

Knights of Columbus History at St. John the Baptist Parish.

Thanks to Jim Marino, Sean Conley and Alan Kalitzky for helping to put this article together!

The Knights of Columbus council at St. John the Baptist Parish was formed on March 29, 1982 –the 100th anniversary of the Knights – when Father John Sebahar, the Pastor asked Jim Marino to try to establish a Knights Council for his church.

The Knights started with 33 members and currently have just over 200 families represented from all parts of the parish and other areas. The Charter is on Display in Sebahar hall with the names of the founding members.

The Knights established the Pancake breakfast at the request of Father Sebahar, to find a way for families to meet each other and share family activities. Pancake breakfasts evolved from just Pancakes and sausage to today's menu of Pancakes, Sausage, eggs, hash browns, juice and coffee. Pancakes are also served with Blueberry, Strawberry and Chocolate chip additions.

Also During their first ten years, the Knights also joined with other parish organizations to sponsor a St. Patrick's day corned Beef and Cabbage dinner dance. A St. Valentine dance and also a St. Joseph Table. Cooking is their favorite activity and they expanded again to cook for the Parish Picnic. Cooking Beef roasts over an open wood fire, then Pig Roasts and of course Hamburgers, Hotdogs and Bratwurst.

Using funds generated by their various cooking activities, they gave scholarships to St. John's students attending St. Francis High School and also provide funds for families to help their children attend St. John's school.

The next cooking activity – Fish Frys during lent was requested by Father Frank Vistas to again give St. John Families wholesome local activity to enjoy with their Winfield friends. Using dollars generated by many Fish Frys and with additional donations from members and the help of many men in the community, the Knights generated funds to build a garage addition to the parish home. Skilled craftsman helped with the design and in the actual building of the Garage. Again using funds generated and skilled craftsman and donations from Knights and Winfield craftsmen, the Knights designed and built the Pavilion next to the church. They also updated and upgraded the grotto behind the Mary Garden with the addition of a Fire Pit. This grotto was originally built by Joe Koenigmen as a memorial to his mother. Joe was awarded the Eagle Scout award for his original project. Father Matt Prachter asked the Knights to add a fire Pit that has been used many times by the teens of the parish.

With the help of a grant from Central DuPage Hospital, the Knights purchased a used food service trailer. This trailer gave the Knights the opportunity to expand their cooking activities to generate additional funds for our community. These funds were used to assist various food pantries, the Larson veterans shelter, to furnish a room for the Ronald McDonald house, to purchase winter coats for the past 15 years to donate to family shelters and grade school children in Wheaton, Carol Stream and West Chicago.

The Knights have provided honor guards for many Conformations ceremonies, First Communion, and memorial masses. They are active on many parish committees and other parish organizations and help the school in many ways.

The Knights sponsor a room at the Winfield Ronald McDonald house. They instituted a Charity golf outing to raise the funds for the room and had a five year commitment to pay for the room. The success of their charitable activities led them to be asked to save the Winfield Good Old Days celebration and Winfield scholarship when the Chamber of Commerce had to back out of the event. They were so successful at Good Old Days, that they were able to increase the number of scholarships and have funds remaining to support other local events and activities.

The local Knights have also built a Pavilion at St. John's church for the church and community to use and a similar pavilion on the Riverwalk.

Recently, they have completed the rebuilding and furnishing of the service kitchen in Sebahar hall to a full food service certified kitchen. This will enable the parish to have many additional activities in Sebahar hall and continue generating activities for our parishioners and community to have events within Winfield. .

Over the nearly 40 years the Knights have been in Winfield, the Knights have participated in the Intellectually Disabled Candy drive. They have averaged \$5,000 per year collected to aid organizations that work with the disabled. They have also sponsored a yearly Christmas party and Easter gathering for severely Disabled youngsters.

Working with many other civic organizations, they have contributed greatly to continue to make Winfield a great place to discover and live. Our principles clearly set our path and reasons we are here. You'll see us in the Community all times of the year living our Motto:

"In Service to One, In Service to All"

All the good works we do are informed by our four core principles:

Charity – Our Catholic faith teaches us to "Love thy neighbor as thyself." Members of the Knights of Columbus show love for their neighbors by conducting food drives and donating the food to local soup kitchens and food pantries, by [volunteering at Special Olympics](#), and by supporting, both spiritually and materially, mothers who [choose life](#) for their babies. Knights recognize that our mission, and our faith in God, compels us to action. There is no better way to experience love and compassion than by helping those in need, a call we answer every day.

Unity – None of us is as good as all of us. Members of the Knights of Columbus all know that – together – we can accomplish far more than any of us could individually. So we stick together...we support one another. That doesn't mean that we always agree or that there is never a difference of opinion. It does mean that – as a Knight of Columbus – you can count on the support and encouragement of your brother Knights as you work to make life better in your [parish and community](#).

Fraternity – Blessed Michael J. McGivney founded the Knights of Columbus, in large part, to provide assistance to the widows and children left behind when the family breadwinner died – often prematurely. The Order's [top-rated insurance program](#) continues to do this today, as do the good works of individual Knights, who gave more than 75.6 million service hours in 2017, illustrating how Catholics serve each other in fraternity and mercy.

Patriotism – Members of the Knights of Columbus, be they Americans, Canadians, Mexicans, Cubans, Filipinos, Poles, or Dominicans, are patriotic citizens. We are proud of our devotion to God and country, and believe in standing up for both. Whether it's in public or private, the Knights remind the world that Catholics support their nations and are amongst the greatest citizens

*Excerpts provided by the Knights of Columbus, www.kofc.org

Men interested in joining the Knights, should contact any of the Knights at their various functions or one of our priests.