# About: Is the Knights of Columbus a Secret Organization?

No. The principles and objectives of the KofC are published and well known. While the Knights of Columbus council meetings are only open to members, this is common for many private organizations. Our meetings follow the same format as many civic or church organizations and use Robert’s rules of order. Our programs and activities are open to the public and typically involve family members and others. Ceremonials, such as degrees, are the only aspect of the KofC where details are not shared. This is done so that candidates can fully appreciate each degree experience.

# About: What Are Degrees and Why Are They Important?

There are four degrees in the Knights of Columbus. They can be thought of as lessons in charity, unity, fraternity, and patriotism. They are meant to inspire knights to grow in their Catholic faith and to think about these principles as they progress on their journey as knights. The first degree is about charity and is required before a candidate can become a member. The second degree is about unity. The third degree is about fraternity and is required before a knight is considered a full knight with the privilege to become an officer, attend state meetings or attend supreme conventions. New knights now become third degree knights upon attending the combined degree ceremony. The fourth degree is about patriotism, and is required before a knight can join an assembly or participate in the color corps.

The color corps is the most visible organization within the Knights of Columbus. Although not required, many knights who have completed their fourth degree elect to become active in the color corps.

# About: What Do the Symbols and Colors on the Knights of Columbus Emblem Mean?

The third-degree Knights of Columbus emblem is the most recognized emblem of the order. It consists of a knight’s shield mounted on a Formee Cross. There is also a fourth-degree emblem that features the Dove, the Cross, and the Globe.

# About: When Were the Knights of Columbus Founded?

The Knights of Columbus was founded in 1882 by Father Michael J. McGivney in the basement of St. Mary’s Church in New Haven, Connecticut. The Church is still in existence adjoining the campus of Yale University, and the council still uses the basement of the church for its meetings. The headquarters of the Knights of Columbus is still located in New Haven. St. Mary’s Church and the Knights of Columbus Museum are open to the public for visitation.

The cause for canonization of Father McGivney was opened in 1997 and is proceeding. This process could lead to proclamation of sainthood for our Order’s founder. The title “Servant of God” is permitted to be used once a formal cause for canonization is under way. This title was given to McGivney in 1997, when the Vatican granted nihil obstat, meaning that it had found no objection to the advance of the formal cause for canonization. In 2008, after the Congregation for the Causes of Saints made a positive judgment on the positio, Pope Benedict XVI declared Father McGivney’s heroic virtue as a prelude to possible beatification and Father McGivney was given the title, “Venerable Servant of God.” On October 31, 2020, Father McGivney was beatified when his intercession miraculously saved the life of a newborn, Mikey Schachle. Once he gets another miracle, he will be a saint! For more information on the life of Father Michael J. McGivney, see his biography, "Parish Priest", by Douglas Brinkley and Julie M. Fenster.

# About: Who Are the Knights of Columbus and What Do They Do?

The Knights of Columbus was founded in 1882 by Father Michael J. McGivney at St. Mary’s Church in New Haven, Connecticut. The Knights of Columbus is a family fraternal organization of over 2 million Catholic men and their families, and is organized into local councils, state councils, and a supreme council. Over 15,000 councils are currently active. The Knights of Columbus extends throughout the United States, Canada, the Philippines, Mexico, Poland, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Panama, the Bahamas, the Virgin Islands, Cuba, Guatemala, Guam, and Saipan.

The Knights are in solidarity with the Holy Father and our Priests. The Knights work on and contribute to service programs in the areas of Community, Family, Youth, Church, and Council. Globally, in 2012 the Knights donated more than $158MM to charities and $1.406B in the past decade. Knights donated nearly 70 million hours of their time to various charitable activities and over 653 million hours in the past decade. The specific programs supported are generally determined by the local and state councils based on local needs, but all have the same purpose and that is the support of these five areas. The core principles of the Knights of Columbus are charity, unity, fraternity, and patriotism. We are all united in charity.

