

The Knights of Columbus are the largest Catholic fraternal organization in the world! ...who are they again? Here are 25 things every Catholic should know about this amazing organization!

1) It all started when a parish priest wanted to help Catholic families.

The year was 1882 and anti-Catholic sentiment was running high. Catholic immigrants faced hostility and were thrown into dangerous work conditions which could cause early deaths. So, 29-year-old Father Michael McGivney gathered the men of St. Mary's Church in New Haven, Conn., to establish a lay organization.

The goal? To unite men of Catholic faith and provide for the families of deceased members.

2) The Order is the world's largest Catholic fraternal organization.

Today, with nearly 2 million members worldwide, the Order is still true to its founding principles of charity, unity and fraternity.

3) The Knights have councils in over a dozen countries.

Knights are active in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, the Philippines, Dominican Republic, Poland, Panama, Guatemala, Lithuania, Bahamas, Saint Lucia, South Korea, Ukraine and more!

4) The Knights stood up to ISIS.

The Order produced a [280-page report](#) detailing the genocide against Christians by ISIS, which was decisive in getting the genocide recognized by the U.S. State Department.

5) The Knights are saving a Christian town in Iraq that was desecrated by ISIS.

They are raising \$2 million to save [Karamles](#), a town recently liberated from ISIS.

6) Columbus was chosen as the Knights' namesake because...

...the American public loved this famous Catholic explorer at a time of general antipathy towards Catholics. Today, many make him out to be a villain, but many of those claims are actually [historically inaccurate](#).

7) The K of C emblem is literally [everywhere](#) at the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C.

That's because the Knights are one of the major supporters of the March for Life and the pro-life movement.

8) K of C has donated \$1.62 billion (yes, [billion!](#)) to charitable causes over the past decade.

As of December 2017!

9) They have swords!

Maybe the most important point.

10) The Knights of Columbus Fortune 1000 Insurance Company was born out of Father McGivney's vision to help protect Catholic families from financial ruin.

As a seminarian, his father died unexpectedly. Father McGivney was convinced that there had to be a way to help other Catholic families facing similar financial troubles. He established the K of C insurance system that has evolved into a top-rated [insurance](#) program, with over \$100 billion of life insurance in force.

11) K of C founder Father McGivney may become a saint.

His [cause](#) for canonization is open, and he was given the title "Venerable Servant of God" by the Holy See in 2008.

12) Oh, and some Knights are [already](#) saints

St. Luis Batis, St. Rodrigo Aguilar, St. Miguel de la Mora, St. Pedro de Jesús Maldonado, St. José María Robles and St. Mateo Correa were martyred during the persecution of Catholics in Mexico in the early 20th century.

13) At the peak of the Ku Klux Klan's power, the K of C stood as its most [vigorous opponent](#).

In one incident in 1924, hooded Klansmen abducted, severely beat and mutilated Father John Conoley in Gainesville, Fla. Knights armed with shotguns stood in the windows of the rectory, protecting another priest and the church itself from the Klan's threats to burn it.

14) The Knights have been a huge [supporter](#) of the Special Olympics since day one.

15) Babe Ruth, Vince Lombardi, and [President John F. Kennedy](#) were all members of the Knights.

16) Ever wonder how the words "under God" became part of the Pledge of Allegiance?

We can thank the K of C for [that](#).

17) They have a long history with Mother Teresa.

Upon receiving the Knights' Gaudium et Spes Award she said, "I accepted to come, and to accept out of sheer gratitude, for they have done so much for our congregation and for our poor."

18) They're a major supporter of [vocations](#).

K of C councils "adopt" one or more seminarians and provide them with financial assistance and prayer through the RSVP program.

19) Knights of Columbus has an investments business called Asset Advisors.

K of C's investment team manages approximately \$24 billion in assets in accordance with Catholic [moral principles](#).

20) Both the first American and the last American to fall in [World War I](#) were Knights of Columbus.

21) They have a long tradition of supporting the military.

This year, the Knights sent more than 200 military personnel, their designated caregivers and volunteers to the Marian shrine in Lourdes, France, for a time of rest, prayer and healing as part of the annual [Warriors to Lourdes](#) pilgrimage.

22) The [Saint John Paul II National Shrine](#) is a major initiative of the K of C.

The shrine has a first-class relic of JP II's blood, and it is a great place to venerate the saint and remember his legacy.

23) There are 374 ([and growing!](#)) K of C councils on college campuses around the world.

The annual [College Councils Conference](#) is held in New Haven each fall.

24) The Knights are on a mission to save 1 million lives.

Little is more moving than seeing an image of a baby growing in the womb. Since 2009, the Knights have funded about 900 [ultrasound machines](#) at pregnancy care centers in all 50 states.

25) With the new Online Membership program, joining the Knights is easier than ever.

Practicing Catholic men 18 years of age and older can join at KofC.org/JoinUs.

