

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

Divine Mercy of Jesus Council 17249
St. Jerome's Catholic Church 10895 Hamlin Blvd. Largo, FL
February 2026 Volume 4 Issue 12



FROM AROUND THE WORLD
OF INTEREST TO CATHOLICS

The population of China is the lowest it's ever been.

Greenland's only Catholic priest says, "We're not just minerals or a military position."

Nigerian government urged to secure release of 167 worshippers abducted from churches.

Health spending bill would keep ban on tax-funded abortion.

10,000 pro-lifers march in Paris for annual March for Life.

Thousands gather at Bangladesh Marian shrine where villagers were saved during 1971 war.

March for Life 2026: 'Life Is a Gift.'



God's Greatest Miracle



Rocco Totino

Before we get too far into 2026, at the end of January every council needs to submit to the Supreme Form #1728, the Annual Survey of Fraternal Activity which covers the council's charitable disbursements and hours of service from January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025.

Our PGK Bill McCabe gave me valuable information about how to prepare the annual survey. Our Treasurer, Brother Rich Pettit, provided the financials, and the Past Deputy Grand Knight Bill Bannon and Deputy Grand Knight Brother Rick Hendrickson update spreadsheet of service hours by category. Here's a summary of how it broke down in our four program areas.

In Faith activities we gave away \$10,544.37 and expended 350 hours of service. You might remember we donated \$ 3,500.00 to the ECC for the outdoor classroom fund alone.

Family activity contributions were \$2,374.12 and 124 hours of service. Some examples include Lifeline and the Boy Scouts.

The Community activities totaled \$4,007.69 and 1285 hours of service. Examples include the Coats for Kids program and other community events.

Life activity contributions were \$2,200.15 and 105 hours of service. The council provided financial support to Foundations of Life pregnancy center. Everyone should be proud of our council's efforts in 2025. Monetary donations to our programs is possible due to our Bingo program. Bingo is our main source of income which allows us the flexibility to help so many worthy causes. In 2025 we conducted 45 weeks of Bingo. The total revenue (before expenses) was \$36,856.00. We have to subtract the cost of donuts (\$3,204), supplies (\$3,559.25), and the church share of 20% (\$6,018.55). The council proceeds equal \$24,074.20. Our council contributes 20% to the Columbiettes (\$4,814.84) for their help with Bingo. Our Bingo game hosted 3,010 players and the majority of them are regular players each week. That is the strength of our game. We provide fun and friendly games that build a sense of community. Our Parish Center is scheduled for renovation starting in May. Our council will make a contribution for this renovation. We are working with the parish office and other ministries to move bingo to the Msgr. Muldoon building for a period of about 3-4 months.

Let's hope 2026 is as successful. Thanks for all you do.



As far as I'm concerned, grown up means that I groan when I get up.

Coffee is the answer. but I forgot what the question was.

I tried to be normal once. Worst two minutes of my entire life.

I'd like to help you out. Which way did you come in?

My favorite exercise is a cross between a lunge and a crunch. I call it lunch.

Whatever you're doing, always give 100%, unless you're donating blood.

Common sense is like deodorant. The people who need it most never use it.

My neighbors are listening to great music, whether they like it or not.

Duct tape can't fix stupid, but it can muffle the sound.

Tomorrow is often the busiest day of the week.

When I was a kid my parents moved a lot, but I always found them.

Life is short. Smile while you still have teeth.

I'm writing a book. I've got the page numbers done.

A lot of people are afraid of heights. Not me. I'm afraid of widths.

This suspense is terrible. I hope it will last.

Nothing so needs reforming as other people's habits.

Cats seem to fight a lot, but there are plenty of kittens.

Today I will live in the present. However, if it is unpleasant, I will eat a cookie.

Various Council Activities

Welcome to our newest Knights



L to R: Bruce Villeneuve, Thomas Urban and recruiting director Jim Cullinan.



