

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

Divine Mercy of Jesus Council 17249

St. Jerome's Catholic Church 10895 Hamlin Blvd. Largo, FL
December 2025 Volume 4 Issue 12



From the Desk of the Grand Knight



GK Rocco Totino

Christmas and a new year.

One year has passed since two major hurricanes devastated our neighborhoods. We are thankful for the good weather this year. Most of our neighbors and friends are back to normal. Our Church roof was replaced, welcoming returning snowbirds. Thanksgiving, Advent "Little Blue Books," Nativity scene, new Breaking Bread Books: our Parish is in full swing with excitement to celebrate

We look forward to our annual social event, "Advent/Christmas Dinner," on December 10, 2025, a time to be with family and friends. (See extended notice on the next page.)

Our council is well positioned to achieve Star Council. For the remainder of this year and next year, we will be concentrating our efforts on Faith and Action programs. Our Faith, Family, Community and Life Directors will be asking to fund programs and labor hours. Brother Knights, engage and share your talents!

Thank you to all our dedicated Bingo volunteers, who make Bingo fun for all who come each week.

The council breakfast is gaining popularity. This month we served 128 guests.

We issued \$1000.00 check to Life Line to purchase Thanksgiving turkeys and continued to provide financial assistance of \$500.00 each to seminarians Ricardo Velasco and Dakota Gates.

We are thankful to have four new knights joining our council; exemplification will be December 4th, 7pm at Blessed Sacrament. Please welcome them: Max Rieumont, Thomas (Tom) Urban, Bruce Villeneuve, and Phillip (Phil) Campanella.

Two months ago, we had two transfers, both fourth-degree Knights: Thad Wexler and Mark Coyne. A new Knight and Inside Guard is Clint Walker.

Our final officers' meeting for this year will be December 3, 2025.

Feast of the Holy Family is Sunday, December 28, 2025, at the 9 a.m. Mass. A simple reception for Knights, Columbiettes, and their families will follow. Fr. Mike will preside.

Our next general meeting will be January 14, 2026.

On behalf of the officers, we wish you and your family a most blessed Merry Christmas and happy, healthy new year!

God Bless

Vivat Jesus,

Rocco Totino GK

The Advent season in 2025 will begin on November 29th and will include the following key dates:



1st Sunday of Advent: November 30, 2025

2nd Sunday of Advent: December 7, 2025

3rd Sunday of Advent: December 14, 2025

4th Sunday of Advent: December 21, 2025,
when the fourth candle on the Advent wreath is lit.

LAUGHTER
~ is the best ~
MEDICINE

They say once you retire you will travel more. What they don't tell you is it's to doctor's appointments.



**WITH ALL MY
ACHES AND PAINS
I'M AFRAID
I HAVE THAT
CHINESE DISEASE.
'YUNG NO MO**

Today in Florida



Do not let them take your temperature going into the store! It's a scam! They're erasing your memory. I went for bread and eggs and came home with Blue Bell Ice Cream and Snickers.

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS CHRISTMAS PARTY
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10
5:30 PM -- 9:00 PM
ST. JEROME PARISH CENTER

*GARDEN SALAD

*MIXTURE OF FRIED AND GRILLED CHICKEN
WITH WHITE SAWMILL GRAVY

*MASHED POTATOES WITH BROWN GRAVY

*GREEN BEANS AND CORN

*BISCUITS AND CORN MUFFINS

*ICED TEA / LEMONADE / OR WATER
BEER AND WINE

*COMPLIMENTARY

Live Music by Ricky B Trio

\$20 Per Person (Plus bring and dessert)

Buy your tickets by December 4th

No tickets will be sold at the door

Dress Code: Christmas / Holiday Attire

Brother Knights

Our Christmas party is a social event. Knights, Columbiettes, family members and friends are welcomed to attend these festivities.

We are planning to set up the Parish Center to accommodate 100 party goers, and order food. Please purchase your tickets no later than December 4th.

