



# The Columbian Gazette

## Of Ashburn

VOL 5 Issue 2 - June 2025

### A Message from Deacon Renzette

#### Mirrors of the Face of God

In his novel, *Till We Have Faces*, Christian author C.S. Lewis provides a retelling of the Greek myth of Cupid and Psyche. In his version, Psyche is spirited away by the winds to live in an incredible palace on the Grey Mountain as the wife of an unseen god. Her sister, Orual, ventures to find her to bring her home.

Upon Orual's arrival, Psyche relates the story of her journey and life on the Grey Mountain. She tells Orual of the great palace she lives in, the wonderful feasts that appear each day, and of her husband, a god, who visits with her nightly but who remains hidden and forbids Psyche from seeing his face when he visits each evening.

But Orual can see no palace, no grand feasts, and certainly no god. Orual cannot believe that Psyche is actually the spouse of this unseen and unnamed god. For Orual, highly educated and guided by common sense, Psyche's faith in her husband is ridiculous. It must be untrue. This "god" must be either a terrifying brute or a conniving liar.

The truth is clear: Psyche's god-husband is a myth; a fable and Psyche is at best crazed or delusional. After all anyone with common sense would agree that there can be no such god, invisible and hidden and yet good and lovely. Surely, if he were pleasing and good, he would reveal himself plainly?

To a disciple of Christ living in our modern era, it often seems as if we are surrounded by our own collection of Oruals. To them the life of discipleship makes little sense; easily dismissed as myth or delusion. But when we open ourselves fully to our unseen God, we realize that the disciple's life is a deep and intimate relationship that produces a greater and deeper love, not only for God, but for everyone around us.

The world around us says that our love is fake or illusory, but it only seems as such to someone who has not opened themselves to encounter the Living God, He Who is Love.

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### From our Grand Knight

Brothers:

As I complete my term as Grand Knight, I want to take a moment to thank each of you for your dedication and service over the past year. One of our most recent accomplishments—helping organize and deliver 4,661 pounds of food to the local food pantry—is a powerful example of what we can do when we come together to support our brothers and sisters in need. I'm incredibly proud of the work we've done as a Council - our pancake breakfasts in support of charity, KOVAR drives, and our highly impactful food drives to name a few - all made an impact and delivered needed assistance to those in need. As I step aside, I'm confident we are in great hands—our incoming Grand Knight brings fresh ideas, strong energy, and deep commitment to the mission of the Knights of Columbus. Let's continue to support one another and keep building on the momentum we've created.

Vivat Jesus!

- Mike Boyle, GK

### Guided

By Doug Smith

As all the Cardinals assembled in Rome for the momentous task of electing a new Pope, I can only guess what was going through their minds as they entered the Sistine Chapel. It's quite possible that some had never considered the possibility that they would be summoned for this task. Many of the Cardinals were relatively new to their responsibilities to begin with. Yet here they were, ushered into the Chapel to begin their secret ballot process where two-thirds of them needed to agree. Can you imagine the pressure that they felt with this task ... especially with the world anxiously watching and waiting outside?

Before entering, the dean of the College of Cardinals, Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, presided over the Mass and

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And this opens us to the task set before us as disciples of Christ. It is not enough for us to press the case – to present the argument for the truths of our Faith – we must live them in such a way that they become evident to even the most stalwart of the Oruals in our world.

The life of discipleship necessitates a deep relationship with God by which He reveals Himself to us and us to ourselves. This is because through this intimacy of Faith, we become mirrors of our loving God to those who cannot yet see Him.

This was the solution in Lewis' novel for Orual's skepticism, and it holds true in our world as well. Only by drawing closer to God, experiencing His loving presence in our lives can we be the true "ambassadors for Christ" that we are all called to be.

- Deacon Renzette

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urged them to set aside all personal interests and find a pope who prized unity. Many of the Cardinals had never met each other. How was one supposed to vote when you know nothing about the majority of the people in the room? As Catholics, we are told that the Holy Spirit and the saints will guide them in making their choice.