Life Director Kevin Manning presenting the first check of \$2,000.00 to Foundations of Life and Pregnancy Center Director Angie Salcilo.

Update on our council's baby-bottle drive

Our council's baby bottle drive is always very successful, thanks to our parishioners who make donations. Baby bottles with cash or checks are still being dropped off at the Parish office or left at a desk by the church gathering space. Life Director Kevin Manning soon will be presenting Angie Salcilo with the balance of \$5,000.00 plus \$2,000, For a total of \$7,000.00 plus, superseding last year's drive by few hundred dollars.

Our council is dedicated to community service. We extend to our wonderful parishioners and clergy our gratitude for making the baby-bottle drive successful for the second year in a row.

Knights of the Month



January
WDD Bill McMillan
and PGK Pete McCabe.



February
Jim Cullinan
and GK Rocco Totino

Debunking Common Misconceptions about the Bible

There are many common myths and misconceptions about the Bible that people readily believe. For example, did you think that one pair of each animal boarded Noah's Ark, or that Satan was the ruler of hell?

In fact, a lot of these ideas have come from misrepresentations in art and literature that have seeped into pop culture and folklore as the years have gone by.

Adam and Eve ate an apple

Many people believe Adam and Eve ate an apple in the Garden of Eden; however, the Bible never actually names the fruit. Genesis simply calls it "the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."

The serpent is Satan

Originally, the Bible used the serpent in Eden as a symbol of deception and cunning. In Genesis, the tempter is only called "the serpent." The identification of the serpent with the devil came later through interpretation and the New Testament.

Jesus was born in a stable

Many nativity scenes show Jesus being born in a wooden stable. However, the Bible never mentions a stable at all. In Luke, it simply says that Mary laid Jesus in a manger, which is a feeding trough, and implies it was a stable.

The animals went two by two

Most people picture every animal entering Noah's Ark in pairs. However, in Genesis, it actually says that "seven pairs" of clean animals and birds, and "one pair" of unclean animals, entered the ark at the same time.

There are only ten commandments

Many people assume that the Ten Commandments are the entirety of God's law in the Bible, but they are actually just a small portion of the laws within the Bible, which actually contains over 600 commandments.

Three kings visited Jesus

Illustrations of the manger scene usually show kings visiting baby Jesus, but the Bible never says that they were kings. In fact, it says, "wise men from the east," and they were more likely scholars or astrologers, not royal rulers.

The wise men visited the manger

There's also no actual evidence that they were at the Nativity at all. The shepherds came on the night of Jesus' birth, but Matthew says the wise men visited "a house" later, and Jesus may have been a toddler by then.

Moses parted the Red Sea

A common misconception is that Moses parted the Red Sea. However, the original text refers to a body of water which translates to "Sea of Reeds." This suggests that the event may have actually occurred in a shallow lake.

Mary Magdalene was a prostitute

Mary Magdalene has long been portrayed as a repentant prostitute, but the Bible never labels her that way. The confusion came from medieval sermons that merged her with other female figures in the Bible.

Jesus had long hair

Artistic depictions of Jesus often show him with flowing hair and European features, but the Bible gives

no physical description of him at all. The long-haired image of Jesus became popular through medieval and Renaissance art.

Money is the root of all evil

The Bible never actually says money itself is evil. It says, "The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil." So, it warns against greed and misplaced priorities, not wealth itself.

The Bible forbids alcohol

It's often claimed that the Bible condemns all use of alcohol, but this isn't accurate. Scripture warns strongly against drunkenness and addiction, yet it also portrays wine positively as a symbol of blessings and celebration.

Satan rules hell

Many people imagine Satan as the ruler of hell. This idea, however, comes more from medieval art, literature, and pop culture. Scripture actually portrays Satan not as a ruler of hell, but as one who will ultimately be punished there.