# About: Who Are the Leaders of the Knights of Columbus?

The leader of each local council is called the Grand Knight. The Grand Knight and other officers of each local council are elected each Fraternal year which extends from July 1 to June 30.

The leader of each state council is called a State Deputy. The State Deputy and other officers of each state council are elected each Fraternal year which extends from July 1 to June 30.

The leader of each Fourth Degree assembly is called the Faithful Navigator. The Faithful Navigator and other officers of each assembly are elected each Fraternal year which extends from July 1 to June 30.

The leader of each state Fourth Degree District is the District Master. He serves a two-year term and is selected from nominees made by the Assemblies in the state at the Biennial Meeting. The District Master serves under the State Deputy and the Vice Supreme Master.

The leader of the entire order is called the Supreme Knight. The Supreme Knight is chosen by a Board of Directors composed of 24 members who have been elected by the Supreme Council.

# About: Why Do Some Knights Wear the special suit, beret and sword? What happened to the Capes, Tuxedoes, and Chapeaus?

This is a role reserved for fourth degree knights and is called our color corps or sometimes the honor guard. You will most often see the color corps at civic events such as parades and wreath-laying ceremonies, or at special church events, Masses, events involving our Bishop, and at funerals. Participation in the color corps is not a requirement, but many fourth-degree knights find it to be a gratifying experience.

Honor Guard members wear a colored baldric and patch on their beret of certain colors. The colors denote officer positions within the color corps. At the annual Supreme Convention, you may see a dark blue, signifying the Supreme Master, the knight in charge of all fourth-degree knights worldwide. You may see a light blue, and those are Vice Supreme Masters, who help oversee assemblies and fourth-degree events over a large area like multiple states. Gold is reserved for the Master of the Fourth Degree. He is the leader of the Fourth Degree in our state. Green is reserved for the District Marshall who leads all color corps in our state. Purple is reserved for the Color Corps Commander of each assembly. White is reserved for the Assembly Faithful Navigator and Past Faithful Navigators. Red is for all other Color Corps members.

Around 2017 the Supreme Council decided it was time to retire the old look of the Cape, Chapeau and tuxedo and replace it with a suit and beret. This is at least the fourth time that the uniform has changed, with it being a tuxedo and top hat before the capes and chapeaus! To see previous uniforms, I recommend checking out The Knights of Columbus: An Illustrated History as they show some of the previous iterations.

The next time you see a color corps present at an event, you now know that they are there as a sign of deep respect and honor. Please thank them for their service.

About: How do I get more information about the Knights of Columbus?

To get more information about the Knights of Columbus, visit the Knights of Columbus website at www.kofc.org. You can learn more about the history and mission of the Knights of Columbus, find a council near you, and discover opportunities to get involved in your local community. Additionally, you can contact your local council directly for more information about membership and activities.

About: What is the Knights of Columbus?

The Knights of Columbus is a Catholic Fraternal Organization created to serve families, parishes, community, and the Catholic Church. The first Knights of Columbus were started in 1882 in New Haven, CT by Fr. Michael McGivney.

At the time, Catholics could not get life insurance, and as most of the men/breadwinners worked in dangerous hard labor jobs, many families would be left without money to support them if the husband died. After the father's death, the families would be torn apart and the children would be fostered by other families who most likely weren't Catholic and wouldn't raise the children in their family's faith. McGivney and his first knights banded together and started a small fund to give to those who need support after the loss of the husband. They also started providing community and parish support in many different ways.

Since that time, the Order has grown from nine men in one local council to over two million men in over 16,000 councils and over 10 countries, including the United States, Canada, France, The Philippines, Mexico, Poland, Ukraine, and South Korea.

About: Who are Knights of Columbus?

The Knights of Columbus are practicing Catholic men who are 18 years and older. In your local council, they are men you see every day at mass and events. They are fathers, sons, and men who love their families and parish. The knights and their families volunteer their time, talent, and 'treasure' to raise funds to serve their parish and community. Beside our Catholic faith, the knights follow four tenets: Charity, Unity, Fraternity, and Patriotism.

