercy—shown in our creation, our redemption, and our sanctification. Do we truly appreciate this gift? Do we even accept it?

We unwrap the gift of Divine Love and Mercy in every moment of our lives, especially at every Mass and Confession. Even after an eternity in heaven, we will have only begun to understand how great this gift truly is. We must receive it, appreciate it, and share it.

Think of a gift you once gave that was not appreciated. It's one thing to hand someone a gift card; it's another to pour weeks of work, thought, or sacrifice into a gift, only to have it ignored—or rejected. The heartbreak would be real.

Now imagine God's perspective. He already has spent eternity preparing your creation and your place in heaven. He offers unfathomable Mercy for your redemption and infinite Love for your sanctification. How deep His sorrow must be when such gifts are refused.

But how immeasurable His joy when we accept and appreciate His Love and Mercy—and share it with others.

- Bill Lehner, Lecturer

They're Everywhere

You've seen them ... and they've see you. CAMERAS! On buildings. On light poles. In buildings. In tunnels. On your computer. Around schools and churches. In airports, train stations, subway stations, bus depots. In cars. Doorbells even have cameras. Everyone seems to carry one with their smart phone. They're everywhere!!! You can't avoid them.

What started out as a sort of novelty has become a way of life. Many were first used as a security measure to monitor for safety. Then they were employed to counter theft. That morphed into protecting against crime, violence, or terrorism. Cameras have become the backbone of law enforcement in watching out for the bad elements in our society. Wherever you go, someone is always watching!

When you stop and think about it, it's pretty sad that our culture has evolved that we have to be constantly watching out for the bad. Finding the person who broke into a house or business. Establishing fault in a traffic accident. The individual who spray painted the graffiti. The person who committed the mass shooting. Our society has declined so much that many people think nothing of breaking the law and being so casual about the impact of their actions on others.

With everyone watching us all the time, what are we watching ... with our eyes? Do we look at the world around us and search out the good? Do we see and recognize when we see something good happen, whether it happens in our family or our daily environment? And most importantly, what do other people see when they look at us? How are our actions and words viewed by those around us? Hopefully they see the values we have as Knights and Catholics reflected in our daily deeds and the way we live, work, and drive. Most especially, what do our children see when they look and listen to us?

So, take a moment to look in the mirror and judge for yourself whether those around us see the positive image that we should project every day of our lives.

- Doug Smith

Book Review:

***The First Thousand Years: A Global History of Christianity* by Robert Louis Wilken**

By ROBERT N. BORGHESE

The author of this book, Robert Louis Wilken, is a former Lutheran minister and Professor Emeritus of the History of Christianity at the University of Virginia. After many years of study, Professor Wilken wanted to be fully united with the historic apostolic Church, which led him into the Catholic Church. There have been several other high-profile cases of Biblical scholars converting to Catholicism after studying the early Church and following the apostolic succession with unbroken lineage from the Apostles to the present-day Catholic Church.

Beginning with the life of Jesus, the book describes the dramatic spread and development of Christianity over the first thousand years of its history. It's not just a history of the West but also the mission of Christians into Eastern Europe, Ethiopia, Persia, India, China, and the entire world. "If the story of Christianity is told solely from the perspective of the West, an essential element is ignored."

We are reminded that Christianity is characterized by decline and attrition as well as by growth and expansion.

The rise and spread of Islam and how it impacted Christianity are important in Church history. "Few irruptions in history have transformed societies as rapidly and irrevocably as did the conquest and expansion of the Arabs of Islam in the seventh century. And none came with greater swiftness."

There are dozens of places in the book that will give you insight into Church history that you may not have fully realized. For instance, the author writes that "the first Christians were pious and observant Jews, not renegades." So, when Paul wanted to welcome the Gentiles into the Church, it was no easy decision for the Apostles. In the end, the author points out that "the Spirit among gentile Christians set the Christian 'way' on a different course." This insight is backed up by Acts 10, when the Holy Spirit fell upon

Gentiles, demonstrating that Gentiles were fully included in God's plan for salvation, leading Peter to command their baptism, a key moment in Church history.