Please email me at rt49lilburn@yahoo.com or text me at 404-451-4535 to reserve your tickets. To date we have 72 tickets sold. If you are in town, join us at the Christmas party. Tickets are \$20 each.

Vivat Jesus,

Rocco Totino GK



The Knights of Columbus Council 17249 at Work

Coats for Kids



Community Director Pete Ganio delivered 48 coats for kids at Clothes to Kids Inc. in Clearwater. Coats will be distributed to families asking assistance.

Knight of the Month



Mr. Say-Yes-to-Life, our Life Director Kevin Manning, organized the baby-bottle drive at St Jerome to raise money for the Foundation of life and pregnancy Center in Seminole. At two weekend Masses our generous parishioners donated \$7,000.00. Foundation of life and Pregnancy Center, run by Catholic Charities, will put the money to good use, helping young mothers and new-born children.

Knights work together to set up nativity scene



L - R: Jim Sander, Bruce Villeneuve, Joe Moore, and Joe Coyne. (Missing are Harry Kane and Roco Totino)

9 Catholic Celebrities

Actor Mark Wahlberg, known for roles in *The Departed* and *Transformers*, credits his Catholic faith for keeping him grounded. He practices daily prayer and attends Mass regularly.



Jim Caviezel portrayed Jesus in *The Passion of the Christ* and Jim Ballard in *Sound of Freedom*. His devout Catholic beliefs have greatly influenced his career choices and dedication to faith-based films. He has credited Pope John Paul II as one of his greatest influences.



Nicole Kidman was raised in a devout Irish Catholic family in Australia and still considers faith to be an integral part of her life. She raised her children Catholic, regularly attends Mass with her family, and even wears a crucifix her grandmother gave her.



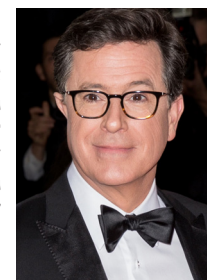
Actor Martin Sheen, known for starring as Jed Bartlet on *The West Wing* and as Kit Carruthers in the film *Badlands*, is deeply committed to Catholicism. His faith has influenced his activism in peace, social justice, and humanitarian causes.



Irish actor Pierce Brosnan is a lifelong Catholic. His faith has helped him navigate personal tragedies, such as the death of his first wife Cassandra Harris in 1991 and his daughter Charlotte Brosnan in 2014. After these losses, Brosnan reflected on what being Catholic means to him: "At the end of the day, you have to have something, and for me, that is God, Jesus, my Catholic upbringing, and my faith."



Comedian and late-night host Stephen Colbert is a practicing Roman Catholic. Known for his humorous, yet deep discussions on faith, he regularly integrates his beliefs into his work.



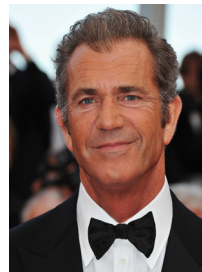
Martin Scorsese grew up in a Catholic environment in New York City's Little Italy and once considered becoming a priest. Although he considered himself a lapsed Catholic after three divorces, he later reaffirmed his faith. In 2024, he narrated "Martin Scorsese Presents: The Saints," an eight-part docudrama series that explores the lives of selected Christian saints.



Leonardo DiCaprio, best known for films like *Titanic*, *Inception*, *The Wolf of Wall Street*, and *Once Upon A Time in Hollywood*, was raised Roman Catholic. He still credits his early faith for influencing his environmental activism. In 2016, he met with Pope Francis, not to bond over Catholicism, but to discuss their shared concern for the environment.



Mel Gibson, famous for starring in and directing *The Passion of the Christ*, was raised in a large, Irish Catholic family. Various sources are suggesting that he is going to make a sequel to his film, but no one knows for sure.



A person's greatest emotional need is to feel appreciated.

BITS AND PIECES

Nearly 100 faith leaders are imploring Trump to compel Syria to lift blockades preventing humanitarian aid from reaching Christians.