About: Is the Knights of Columbus a Secret Organization?

No. The principles and objectives of the KofC are published and well known. While the Knights of Columbus council meetings are only open to members, this is common for many private organizations. Our meetings follow the same format as many civic or church organizations with opening and closing rituals and time spent conducting the business of the council.

About: What is the Fourth Degree of the Knights of Columbus?

The Fourth Degree of the Knights of Columbus is the patriotic degree of the Order. Knights who have attained the Third Degree may choose to join the Fourth Degree, which focuses on patriotism and love of country. Fourth Degree Knights participate in special ceremonies and events, including honor guards and parades, to promote patriotism and support for the nation.

About: What is the history of the Knights of Columbus? The Knights of Columbus was founded in 1882 by Father Michael J. McGivney, a young parish priest in New Haven, Connecticut. Father McGivney saw the need to provide financial assistance and support to Catholic families who had lost their breadwinners and founded the Knights of Columbus as a fraternal benefit society to meet this need. Since its founding, the Knights of Columbus has grown into the world's largest Catholic fraternal organization, with millions of members worldwide.

About: Is the Knights of Columbus a religious organization?

Yes. The Knights of Columbus is a Catholic fraternal organization founded on the principles of charity, unity, fraternity, and patriotism. While the Knights of Columbus is not a religious order like the Jesuits or Franciscans, it is deeply rooted in the Catholic faith and works to promote the values of the Gospel in society.

About: How is the Knights of Columbus organized?

The Knights of Columbus is organized into local councils, each of which is affiliated with a parish or community. These councils are overseen by state councils, which are in turn overseen by the Supreme Council, the governing body of the Knights of Columbus. The Supreme Council is headquartered in New Haven, Connecticut, and is responsible for setting policy and direction for the Order as a whole.

About: What are the principles of the Knights of Columbus?

The principles of the Knights of Columbus are charity, unity, fraternity, and patriotism. These principles guide the work and activities of the Order and inspire Knights to serve their families, parishes, communities, and country.

# Benefits: Do the Knights of Columbus Offer Fraternal Benefits?

You may already be aware that the Knights of Columbus offers affordable life insurance to its members. Although there is no requirement to purchase insurance from the Knights of Columbus, approximately one third of the Knights globally have elected to have some form of insurance, annuities, disability income insurance, or long-term care through KofC. The Knights of Columbus has assured the welfare of its members since 1882 (over 125 years) and ranks in the top 5% of the approximately 2,000 insurance companies throughout North America. It has consistently received the highest possible ratings from A.M. Best (A++ Superior) and Standard & Poor’s (AAA Extremely Strong) and is a member of the Insurance Marketplace Standards Association (IMSA) which is reserved only for those insurance companies that conduct business by the highest ethical standard.

There are also other benefits associated with being a Knight. These include scholarships, accidental death benefits, orphan benefits, etc.

For further information on fraternal benefits see the KofC web page at www.kofc.org.

Benefits: What are the benefits of joining the Knights of Columbus?

The benefits of joining the Knights of Columbus are numerous. Among them are:

* Service and Support to Parish and Community: Knights of Columbus councils are known for their work in serving the parish and broader community through a variety of programs and activities.
* Spiritual Growth: Knights have the opportunity to deepen their faith through involvement in the spiritual activities of the Order.
* Fellowship: Membership in the Knights of Columbus provides opportunities for fellowship with other Catholic men and their families.
* Insurance: Knights of Columbus insurance is available to members and their families, providing financial security and peace of mind.
* Leadership Development: The Knights of Columbus offers opportunities for leadership development and personal growth through involvement in council activities and programs.
* Family Activities: The Knights of Columbus sponsors a variety of family-oriented activities and events, providing opportunities for families to spend time together and strengthen their bonds.

Benefits: What is the Knights of Columbus Insurance Program?