There are seven deadly sins

The famous "seven deadly sins" of pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, wrath, and sloth isn't found in scripture as a single list. It was developed by early Christian theologians, and while the Bible discusses those sins, they are not grouped in this way.

Jonah was swallowed by a whale

The story of Jonah is often retold as "Jonah and the whale," but the Bible never actually says that a whale swallowed him. The original text in Jonah refers to "a great fish," and does not specify what kind of sea creature it was.

If you find yourself
drowning in sin,
remember that
your lifeguard
walks on water.

If you feel like
quitting,
remember
why you
started.

Be thankful to all
who said no to you.
It is because of
them that you are
doing it yourself.

Proposed Arizona Legislation Threatens Seal of Confession

A bill recently introduced in the Arizona House of Representatives would force priests to break the seal of Confession or face felony charges by attempting to require clergy to report child abuse if the information about the abuse was learned while hearing a confession. Democratic Rep. Stacey Travers would do away with the current religious exemption for the seal of Confession in Arizona's statute on mandatory reports of physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and other harm done to minors. Under the revised statute, clergy would be required to disclose information if there is reasonable suspicion to believe that the abuse is ongoing, will continue or may be a threat to other minors.

Arizona Catholic Conference called Steele's bill "legislation hostile to

religious liberty."

It was previously reported that Washington state attempted to enforce a law violating the seal of confession in 2025 but was prevented from doing so when the U.S. Department of Justice and Catholic and Orthodox clergy sued. Washington agreed in October to drop the policy and respect the confession seal.

Jean Hill, the executive director of the Washington State Catholic Conference, which represents the state's bishops in matters of public policy, had this to say about the decision: "Preventing abuse and upholding the sacred seal of confession are not mutually exclusive; we can and must do both. That's why the Church sup-



ported the law's goal from the beginning and asked for a narrow exemption to protect the sacrament. We're grateful the state ultimately recognized it can prevent abuse without forcing priests to violate their sacred vows."

Facing Death, Renowned Cartoonist Announces His Intent to Convert to Christianity

Scott Adams, the 68-year-old cartoonist who created the decades-long "Dilbert" comic strip, announced he is converting to Christianity amid his deteriorating health caused by terminal cancer. Adams, who was diagnosed with prostate cancer in last year, had previously been critical of organized religion and expressed skepticism about traditional faiths in two fictional books entitled "God's Debris" and its sequel, "The Religion War."

On an episode of his podcast "Real Coffee with Scott Adams," the cartoonist expressed a change of heart following numerous conversations with Christian friends.

"I haven't been a believer, but I also have respect for any Christian who goes out of his way to try to convert me," Adams said, "Because how could I believe that you believe your own religion if you're not trying to convert me?"

Adams formed
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plan to
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s t i l l
t i m e ,
u n d e r -
is t h a t

never too late."

"And on top of that, any skepticism I have about reality would certainly be instantly answered if I wake up in heaven," he said.

"Speaking to my Christian friends," Adams said, "my conversion is coming, so you don't need to try talk me into it."

"If it turns out that there's nothing there, I've lost nothing, but I've respected your wishes, and I like doing that. If it turns out there is something there and the Christian model is the closest to it, I win."

Adams' cancer has spread through his bones, and he is paralyzed be-

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CONVERSION

low his waist. Father Thomas Petri, a Dominican theologian, said that learning of his conversion is very good news and that he will continue to pray for Adams.

Petri said he has seen some Christians online try to suggest that the conversion is not genuine, because he seems to be doing it merely as a wager in case God exists.

"Few people come to God with a perfectly formed faith," he said. "Yet, because we believe God is love, it's hard to think that Scott Adams' gesture would not be received and blessed by Him."

"As we approach death, we become more focused on things and have questions," Petri added. "Trusting in God opens us to the possibility that death is not an end but an avenue to something greater. I pray that even the most hardened sinners will have some desire for God even in their last moments. I think that's enough for God to work with."

