

## State Deputy Message September 2019

My Worthy Brother Knights,

As you receive this month's KOCO, you will be enjoying the Labor Day holiday weekend. My sincerest wishes that each of you are relaxing and recreating this holiday that celebrates the efforts of the work that is done to keep our great country flourishing.

This past month I accompanied my fellow state officers, delegates, Bishops, and several brother Knights from Arizona in attending the 137<sup>th</sup> Supreme Convention. There were many meetings to attend and much to learn. Our Worthy Supreme Knight Carl Anderson recapped the achievements of the past year and I have placed them in a separate article found elsewhere in this edition of the KOCO.

The greatest moment during the Convention came when our Immediate Past State Deputy Sean Halpain was elected to the Supreme Board of Directors. I was honored to have delivered the nominating speech for Brother Sean and deeply moved when he was elected. Supreme Director, Halpain will continue to serve this year as the Immediate Past State Deputy but he will likely spend some time away from Arizona attending to his new duties. The State Officers and I pledge Brother Sean and Brenda our prayers and support as they embark on this new adventure.

Also high on the list of exciting news from the Supreme Convention, Arizona received the New Council Development Award for FY 2018-19. This means that our jurisdiction met or exceeded its Supreme goal for instituting new councils during the fraternal year. Congratulations Brothers for this great achievement.

Many of Arizona's councils will be receiving well-deserved recognition as Star Council as they met or exceeded their membership and insurance goals and completed all required Faith in Action service programs. Congratulations to our 8 Star, 1 Double-Star, and 1 Quadruple-Star Councils. Yes, quadruple-star. It was earned by Council 14804, Grand Knight Santo Toribio Romo, and District Deputy Gonzalo Ortiz. Well done brothers! Star Council is not hard to achieve. Always be recruiting, work with you Insurance Field Agent, and use your District Deputy and State membership resources. It's their job to help you succeed. Every Council can be a Star. Schedule a Church Delta Drive. Need ideas, visit the State website at [www.kofc-az.org](http://www.kofc-az.org).

It is my happy privilege to announce to you that the "To be a Patriot Award" for 2018-2019 was awarded to the St. Joseph Assembly #2126 in Glendale, under the command of Randall Hughes, Faithful Navigator. Congratulations to SK Hughes and our brother Sir Knights of this fine Fourth Degree Assembly.

The Arizona rosary Celebration is just under two months from now. Brother, this is our spiritual gifts to our dioceses and faith communities. Every Knight should be involved. You have 7 days to get your ad contract submitted. If you miss the cutoff date, make a donation to support the celebration. Volunteer as an Usher, Don your Fourth Degree Uniform and march with the Honor Guard. Bring your banners and represent your council or assembly in the Blessing Procession. Attend the Holy Hours and dinners. Bring your family and pray the Rosary, All the information can be found on the website [www.azrosary.net](http://www.azrosary.net).

We have a great deal of work to do this fraternal year as we labor in unity to extend a charitable hand to our neighbors, protect life at all stages, and ensure our youth, families, and church are protected from evil and continue to flourish. Thank you, my brothers, for all your efforts. May God bless you one and all.

Vivat Jesus!

Mario Vassallo  
State Deputy

## Highlights from the 137<sup>th</sup> Supreme Convention in Minneapolis, MN

The Supreme Knight said, “Through our unity, we will continue to rise in charity and fraternity. And as we extend the hand of brotherhood, we will continue to transform the world around us — a world that needs more, not less, of the truth and witness that define all those who call themselves Knights of Columbus.”

Next he reported on the story of Kendrick Castillo, a young man who confronted an active shooter in his school and died protecting his fellow students and was posthumously declared a Knight of Columbus. Supreme Knight Anderson said, “Kendrick wanted to be a Knight of Columbus because he wanted to help not only people, but his community. And in his last moments, Kendrick Castillo did both.” He continued, “This evening we will posthumously present Kendrick with the Knights of Columbus Caritas Award.