The Knights of Columbus Insurance Program is a fraternal benefit society that provides life insurance and other financial products to members of the Knights of Columbus and their families. The program offers a range of insurance options, including term life insurance, whole life insurance, and annuities, designed to meet the needs of members at every stage of life. The Knights of Columbus Insurance Program is one of the largest and highest-rated insurance programs in North America, with billions of dollars in assets and millions of policyholders.

Programs: What does Council #15857 do?

The Knights of Council #15857 are active in many ways. Some are more visible, while others may not be. Some of the most visible ways that the council serves are in the monthly breakfast burrito sales, canned food drives, Lenten fish fry, annual Red Hidden Peach sales and sweet corn sales, and hosting the monthly parish Game Night and Movie Night. You'll almost always find knights helping set up and put away tables and chairs for parish events, as well as the canopy tent on McGivney Terrace, on the south side of the parish. They will also cook food for parish picnics and other events.

There are many ways the council serves that may not be seen. The council uses funds raised through events like peaches and sweet corn sales to support:

* Coats for Kids (winter coats for local kids that need one)
* Unbound (support for a young child, currently located in Madagascar)
* Seminarians and Diaconate candidates
* Canned Food Drives for local food banks
* Rosaries for funerals
* Pregnancy Support Centers
* March for Life and more!

Programs: How do I support the Knights of Columbus? You are probably already supporting the Knights. If you buy breakfast burritos, peaches, or sweet corn, you are helping support our causes! Join us for one of our events. We would love to see many more people playing games at Game Night or enjoying popcorn and a movie at Movie Night. All of these are ways to support the Knights.

Programs: How does the Knights of Columbus support the Catholic Church?

The Knights of Columbus supports the Catholic Church in a variety of ways, including financial contributions, volunteer service, and advocacy. Knights of Columbus councils often provide financial assistance to parishes and schools, sponsor religious education programs, and support seminarians and religious vocations. Additionally, Knights of Columbus members are active participants in parish life and ministries, serving as lectors, ushers, and ministers of the Eucharist.

Programs: How does the Knights of Columbus support charitable causes?

The Knights of Columbus supports charitable causes through a variety of programs and initiatives. Knights of Columbus councils raise funds for charitable organizations through activities such as pancake breakfasts, fish fries, and charity golf tournaments. Additionally, the Knights of Columbus donates millions of dollars each year to charitable organizations and causes, including disaster relief efforts, food banks, pro-life organizations, and programs for people with intellectual disabilities.

Participation: What do I have to do as a knight?

Once you are a knight, there is no requirement of how much or how little you need to participate in council events. The only real 'requirement' is paying the annual council dues, and if you have financial issues that make that hard, talk to the officers; we can help!

We recommend to all our knights the same thing if they aren't sure of what to do as a knight. Help with one thing, once a year. There are many programs that can use knights doing small things. When we hold a canned food drive, help hand out the 'shopping list' and bags after the mass you already attend. Help sell burritos or sweet corn or peaches, again after the mass you are already at! These services take fifteen minutes or less of your day and don't require you to make an extra trip anywhere.

Want a real stress-free way to participate? Join at a game night or movie night! What do you have to do? Play games or watch a movie! Buy a FootballCrazr ticket (or more than one).

Participation: What am I required to do as a knight?

As a council member, you'll receive emails about upcoming and ongoing events. If you see one that interests you, sign up and participate. Do you think you have a skill that could help (are you good with numbers and financials? Think you can help get more men interested in the Knights? Are you passionate about a program or area we already help in?) and want to serve the council in that way? Talk to an officer at the meeting.

Is there something you would like to see the Knights participate in or help with? Talk to the council at a meeting. We are always interested in new ways we can help.

Any man that joins is a candidate to be an officer in the council. Men like you are qualified to be an officer and help the council. No man is 'not good enough' to be an officer. No matter how you find a way to serve, we are happy to see you.

Participation: Do I have to attend meetings if I join the Knights of Columbus?

While attendance at council meetings is encouraged, it is not mandatory for members of the Knights of Columbus. Members are encouraged to participate in council activities and programs to the extent that their time and schedule allow.

