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## Knights of the Eucharist

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K of C councils lead parish efforts to foster deeper faith in and devotion to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament

By Peter Jesser Smith



Members of Holy Rosary of Wea Council 12546 in Bucyrus, Kan., pray in the perpetual adoration chapel at Queen of the Holy Rosary Parish. (Photo by Ryan Nicholson)

As evening Mass ended at Incarnation Catholic Church in Orlando, Fla., on May 6, several Knights set up a table filled with candles at the front of church. It was time for the parish's monthly "Candlelight Adoration," held every First Friday with help from St. Thomas à Becket Council 16236. One by one, parishioners came forward to light a candle and kneel in prayer before Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, exposed in the monstrance upon the altar.

"From the early days of the council, Candlelight Adoration has brought the parish together and furthered devotion to our Lord in the Eucharist," Past Grand Knight Michael Coleman explained. "Brother Knights, families, children go before the Lord and offer their adoration, contrition, thanksgiving and supplications."

Later the same night in Bucyrus, Kan., James Brown, a member of Holy Rosary of Wea Council 12546, entered the perpetual adoration chapel of Queen of the Holy Rosary Church. It was time for his weekly Holy Hour. Brown is just one of scores of Knights from Council 12546 and Immaculate Conception Council 12437 who pray in the chapel regularly, some of them taking hard-to-fill early morning slots.

From coast to coast and in jurisdictions around the world, Knights of Columbus play a role in strengthening eucharistic faith in their parishes: regularly participating in Mass, organizing Holy Hours, leading eucharistic processions, and adding reverence to special liturgies as part of Fourth Degree honor guards.

Now, with the launch of the three-year National Eucharistic Revival this month, all members are urged to deepen their devotion to Jesus Christ in the holy Eucharist through prayer, faithful attendance at Mass and adoration. The Supreme Council has also developed eucharistic procession training materials in consultation with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and the supreme knight has asked Knights to "stand ready" to help their bishops and pastors with revival efforts.

The Knights of Columbus has a long history of supporting efforts to promote eucharistic devotion among the Catholic faithful. Two thousand Canadian Knights were in attendance at the first International Eucharistic Congress in the Western Hemisphere, held in Montreal in 1910. Large K of C delegations later took part in the 1926 IEC in Chicago and the 1976 IEC in Philadelphia, while thousands of Knights participated in the 2004 IEC in Guadalajara, Mexico, and the 2016 IEC in Cebu City, Philippines.

In the United States, the Order organized back-to-back Eucharistic Congresses in 2002 and 2003 in Washington, D.C., followed by a third congress in Chicago during the Year of the Eucharist in 2005. These events drew thousands of Knights and their families together for a wide array of events centered on the Blessed Sacrament.

Already this year, Knights in Oregon worked closely with Archbishop Alexander Sample of Portland and Bishop Liam Cary of Baker to assist with a statewide Holy Hour on Jan. 29. Prayer intentions for the Holy Hour included divine guidance for the synodal process called for by Pope Francis, a deeper appreciation for the sanctity of human life, and the revitalization of parishes.



Luis Rosas, past grand knight of St. Thomas à Becket Council 16236, and his wife, Sandra, kneel before the exposed Eucharist at Incarnation Catholic Church on May 6. The council helps to organize Candlelight Adoration each month after First Friday Mass at the parish, which is part of the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter. (Photo by Chris Casler)

Oregon State Deputy Ray Prom, who coordinated the effort, has been involved with monthly eucharistic adoration at his parish for 20 years.

"So many graces and blessings flow through eucharistic adoration," Prom said. "And we need those graces and blessings now more than ever."

Councils that have encouraged eucharistic devotion in their brother Knights have seen it energize their charitable work.

With more than 200 members, Holy Rosary of Wea Council 12546 in Kansas is a highly active presence at Queen of the Holy Rosary Parish. The parish's perpetual adoration chapel — founded 25 years ago by a member of the council, Paul Guetterman — has been a spiritual dynamo, sustaining the Knights' service to the church, the school and the community, according to Grand Knight Robert Triano.

"One of the things I say to God is, 'All right, God, direct me this week. What do you need done?'" said Triano, who is one of the 200 adorers who keep watch at the adoration chapel.

"Direct me to what I need to do. How can I serve you?"

Michael Coleman, past grand knight of Council 16236 in Orlando, has also seen the effects of the council's eucharistic efforts. In addition to the monthly Candlelight Adoration evenings, the Knights host a Saturday morning Men's Holy Hour quarterly around the Ember Days — four seasonal times of prayer and penance traditionally observed in Advent, Lent, Pentecost and September.

"This has been a great opportunity for men to come in and spend time with our Lord," Coleman said, noting that the Knights' witness in promoting Holy Hours and devotion to the Eucharist has helped inspire more men join the Order.

"With the Holy Hour," he said, "we've been able to attract faithful men who believe in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist and who look forward to serving with other faithful men."

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PETER JESSERER SMITH writes for EWTN's *National Catholic Register*.

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