The Knights of Columbus will launch a new initiative to focus on Native Americans in the United States and First Nations people of Canada. This will include a partnership between the Knights, the Diocese of Gallup, and the Southwest Indian Foundation to build a new shrine to St. Kateri Tekakwitha. Local councils will be encouraged to become more engaged with Catholics living on reservations and tribal lands.

The Knights of Columbus are prepared to commit at least \$250,000 in humanitarian aid for refugees to the southern border. The Supreme Knight stated that, “We are prepared to expand it, with additional resources, to help those in refugee camps in every border state — including Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California.” He cautioned that this initiative is not a political statement, but rather a statement of principle. “It is a natural and necessary extension of our support for refugees across the world,” stated the Supreme Knight

The culture of life will continue to be a high priority for the Order until Roe v. Wade is overturned. In the efforts reported to date, Knights have completed a 10-year goal of placing 1,000 ultrasound machines.

This past year, the Knights of Columbus donated \$2.7 million in disaster relief. This past year, Knights have saved neighbors from wildfires, donated more than half a million dollars to hurricane victims, and helped first responders in historic Midwest flooding.

In talking about the new Faith in Action service program model, Supreme Deputy Anderson said, “St. John Paul II told us, ‘A new state of affairs ... calls with a particular urgency for the action of the lay faithful.’ We cannot run away or stand on the sidelines. We must do our part.”

In striving to renew our Church, the Supreme Knight stated that we must remember that renewal starts within our own hearts. This year the Order sponsored a nationwide relic tour of the incorrupt heart of St. Jean Vianney, the patron saint of parish priests. During the tour, 300,000 people venerated the relic in 99 dioceses and more than 7,500 miles were covered. The Order is continuing the tour in Canada in the new fraternal year.

About religious liberty, those in attendance were reminded that tremendous efforts and courage are required to overcome the bigoted contention that the Catholic faith makes a citizen “unfit” for public office. “If we cannot participate in public life because of our core beliefs, then surely it will be our nation that is the loser,” said Supreme Knight Anderson.

When the Supreme Knight met with Pope Francis earlier this year about the persecution of Christians in the Middle East, the Pope told him that, “the Middle East without Christians is not the Middle East,” and he strongly encouraged the Order to continue its efforts in this matter. Since 2014, the Knights have committed more than \$25 million to build housing, churches, and schools. The Knights also played a pivotal role in the unanimous passage of the Iraq and Syria Genocide Relief and Accountability Act.

The Order entered a historic Memorandum of Understanding with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The Supreme Knight addressed the State Department's Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom.

The Knights of Columbus are champions of charity locally and internationally. Canadian Knights donated \$19 million and 5.7 million hours to charity. Mexican Knights fed and clothed more than 300 needy people; raised money for the construction of a local seminary and parish church; and hosted a pilgrimage to Christ the King Mountain with an icon of Our Lady Help of Persecuted Christians that included thousands. Knights in South Korea established a Peace Refugee Center to serve people who've fled violence across the world. Knights in the Philippines held a Triduum for Peace after a bomb attack killed three Knights. Ukrainian Knights held summer camps for the children of veterans, visited hospitals where the wounded are being treated, and repaired the home of a family who lost their sons in battle. Knights in France proudly support the Notre-Dame Cathedral's reconstruction.

The Knights of Columbus insurance program reported more \$109 billion of insurance in force, nearly \$9 billion in annual sales, and more than \$26 billion of assets under management. The Order is ranked on the Fortune 1000 list of America's largest companies.

The Knights of Columbus Charitable Fund sponsors donor-advised funds designed to help Catholic institutions, members of our Order, and other Catholics direct their charitable giving more effectively. It can only be used to benefit groups and causes that are in line with Catholic values.

The Supreme Knight finished his remarks by proudly reporting on how the Order raised \$185.7 million and donated 76.7 million hours in charitable works over the past year.