

# THE 136TH ANNUAL SUPREME CONVENTION BEGINS WITH THE CELEBRATION OF MASS.

True to the Order's Catholic character, the Knights of Columbus opened its annual Supreme Convention in prayer, as some 2,500 Knights and family members gathered Tuesday for morning Mass. With the cavernous Baltimore Convention Center converted into a worthy worship space, the Mass was a solemn, reverent yet spectacular event concelebrated by more than 100 members of the hierarchy and other clergy, and broadcast live worldwide by three Catholic TV networks.

The main celebrant and homilist for the opening Mass was Archbishop William Lori of Baltimore, the Knights' supreme chaplain, who welcomed everyone to the 136th Supreme Convention in his home archdiocese.

Since the scope of the Mass is impossible to capture with a single lens, here are views from four different perspectives:

## ***A Family for the Knights***

They were high school sweethearts who went to different colleges but reunited after graduation and were married three years ago. Nicholas Shields and his wife, Alyce, attended the Mass with their 1-year-old son, Charlie.

"It is such a thrill to be part of a Mass that brings Knights together from all over the world," said Nicholas, who is 26 years old and serves as the Knights' membership director for the District of Columbia.

"It is so beautiful that we are here united in the Eucharist," said Alyce.

## ***The Man Behind the Music***

Peter Latona would rather be heard than seen. As director of music for all the liturgical services, he sets the tone and tempo for the convention, which begins each day with Mass. The music seeks "to evoke something related to the Knights of Columbus, in keeping with the Mass of the day and the rich treasury of sacred music of the Catholic Church," he noted.

Latona is director of music at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. For the opening Mass, he composed two original settings for the Entrance and Communion Antiphons. He previously composed the "Te Deum," "Fanfare for Freedom" and the arrangement of "God of Our Fathers."

"We work very hard to make sure that the music fits what's happening in the particular liturgy," Latona explained. "Music should touch people on a deep spiritual level to move them closer to God."

## ***Proclaiming God's Word***

For Antonio Bañuelos, "It is a great honor to serve as lector. I am not just reading any text but proclaiming God's words to others, bringing the message that God wants to bring to his people. I pray that his Word reaches others in the way he intends."

As state deputy of Iowa, Bañuelos added, "I am proud to represent my brother Knights of Iowa, and also Hispanic Catholics who may be here or watching on TV. I want to say that the Knights of Columbus is a truly international organization, with people from all backgrounds and many languages. We are open to all Catholic men to help them to become who God calls them to be."

## ***The Mass is the Message***

This convention marks the first time that the host ordinary (bishop of the diocese) also serves the Order as supreme chaplain. The honor belongs to Archbishop William Lori. In his homily, he encouraged Knights to live out their baptismal promises, as the Holy Spirit leads them.

"At the heart of our baptism is a vocation to love God and neighbor," he said. "And we are here this morning because we are convinced that active membership in the Knights of Columbus is a supremely important way to answer this baptismal calling to love, to unite in fraternal support in putting into practice the principle of charity. In serving the vulnerable and the poor, we practice 'a charity that evangelizes,' a charity that, in spite of obstacles, opens minds and hearts to Christ and the Gospel."

## Mass by the Numbers

10 cardinals

74 archbishops and bishops

102 priests

5 languages for the prayer of faithful: English, French, Spanish, Tagalog and Polish

## ICYMI

The opening liturgy was a Votive Mass of the Holy Spirit, to invoke God's blessing and guidance for the convention.

The first reading from the prophet Ezekiel reads, in part: "I will give you a new heart and place a new Spirit within you, taking from your bodies your stony hearts and giving you natural hearts ... you shall be my people and I will be your God."

The Offertory hymn was in the Irish language, "Ag Críost an Síol." The first two lines are translated: "To Christ the seed, to Christ the crop, / in barn of Christ may we be brought."

Hymns were also in Spanish and French, reflecting the linguistic diversity and musical traditions of the Knights.

The title of the closing hymn, "Vivat Jesus!" is also a motto of the Knights of Columbus that members may use to express unity in Christ.

Serving at Mass were seminarians of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, including those from St. Mary's Seminary, where Father Michael McGivney studied for the priesthood.