Yet, the Cardinals are human just like us. Up to this point, they have their own local concerns to worry about. Their interactions with the entire church structure are limited. They are subjected to the "suggestions" and pressures of others to do this or do that. They have their own beliefs regarding pressing social and secular issues. How does one separate those beliefs from the task at hand to come to a unified agreement on a Pope from a collection of men you may never have seen before?

Well, we all know the outcome of the conclave. The voting didn't take long. However, we are left with one question. If the Cardinals did indeed leave their secular influences and beliefs "at the door" in order to make their decision based only on faith, do we do the same?

When you are charting your life's direction, how much do you use your faith to guide you? Or do you succumb to the pressures of the world around you to chart your course? Many people are "guided" in their beliefs and actions by the media which may or may not be totally truthful. How many of us are guided by the values and

principles of our Catholic faith and upbringing? What do we do to help our families and children develop faith-based decision making? As Knights, we are called to be strong men to guide our families in the right direction. We will never be called to go to the Sistine Chapel to make a momentous decision. However, we are called each day to make the best decisions for ourselves and our families.

- Doug Smith

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## **Book Review:**

### ***The Bridge of San Luis Rey* by Thornton Wilder**

By ROBERT N. BORGHESE

*The Bridge of San Luis Rey* by Thornton Wilder was published in 1927. It is a well-written short novel (148 pages in my paperback) that takes place in Peru in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, evoking life in the Spanish colony at that time. It won the Pulitzer Prize in 1928, and in 1998, it was selected by the editorial board of the American Modern Library as one of the 100 best novels of the twentieth century.

This novel begins when five people unexpectedly fall to their deaths when a tiny rope footbridge collapses. Brother Juniper, a Franciscan missionary, sets out to trace the lives of the victims, linked only by their deaths, to understand the seemingly random nature of the tragedy.

The novel endeavors to consider big philosophical and religious questions: Are the deaths of these five people just a random accident, or is it part of God's plan? Why does it seem that the good die before the bad? What do those left behind learn from tragic deaths?

Thornton Wilder said he sought to address the question: "Is there a direction and meaning in lives beyond the individual's own will?"

In 2001 at the memorial service for victims of the September 11 attacks, British Prime Minister Tony Blair quoted the following excerpt from the book:

"But soon we will die, and all memories of those five will have left earth, and we ourselves shall be loved for a while and forgotten. But the love will have been enough; all those impulses of love return to the love that made them. Even memory is not necessary for love. There is a land of the living and a land of the dead, and the bridge is love, the only survival, the only meaning."

If you like good writing and pondering the big philosophical and religious questions of life and death, you will like this book.

- Robert Borghese

## SPOTLIGHT ON NEW MEMBERS



**Meet:** Cooper Hodges  
**Hails from** Baton Rouge, LA  
**Family:** Married to another parishioner (Daphne Batista), no children yet  
**Work:** Suicide Prevention Researcher for the Department

of the Navy

**Hobbies or interests:** Cooking, reading, fishing, tabletop gaming, concerts

**What prompted you to join the Knights of Columbus?**

I joined the Knights because I wanted to become more involved in the parish, which has helped me so much over the years. I hope I can play a small part in helping others the way they have helped me through difficult times.



**Meet:** Robert (Bob) Peters  
**Hails from** Quincy, MA.  
**Family:** Amy, my wife, is a Pediatric ER nurse at INOVA Loudoun. My son, James, is a

rising sophomore at Rollins College in Winter Park, FL. He attended Paul VI HS and played lacrosse.

**Work:** I currently work with technology startups for the aerospace and defense markets. Recently, I joined SkyForceAI, a new AI startup to develop software algorithms to automate sensors and drones.