Nine Truths about Today's World



1. We live in a time where we see many humans but not humanity.

2. Not everyone who smiles at you wants to see you happy.

3. We live in a time where smart phones can bring you to closer to those who are far, but distance you from those who are closer.

4. We live in a time when a single mother can care for ten children but ten children cannot care for a mother.

5. We live in a time where many know the price of everything but not the value of anything.

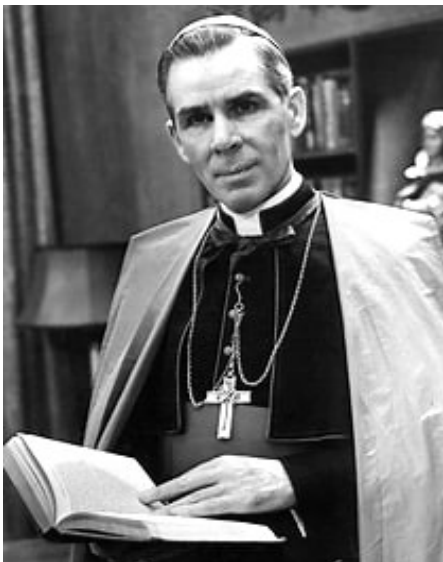
6. We live in a time when our contact lists are huge but our relationships are poor.

7. We live in a time when the rich walk miles to digest their food, but the poor must walk for miles to find food.

8. We live in a time when our possessions are more but our appreciation of them is less.

9. We live in a time when we know how to earn a good living but somehow forget how to live a good life.

Vatican Expected to Announce Beatification for Venerable Fulton J. Sheen



The Holy See is expected to announce in the coming weeks a date for the beatification of Venerable Fulton J. Sheen, the Emmy-winning archbishop whose television and radio ministry made him one of the most prominent Catholic voices in

mid-20th-century America. According to various sources the beatification is likely to take place in September of 2026.

The ceremony is widely expected to be held in Peoria, Illinois, where Sheen was ordained a priest in 1919 and where his cause for sainthood was opened in 2002. Peoria's bishop, Louis Tylka, is expected to play a leading role in the liturgy.

Sheen, who died in 1979, remains one of the most influential Catholic communicators in American history. After earning a doctorate in philosophy and theology, he taught at The Catholic University of America before becoming a national figure through radio. From 1930 to 1950, he hosted The Catholic Hour on NBC Radio, reaching millions of regular listeners across the United States, and an estimated four million listeners at the height of its popularity.

His public profile expanded dramatically with television. From 1952 to 1957, Sheen hosted Life Is Worth Living, a weekly program that regularly drew 10 million view-

ers each week and competed directly with popular secular broadcasts. Unlike other television personalities of the era, Sheen appeared alone on a small set, delivering lectures that combined Catholic theology, philosophy, and commentary on contemporary cultural and political issues.

Sheen won two Emmy Awards for his television work, including the 1953 award for "Most Outstanding Television Personality." Accepting the award, he remarked that he received it for God. His success made him one of the first Catholic clergy to achieve sustained national visibility through mass media.

The Vatican approved a miracle attributed to Sheen's intercession in July 2019: a medically unexplained recovery of a child born stillborn in 2010 after his parents prayed to Sheen. That approval cleared the theological requirements for beatification, and a ceremony was scheduled for December 2019.

When confirmed, Sheen will become one of the most prominent American Catholics to be beatified.

Another Miracle Takes Place at Lourdes

Antonia Raco, a 67-year-old Italian woman long affected by an incurable neurodegenerative illness, was officially introduced to the press in Lourdes, where her healing. Antonia Raco was recognized as the 72nd miracle attributed to the intercession of the Virgin Mary since the apparitions of 1858. Diagnosed in 2006 with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) — a progressive and fatal condition — Raco experienced a recovery that defied medical explanation.