Massive museum to educate visitors on the Shroud of Turin.

St. Cecilia made a vow of virginity in the 3rd century. She was brutally murdered for refusing to renounce her faith.

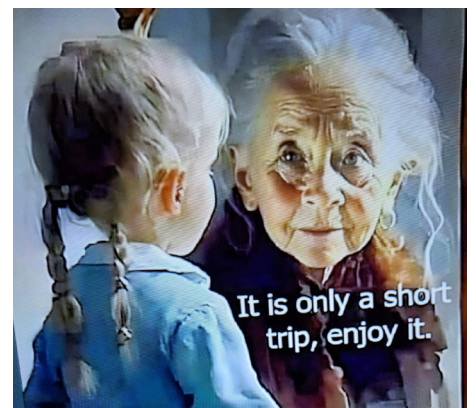
We live in a time where we see many humans but not humanity.

Pope Leo gave an inspiring speech to America's teens.

Catholics who advocate strong but humane immigration enforcement are sometimes accused of disobeying their bishops.

The word for the teaching authority of the Church is Magisterium.

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



Pope Leo's Four Favorite Films

"It's a Wonderful Life"

Seasonal favorite about the joys and trials of a good man (James Stewart) who, facing financial ruin on the eve of Christmas, contemplates suicide until his guardian angel (Henry Travers) shows him how meaningful his life has been to those around him. Director Frank Capra's unabashedly sentimental picture of mainstream American life is bolstered by a superb cast (including Lionel Barrymore as a conniving banker) and a wealth of good feelings about such commonplace virtues as hard work and helping one's neighbor. Young children may find the story's dark moments unsettling.

"Life Is Beautiful"

Bittersweet comic fable in which an Italian Jewish bookseller (Roberto Benigni) uses his imagination to convince his little son that their grim existence in a Nazi concentration camp is just an elaborate contest and that they are sure to win the grand prize. Also co-written and directed by Benigni, the story starts off as a slapstick comedy with the young man courting his future wife, then midway becomes a touchingly human story of a parent's irrepressible determination to protect his child from terror and misery. Theme of genocide.

"Ordinary People"

Donald Sutherland and Mary Tyler Moore give fine performances as confused and troubled parents trying to cope with the psychological aftershocks that result when the older of two sons dies in a boating accident and the surviving son (Timothy Hutton) attempts suicide. Directed by Robert Redford, the movie hints that the characters' complacent and wholly materialistic environment may have contributed to the family's instability, but these aspects remain underdeveloped. The problems are very real yet the movie is strangely cool and distanced from them. Due to the heaviness of the theme and some instances of rough language, it's best for mature viewers.

"The Sound of Music"

Particularly fine screen version of the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical about the formative years of the Trapp Family Singers in Austria between the two world wars. Its interesting story, solid cast (headed by Julie Andrews and Christopher Plummer), lovely music and intelligent lyrics, colorful scenery and pleasant fantasy will entertain the mind and enliven the spirit. Directed by Robert Wise, the movie has held up over the years as thoroughgoing refreshing family entertainment.



6 Comments That Are Worth Considering

Once is a mistake; twice is a decision.

People never forget the way you make them feel.

If you're not gaining friends, you're not growing.

An apology holds no weight if you have to ask for it.

If your absence doesn't affect someone, your presence doesn't matter.

You can't heal from what you don't let yourself feel.

US Bishops Prohibit Catholic Hospitals from Providing Sex-Change Surgeries

It was decided in a 206-8 vote, with seven abstentions, during its 2025 Plenary Assembly in Baltimore, Maryland, to make this update in the seventh edition of "Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services."

Their intention was to have the newest update on the set of directives that reflect the teaching of a 2024 Vatican document on the Moral Limits to Technological Manipulation of the Human Body. The new edition of the directives incorporates the teaching that any interventions attempting to change a person's sex risk threatening the unique dignity the person has received from the moment of concep-

tion.