**Hobbies or interests:** We like to travel and play golf when we are not working or with our families.

**What prompted you to join the Knights of Columbus?**

I originally joined a chapter in Sudbury, MA at the invitation of our parish priest. I was excited to find ways that I could help our parish beyond attendance and financial support. When I moved to Baltimore, MD, I transferred to a chapter there. Now that my son is settled into college life and I have more time to devote to our parish, I am finally transferring to this chapter.



**Meet:** Pierre Michel Karam

**Hometown:** I grew up in Lebanon with the Maronite faith and immigrated to the United States on my 21st birthday! We

reside in Ashburn @ the Hunt which is part of Belmont Country Club

**Family:** Married to Jeanine and we were blessed with three amazing children: Gabrielle, Isabella and Michael.

**Work:** I am retired now after I served 20 years in the US Army Reserve and roughly another 20 years in the Intelligence Community.

**Hobbies/Interests:** I am a gun enthusiast. I also like to read history books, hike, hunt and fish.

**Why did you join the Knights?** I joined the Knights of Columbus because I wanted to deepen my Catholic faith and surround myself with men who share similar values. The Organization's commitment to charity, unity and fraternity coincided with my deep-rooted Catholic (Maronite) principles. Being part of this great Organization, I will be able to serve those in need.

# God's Plan

By Bill Lehner, PGK, Lecturer

Jesus saves us from our sins.

To do this, Jesus redeemed us. He literally bought us back by paying the debt of our sin. He paid the ransom to release us from the slavery of sin, death, and the eternal prison.

But Christ offers more than just getting out of bad debt. He offers family.

To do this, Jesus reconciles us to the Father. He restores kinship with us. He makes us a brother to Him, a son to the Father, and, as a member of a royal family, an heir to the Kingdom of God.

Unfortunately, we look at life through a soda straw. We focus on the minutiae on the other end: the house, the career, and the activities. Drop the straw and take in the big picture. Look at the stars one night; you are an heir to all of it as a son of the Father.

But God offers even more than just the universe. He offers Himself.

To do this, Jesus justifies us. He calls us to the fullness of holiness. As Christ became man and assumed two natures, Jesus raises us up to his own Divine Nature.

We are made for eternal life, just like an airplane is made for flying. Although we were "grounded" after sin with mortality, we still have two capacities in our immortal soul that must soar: the ability to know (truth) and the ability to will (love). Our endless imagination is a great example.

God intends to raise us to divine nature by growing in holiness. We achieve holiness as we work to perfect our knowledge and will, to truth and pure love, through faith and charity. We can even use reason, so pick up a good religious book or study program. As we grow in holiness, we grow in

Divine Nature and become beautiful, just like the Saints.

Where do we start? We must accept God's plan for us. We must seek God's Will first.

Christ offered a simple prayer for us through St. Faustina to abandon our will.

**"Entrust yourself completely to My will saying, 'Not as I want, but according to Your will, O God, let it be done unto me.' These words, spoken from the depths of one's heart, can raise a soul to the summit of sanctity in a short time."** - Jesus as quoted in a *Diary of a Soul* by St. Faustina

Please know that "Jesus Saves" that it means a lot more than redemption. It also means fullness of life through reconciliation and justification. We are freed from bad debt, but we also gain kinship and Divine Nature.

*Credits: Any theology comes from a hopefully accurate paraphrase of a Fr. Hudgins homily online*

- Bill Lehner

## Food Drive

The food drive program under Torsten's leadership, continues delivering generous supplies of needed food to the Catholic Charities Food Bank in Sterling. The May drive collected a total of 4661 pounds of food. The program owes its success to the hard work of all the volunteers (Knights and Youth Group), and the generosity of our parishioners.





## KOVAR Update

Our recent KOVAR collection, after all Divine Mercy Sunday Masses April 26 and 27, resulted in our generous parishioners donating \$5000. This is a very nice amount and one of the largest single weekend KOVAR collections ever. Many brother Knights, as well as their family members and friends, volunteered to wear a KOVAR vest and hand out tootsie rolls at all the Church exits. Look for an email in early Autumn to sign up for our next collection; the date is TBD.