First announced by the Sanctuary of Lourdes on April 16, the recognition marked the culmination of 16 years of medical, canonical, and pastoral inquiry. The woman, a mother and active parishioner from Basilicata in southern Italy, had been living with the disease for several years when she traveled to Lourdes in 2009.

"I had wanted to go to Lourdes since I was a child," she recalled. That wish came true that summer, when she and her husband, Antonio, traveled to the shrine with the Italian pilgrimage association Unitalsi.

The experience, however, was not exactly as she had once imagined: She arrived in a wheelchair, already struggling to breathe and swallow.

On the second day, sanctuary volunteers brought her to the baths. "We prayed together. That's when I heard a beautiful young female voice say three times: 'Don't be afraid!'" she recounted during the press conference in Lourdes, held in the presence of religious and medical authorities.

Raco wore the white veil and uniform of the Hospitallers of Lourdes — the volunteer caregivers she now joins each year, assisting the sick with the same compassion once shown to her.

"At that moment, I burst into tears and prayed for the intentions I had brought with me," she said.

She described a sudden, sharp pain in her legs during immersion, as though "they were taken away from me." She did not disclose what had happened to anyone during her stay and returned home in a wheelchair.

It was there, in her living room with



Antonia Raco, center

her husband, that she again heard the same voice urging her, "Tell him! Call him!" Obeying the voice, she called out to her husband, who had just stepped into the kitchen. "Something has happened," she told him.

In that moment, she stood unaided for the first time in years. Overcome with emotion, the couple embraced, crying together as they realized she was cured.

Why Do Some Religions Disregard Birthdays?

There are a few religions that don't celebrate birthdays, most notably Jehovah's Witnesses. They believe that birthday celebrations are rooted in paganism and therefore refrain from participating in them. Other religions, such as Islam, also don't traditionally celebrate birthdays, although there is some debate on the

matter among Muslims. Some Muslims believe that birthday celebrations are acceptable if they are done in moderation and without going overboard. Ultimately, it is up to each individual to decide whether or not to celebrate their birthday within their religious beliefs. Jehovah's Witnesses believe that birthdays are rooted in

paganism and should therefore be avoided.

The origins of birthday celebrations can be traced back to ancient pagan festivals where people would worship the sun god or other deities. For Jehovah's Witnesses, participating in birthday celebrations would be tantamount to idolatry.

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Money is the root of all evil

The Bible never actually says money is evil. It says, "The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil."

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It's often claimed that the Bible condemns alcohol, but this isn't accurate. Scripture warns strongly against drunkenness and addiction, yet it also portrays wine positively as a symbol of celebrations.

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That there are seven deadly sins (pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, wrath, and sloth) isn't found in scripture as a single list. It was developed by early Christian theologians, and while the Bible discusses those sins, they are not grouped in this way.

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KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS IN SERVICE TO ONE. IN SERVICE TO ALL.



Council 17249 Divine Mercy of Jesus Officers for fraternal year 2025/2026

Chaplain:
Grand Knight:
Deputy Grand Knight:
Chancellor:
Recorder:
Financial Secretary:
Treasurer:
Advocate:
Warden:
Inside Guard:
Outside Guard:
1- Year Trustee:
2- Year Trustee:
3- Year Trustee:
Lecturer:
Program Director:
Membership Director:
Faith Director:
Family Director:
Community Director:
Life Director:
District Deputy:
Field Agent
Newsletter Editor

Fr Mike O'Brien
Rocco Totino
Rick Hendrickson
Joe Coyne
Bob Jodal
Fred Belzel
Rich Pettit
Pete Nuñez
Joe Ghezzi
Clint Walker
Joe Moore
Jerry Kleber
Bill Bannon PDGK
Pete McCabe PGK
Tim Kunish
Rick Hendrickson
Jim Cullinan
Pete Nuñez
Mike Keeser
Pete Ganio
Kevin Manning
Bill McClelland PGK
John Bucher
Jim Hand