"In order to respect the nature of the human person as a unity of body and soul," the directive states, "Catholic health-care services must not provide or permit medical interventions, whether surgical, hormonal, or genetic, that aim to alter the fundamental order of the human body in its form or function."

The directive also emphasizes Catholic hospitals' responsibility to



holistically support people suffering from gender dysphoria.

"In accord with the mission of Catholic health care, which includes serving those who are vulnerable, Catholic health care providers must employ all appro-

appropriate resources to mitigate the suffering of those who experience gender dysphoria," the document states, "and to provide for the full range of their health care needs, employing only those means that respect the fundamental order of the human body."

The Waters of Lourdes

Gabriel Gargam hadn't been to church in fifteen years. He had grown up in a Catholic home but had lost his faith by the time he was fifteen. In his thirties, he had a respectable job as a traveling mail clerk for the Orleans Railway Company.

It was December of 1899, and he was sorting the mail on a train making its way from Bordeaux to Paris when suddenly it seemed as if the whole world exploded.

Later, Gabriel would find out that his train had collided with another train going fifty miles an hour. He was thrown 52 feet from his own train where he lay unconscious in the snow for seven hours. His life was hanging on by a thread when he was finally found, put on a stretcher, and taken to the hospital.

The doctors there gave him the worst news of his life: he was paralyzed from the waist down.

Two years passed and Gabriel never left his bed. He couldn't handle solid food, so he was given nutrients by a feeding tube once a day. He didn't have the strength to speak. His body withered to a meager 78 pounds. He was slowly dying and so was his will to live.

Desperate to save their son, Gabriel's mom started praying for a miracle. She knew that the waters of Lourdes in France were reported to miraculously heal countless pilgrims every year. A simple dip into the water was often enough to remedy even the most severe of illnesses. Gabriel didn't want to go. The travel was likely to kill him and for what? He knew recovery was impossible. But after months of his mom's begging, he relented.



So, Gabriel was put on a stretcher, loaded into a train, and taken to his seat. That effort alone caused him to pass out. For over an hour, no one could wake him. Yet they pressed on.

It was 7 am on August 20, 1901, when they arrived at Lourdes. Gabriel was carried to the miraculous pool and immersed in the water. But the water did not heal him. Instead, the effort was so draining that Gabriel collapsed and stopped breathing. He had a nurse traveling with him, and all attempts to revive him proved unsuccessful. Eventually, believing he was dead, his mother placed a cloth over his face, devastated.

As they transported his body, the daily Eucharistic procession caused them to pause and step aside. Seeing the sorrow of the group, the priest stopped with the monstrance containing the Host, and blessed them, making the sign of the cross with the Eucharist.

Immediately, there was movement under the cloth. Everyone was astonished as Gabriel sat up and spoke for the first time since his accident. "I can walk! I feel I can walk."

He stood up, took a few steps, and announced that he was cured.

Later that day, doctor after doctor examined Gabriel. Not only was he miraculously alive, he was also pronounced completely cured. No one could explain how it had happened or how he was even capable of walking given the state of his body.

But Gabriel knew. And so did everyone who witnessed the miracle. Jesus had healed him. Just as he walked the earth 2,000 years ago making the lame walk, the blind see, and the dead rise to new life, he moves through lives in the hidden form of the Eucharist working the very same miracles.

Gabriel wasn't just physically transformed. His spirit came alive. Overflowing with gratitude toward God, he consecrated the rest of his life to the Eucharist and to serving others. Every year for 50 years he returned to Lourdes and worked, carrying countless people on stretchers to seek God's healing.

This is what Jesus does. He transforms the lives of the people he encounters. In fact, there is nothing more beautiful than the transformation of a man or woman into who God made them to be.

Jesus makes all things new. There is no relationship, no family, no career, no dream, no suffering, no corner of your soul that Jesus cannot infuse with new life if you hand it over to him. The only question is this: will you give it all to him?