I'll conclude with this quote from the book:

"Christianity brought into being a new kind of community, defined not by nation or people or language, but by its worship of the one God as known through Jesus Christ." -Robert Louis Wilken

A Newborn Light



The Magi saw the sign, a star aloft,
Sparkling in the western skies,
Yet near the coast, the clouds hung soft—
It took pure faith to trust their eyes.
No map, no voice, just heaven's flame,
A light half-veiled, yet still they came.

Through desert hush and mountain pass,
They bore their gifts with hearts aglow,
The star had led them far to roam,
Yet to a place that felt like home.

And there, the child they found at last,
With Joseph near and Mary mild,
No throne, no crown, no trumpet blast—
Yet all the world was in that child.
They knelt, and something deep was stirred,
A truth beyond what they had heard.

King Herod's words were insincere,
Concealing a threat they came to fear.
A dream then warned them not to stay—
They turned about and slipped away.

They journeyed home by hidden ways,
But nothing felt the same, nor right—
Their lands, their courts, their golden days
Now dimmed beneath a newborn light.

Poem by Robert N. Borghese 2025. All rights reserved.

Upcoming KOVAR Collection, Save the Dates!

The next KOVAR collection is set for the weekend of January 17th and 18th, after all Masses. Please look for a sign-up email in early January and consider participating in this worthy cause.

-Don Smaltz



Since
1971



Food Drive Update

Dear Brother Knights,

The November food drive is complete and was a huge success. We collected, sorted, and delivered **8,773 pounds(!)** of food this month from our extremely generous parishioners. This is by far the most food we have collected for a monthly food drive. I have been told that the Ushers had to clear the food bags from the entrance Mary-side, so that parishioners were able to enter the Church for 8:45am Mass.

Thank you, Brothers, for your tremendous help to make this program so successful, especially for making sure that the extra slots were filled, and we were able to get it all done.

As always, our Youth Group under Paul Dwyer's great leadership helped us to breeze through categorizing and sorting by expiration date. We couldn't do this without them!

This was the last food drive for the calendar year, and I hope to see all of you next year if not before then.

For now, I am wishing you all a very Merry Christmas!

The next food drive is in January 2026.

-Torsten Koehler



Breakfast with Santa - December 7, 2025

The annual KofC Breakfast with Santa was held on December 7 along with the Festival of Trees. We collected \$3600 in ticket sales and donations, with an additional \$300 from a 50-50 raffle; a pancake breakfast record! Profits will go to the Associates of St. John Bosco. A huge thank you to all brothers that volunteered and worked hard to make the breakfast successful, and special thanks to Mike Zavala, Jim Mosesso, and Don Burnham (for his famous potatoes), and of course Mike Purcell and Santa!



Parish Picnic, October 5, 2025

Our annual parish picnic, hosted by our Council and the Parish, and led by brother Bill Lehner, was held on October 5. The weather was beautiful and we had a great turnout by parishioners!





CURRENT COUNCIL OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS (2025 -2026)

Chaplain
Associate Chaplain
District Deputy
Grand Knight
Deputy Grand Knight
Chancellor
Financial Secretary
Warden
Recorder
Treasurer
Advocate
Trustees

Primary Alt. State Del.
Secondary Alt. State Del.
Programs Director
Lecturer
Inside Guard
Outside Guard
Faith Director
Vocations Chairman
Community Director
Life Director
Communications

Family Director
Membership Director
Recruitment Committee
Retention Chairman
Construction Team Lead
Pancake Breakfast

KOVAR Team Lead
Fraternal Benefits Field Agent
Technology Team
Parish Picnic

Father Hudgins
Father John
Jay Hallam
Eric Ciliberti
Stephen Shields
Dan Brendes
Jim Bonfils
Todd Kane
Miguel Sian
Mike Lang
Miguel Rodriguez
1 Yr. Mike Boyle
2 Yr. John Hegarty
3 Yr. Rob McNamee
Miguel Rodriguez
William Lehner
Mike Boyle
Bill Lehner
Todd Kane
Vince Tranchitella
Jack Hayes
Vince Tranchitella
Stephen McLaughlin
Vacant
Rudy Flores
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