Plan to help with this worthy cause: it only takes a few minutes of your time after mass. Your help and support make a difference, and KOVAR appreciates your support. Over the past 10 years, our council has provided approximately \$80k to KOVAR, which provides financial assistance through grants and home loans to individuals with intellectual disabilities.

- Don Smaltz





**Serving Crew, first shift on May 18..**

## Pancake Breakfast Program Update

We held our last pancake breakfast of the fraternal year on May 18, 2025. The event was very well attended, with parishioners donating a generous \$1473. Two charities will benefit from this breakfast, the Haiti Mission, and You(th) vs. Hunger.

The program had an overall successful year despite the unfortunate cancellation of the breakfast in January. As you can see from the table below, our Council was able to donate a total of \$4150 to various charities. Aside from the monetary success, an even more important benefit has been in bringing the parish together as a community.

8-Sep	Military Archdiocese	\$350
13-Oct	Agape Pregnancy Support Ctr.	\$600
10-Nov	VA Special Olympics	\$350
8-Dec	Divine Mercy	\$1,000
9-Feb	Work Camp	\$250
9-Mar	Thunder Appeal	\$1,000
18-May	Haiti Mission and You(th) vs. Hunger	\$600

**Total Donations \$4,150**

The pancake breakfast will change hands starting next year. I've had the honor and privilege of running the program over the last 3 to 4 years and have thoroughly enjoyed it. However, it is time to pass the baton. Brothers Jim Mosesso and Mike Zavala will be managing the program starting with the breakfast scheduled for September. Thank you, and welcome Mike and Jim! But don't worry, I won't abandon ship...I'll still be around to help! Finally, a huge thank you to all our brother knights who volunteered throughout the year and have made this program a success.

- Rudy Flores



**Pancake breakfast Kitchen Crew, first shift on May 18.**



## Point of View: Examining Too Closely Destroys It or Don't Miss the Forest for the Trees

By Robert Borghese

- The Mona Lisa on close inspection, is but flecks of oil paint.
- The beautiful photo of a landscape is but pixels on close examination, nothing but tiny squares of color.
- Man, God's greatest creation, has a soul, but from a biological viewpoint, we are cells. At source, we are just chemicals.
- All life as we know it requires water-- beautiful, free-flowing, life-sustaining. But water is just hydrogen and oxygen elements.

The whole is indeed greater than its parts!

It is possible to scrutinize every word in the Bible and miss The Word. This happened in John 5: 39-40 when Jesus said to the Jewish leaders:

"You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life."

Don't get lost in words and miss the Word. The path to eternal life is Jesus, who is the Word made flesh.



## CURRENT COUNCIL OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS (2024 -2025)

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

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

Family Director  
Membership Director  
Recruitment Committee  
Retention Chairman  
Construction Team Lead  
KOVAR Team Lead  
Fraternal Benefits Field Agent  
Technology Team  
Parish Picnic

Father Hudgins  
Jay Hallam  
Mike Boyle  
Eric Ciliberti  
Dan Brendes  
Jim Bonfils  
Steve Shields  
Stephen McLaughlin  
Mike Lang  
Cole Slattery  
3 Yr. John Hegarty  
2 Yr. Rob McNamee  
1 Yr. Miguel Rodriguez  
Miguel Rodriguez  
William Lehner  
Mike Boyle  
Bill Lehner  
Garth Griswold  
Savio Thomas  
Jack Hayes  
Vince Tranchitella  
Stephen McLaughlin  
Eric Ciliberti  
Rudy Flores  
Dave Schreder  
Eric Ciliberti  
Robert Borghese  
Torsten Koehler  
Dan Brendes  
Jack Hayes  
Jack Hayes  
Dale Stucke  
Donald J. Smaltz  
Ben Turner  
Anthony Gizzi  
William Lehner