5 Questions Christians Struggle With

1. Why Does God Allow So Much Suffering?

This question lingers quietly when tragedy strikes close to home. Believers know about free will and brokenness, but those explanations don't always ease the sting of watching loved ones suffer. In prayer circles, it might be phrased politely, but behind closed doors, the raw thought is simpler: if God is loving and powerful, why does He let so much pain continue unchecked?

2. Is it wrong that my faith feels weak?

Everyone is told doubt is normal, yet when it actually happens, guilt quickly follows. Some Christians feel like admitting weakness makes them poor examples. They smile and nod in Bible study, but later at home, they wonder if struggling to believe makes them less genuine. The pressure to always appear certain keeps them from voicing what's really going on.

3. Why don't I feel God's presence anymore?

There are times when prayer feels alive, and others when it feels like speaking into silence. During those dry seasons, some quietly ask themselves why they no longer sense God nearby. They may still attend church, sing hymns, and serve, but the warmth has gone missing. The fear of saying it aloud is real. What if others don't understand, or worse, judge them for it.

4. Am I really forgiven?

Christians know the verses about grace and mercy, yet past mistakes can still haunt them. Late at night, old choices replay, and the question surfaces: Did God truly forgive me, or am I

just hoping He did? This doubt rarely makes it into conversation because admitting it might seem like rejecting scripture. Still, the fear sits heavy, even for those who serve faithfully.

5. Why do my prayers go unanswered?

people are told God hears every prayer, but when years pass without change, it's hard not to wonder. Quietly, many ask themselves if they're praying wrong, if God is disappointed, or if He's simply not listening. The silence after repeated prayers can feel unbearable, but few are willing to admit how deeply that silence has shaken them.



St. Jude: The Patron Saint of Lost Causes

St. Jude, also known as Thaddeus, was one of Jesus' 12 apostles.

He is believed to have written the letter of Jude, one of the shortest books of the Bible, and is thought to have been martyred in Beirut around 65 A.D.

He is typically depicted with a club or axe, symbolizing the way he died, as well as with a flame above his head, which refers to Pentecost.

Although Jude is not mentioned much in the Bible and had only one quote attributed to him in the Gospel of John (14:22), this quiet apostle is extremely popular among Catholics today.

His popularity probably stems from his patronage of lost causes. An experience Jude had while in the city of Edessa is said to be the reason why he is associated with "impossible" situations.

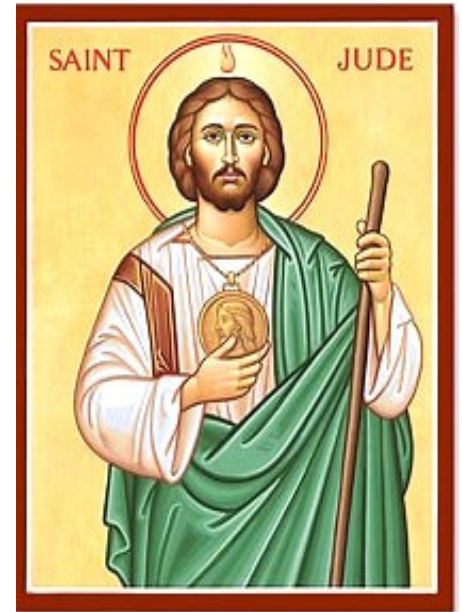
According to the ancient Church

historian Eusebius, while Jesus was still alive, the ruler Abgar V of Edessa was afflicted with an incurable and painful disease. He had heard of the miracles of Jesus and wrote him a letter requesting a visit. Jesus responded that he would send one of his disciples.

After Jesus' ascension into heaven, Jude went to evangelize near the city of Edessa and went to visit Abgar. Jude laid his hands on the sick ruler, and he was reportedly instantly healed.

Many people choose to carry the image of St. Jude on a medal or as a pendant on a necklace for comfort and call on him in their time of need and healing.

His feast is shared with St. Simon, who was also said to be a cousin of Jesus and is believed to have traveled to Persia with Jude, where they were both martyred.



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