# Do I Have to Be Active in a Certain Number of Events or Meetings after Joining?

No. This is a common misperception that unfortunately causes some busy men to be reluctant to join the Knights of Columbus.

While all knights are encouraged to be active, there is no set requirement. As a Knight, you can choose the projects that you become involved with, and you volunteer only the time you have available. As a family fraternal organization, the Order is dedicated to family life and the need to balance your time with other activities.

When are the Council Meetings? How many are there? Where are they held?

Council 15857 holds meetings on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month. There are two meetings, the Business Meeting, and the Planning Meeting. The Business Meeting starts with a Rosary at 6:40 p.m. and the Meeting itself starts at 7 p.m. and is on the second Tuesday of the month. This is a big meeting where the council discusses business matters, financials, and programs. The Planning Meeting is mostly for the officers, though all council members are invited and welcome to attend. This is where the members will get into more detailed discussion and review of programs and business matters that will be brought forward in a future Planning Meeting. The planning meeting starts at 7 p.m. on the 4th Tuesday of each month. All meetings are in Bakhita Hall at Guardian Angels Parish in Mead.

How do I join the Knights of Columbus?

We are so happy to hear you want to join the Knights! There are two ways to join the Knights:

Go to KofC and click on 'Join'. This will take a few minutes but is the fastest and easiest method. Make sure you put our council number, 15857, in. There is a code on the page to even get your first-year membership free! Once you complete the registration, you are already a knight! If we haven't already been talking with you, we will get in contact with you to help you join the council more.

Fill out a Form 100 that you can get from many of the knights or download on the links page and give to a knight or even turn into the parish office. Someone will contact you to help you finish becoming a knight. Whether you join the knights online or with a Form 100, you will go through a small ceremony to explain our tenets of Charity, Unity, and Fraternity. Your family is invited and welcome to watch the ceremony with you. This can also be watched/attended online if scheduling is an issue.

Why should I join the Knights of Columbus?

The Knights of Columbus are committed to making our community a better place, while supporting our Church. The Knights of Columbus also provides an opportunity for you and your family to get to know other families in our parish. Families can socialize, and our events often enable other parishioners the opportunity for fellowship also. Being a Knight is about much more than camaraderie, however. It is about being involved with your community. It is about supporting your local Catholic Church, while growing in your own faith. It is also about providing security for your family and enhancing your family life.

Can a non-Catholic join the Knights of Columbus?

No. Membership in the Knights of Columbus is open to practical Catholic men in union with the Holy See, who shall not be less than 18 years of age on their last birthday. A practical Catholic is one who lives up to the Commandments of God and the precepts of the Church. Today, this can be a difficult task; however, membership in the Knights of Columbus provides support to continue the journey of living as a faithful Catholic.

Can a woman join the Knights of Columbus? No. The Knights of Columbus is a fraternal organization for men. Some councils have a Ladies Auxiliary or Columbiettes which are adjacent to the council and work together with the Knights.

How much does it cost to join the Knights of Columbus?

The cost of joining the Knights of Columbus varies depending on the individual council and jurisdiction. In addition to the cost of membership dues, there may be additional fees for insurance coverage or other benefits. It is best to contact your local council for specific information on membership costs.

Join: How do I find a Knights of Columbus council near me?

To find a Knights of Columbus council near you, visit the Knights of Columbus website and use the "Find a Council" tool. You can search by location to find councils in your area.

Can I transfer my membership to a new council if I move?

Yes. If you are a member of the Knights of Columbus and move to a new location, you can transfer your membership to a new council in your new area. Simply contact your current council and request a transfer, and they can help you complete the necessary paperwork.

How do I become a Fourth Degree Knight?

To become a Fourth Degree Knight, a member must first attain the Third Degree of the Knights of Columbus. Once a member has attained the Third Degree, they can choose to join the Fourth Degree by participating in a special exemplification ceremony. Fourth Degree members are known as Sir Knights and wear distinctive regalia to signify their membership in the patriotic degree of the Order.

Can I join the Knights of Columbus if I am already a member of another fraternal organization?

Yes. Membership in the Knights of Columbus is open to Catholic men who meet the eligibility requirements, regardless of membership in other fraternal organizations. Many Knights of Columbus members are also members of other organizations, such as the Lions Club, Rotary Club, or Hibernians. The only exception is the Freemasons. The Catholic Church has said that the Freemasons go against Catholic beliefs, so a member of the masons is not a Catholic in Good Standing and therefore cannot be a member of the Knights of Columbus.

# Are There Dues Involved with Being a Knight?

Yes. The local council collects modest annual dues from members.

The dues are used to defray communication and administration costs by local, state and supreme councils.

# How Do I Become a Knight?

You must be a practicing Catholic man age 18 or older to be eligible to be a Knight. A practicing Catholic is one who is in union with the Holy See and who practices the precepts of the Catholic Church. Men interested in joining the Knights of Columbus can do so at any time during the year. You do not have to wait until a membership drive is held or until someone invites you to join. You can take the initiative to join. The first step in becoming a Knight is to contact a current Knight or membership director and complete a membership application. After your application is reviewed and approved by the council and admissions committee, you will attend a first degree exemplification. Following the first degree, you are considered a council member and are welcome to attend regularly held council meetings and events.

# How does Online Membership differ from membership in a local council?

Members who join online (“Online Membership”) are members of the Knights of Columbus who have not yet taken a First Degree or been admitted to a local council.

As a member, like all members of the Knights of Columbus, you will have the right to purchase insurance on yourself, your spouse and any dependent children. You will receive Columbia magazine, the free accidental death benefit (age restrictions apply), and are eligible for participation in the family fraternal benefit. You may also attend select local and state council events which are promoted by your state division.

# I don’t have time to join another organization; why should I join the Knights of Columbus?

Online Membership was designed to allow eligible Catholic men to join the Knights of Columbus online, through a streamlined, optimized process. Online Membership provides you with a digital membership experience, which will help you to grow as a Catholic man and a Knight.

As a Knight, you can choose the projects to be involved in within your own community. You will receive regular updates from your state council regarding news and events in your area and be presented with frequent opportunities to work alongside brother Knights in local councils.

# If I join online, am I joining a local Knights of Columbus council?

No you are not. When you join online you will not belong to a local council at first. Instead, you will become a member of the Knights of Columbus state division in your state of residence.

# What are the membership dues/fees for members who join online?

Online Membership dues are currently $30 per year across all jurisdictions. Dues are paid online to the Knights of Columbus Supreme Council and they cover both the member's state and supreme membership fees. If a member transfers to a local council, the dues are pro-rated to that council. Debit cards and credit cards are accepted as forms of payment by the Supreme Council.

# What are the requirements to join the Knights of Columbus?

Membership in the Knights of Columbus is open to men 18 years of age or older who are practical (that is, practicing) Catholics in union with the Holy See.

# What is a practical Catholic?

A practical Catholic accepts the teaching authority of the Catholic Church on matters of faith and morals, aspires to live in accord with the precepts of the Catholic Church, and is in good standing in the Catholic Church.

# Why Should I Join the Knights, I Already Belong to Another Volunteer Organization?

The Knights of Columbus are committed to making our community a better place, while supporting our Church. The Knights of Columbus also provides an opportunity for you and your family to get to know other families in our parish. Families can socialize, and our events often enable other parishioners the opportunity for fellowship also. Being a Knight is about much more than camaraderie, however. It is about being involved with your community. It is about supporting your local Catholic Church, while growing in your own faith. It is also about providing security for your family and enhancing your family life.

# If I sign up online, can I join a local council?

Yes! Council-based membership is the best way to experience the Knights of Columbus. Prospective members can join local councils just as they always have. Online Members can transition to local council membership, just as members from other local councils may transfer today. Transferring involves completing a membership form (Form #100) and going through the council admissions process. This includes meeting with council leaders and taking the First Degree ceremonial.