In this article, I want to tell you about a wonderful Catholic charitable organization that you may not have heard of before, but is making a big comeback here in Michigan. This charity is called the “International Order of Alhambra.” The International Order of Alhambra is a Catholic men and women’s fraternal organization which was founded on February 29, 1904 in Brooklyn, New York, by William Harper Bennett. William Harper Bennett also had strong ties with the Knights of Columbus, as he is the one credited for designing the 4th degree ceremony for the Knights. Alhambra was originally conceived as a side degree, or a 5th degree if you will, for the Knights of Columbus, however it was never formally recognized as such. For many years, membership was restricted to members of the Knights of Columbus, but this requirement was later removed. Also, membership in the Order was also restricted to men until July, 2011, when membership was opened to women as well. Many Church leaders are or have been members of the Alhambra, including Pope Paul VI and John Paul II.

The International Order of Alhambra derives its name from the Moorish palace in Granada, Spain, which was called Alhambra. It was from this palace that the Moors surrendered to Ferdinand and Isabella in 1492, after occupying Spain for nearly 800 years. Once Spain was back in Christian hands, the Spanish monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella, were now in a position to be able to finance Christopher Columbus’ voyage. And it was from within sight of this palace that Columbus received his first favorable reply that he now had the funding to embark on his historic voyage. The emblem of the International Order of Alhambra is the red tower of Castile with a cross on it surmounting the crescent of the Saracen symbolizing the triumph of Christianity over the Moors.

So now that you know a little about their history, what do the Alhambrans actually do? The Alhambra is a charitable organization, and by far, the biggest thing they do is they provide assistance, education and residences for intellectually disabled persons. Another thing that the Order does, which gets far less attention, is that they identify, mark, preserve and commemorate Catholic historical places, events and persons of international or regional importance. Lastly, they also promote fraternalism and social activity among its members. Or in other words, to put in simpler terms, they like to party.

Some of the things that I have seen the Alhambra do here in Michigan are this: They have a summer camp called St. Francis Camp, that they run for the intellectually disabled. St. Francis Camp is located near Jackson, Michigan. (The Knights of Columbus have generously donated to this camp over the last few years.) They also provide for residences, or group homes for the intellectually disabled. The Alhambra also gives out scholarship money to those who are studying in fields that lead to giving care to the intellectually disabled. They help out with the Shrine Circus every year and bring the intellectually disabled to come see a show. They also put on parties or events for the intellectually disabled, such as Christmas parties, or trips to the zoo. Some people in the Alhambra are involved in clown ministry, which is a big hit at the Christmas parties and other events. And of course, they do more than these things that I have just listed. The Alhambra truly is one of the best kept secrets in the Catholic Church. Any Catholic who is interested in doing some kind of ministry, and would be open to serving the intellectually disabled, I would encourage them to consider joining the Alhambra, because everyone who does it will tell you, there really is a lot of joy in helping out God’s special people. If you are interested in joining or want more information you may contact me at St. John Neumann.

God Bless, Fr. Paul Ballien

MUNCH & LEARN
Sunday, September 22nd
11:30 am to 12:30 pm
Our Lady of Loretto Parish
17116 Olympia Rd. Redford
Topic: “Is This Health for Me?”
Presented by: Kristy Stevenson, MEd, RD
Ascension Michigan Weight Loss
Questions call: 313-934-9000

GOLF OUTING | FUNDRAISER
Saturday, September 21st
Tee Time: 8:00 am
Whispering Willows Golf Course
20500 Newburgh Rd. Livonia
Hosted by: St. Colette Parish
Knights of Columbus
4-person scramble; 3 flights so every team has a chance to win.
$100 per person includes: donuts, hot dogs, dinner along with the round of golf.
Hole sponsors ($100) and prize donors are needed.
Contact: John Glennon 734-968-2286 or Bob Legel 734-591-6845
MEN’S RETREAT
September 20 to 22nd
St. Paul of the Cross Retreat Center
Hosted by: Men of St. John Neumann
Retreat Theme:
“Who Do You Say I Am?” Matthew 16:15
Contact: Joe Camilli jcamill@wowway.com
734-455-1079

FRIDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY
Starting September 13th
Resurrection Parish
48755 Warren Rd. Canton
Friday mornings:
8:30 am (optional Mass)
9:00 am (coffee & goodies)
9:30-10:30 am Presentation
Held in the Church Social Hall
September 13th — Genesis with Adam & Eve
September 20th — Noah & the Flood
September 27th — Abraham, Sarah & Hagar
October 4th — Isaac
October 11th — The Jacob Saga
October 18th — Moses & Exodus
October 25th — The God of Israel
Contact: Deacon Paul Lippard
resoffice@resurrectionparish.net

IHM ALL-DAY SPIRITUALITY EVENT
Saturday, October 12th
Marian High School
7225 Lahser Rd. Bloomfield Hills
“What is Your Hope: Spirituality & Seekers” presented by the
Margaret Brennan IHM Institute for
Spirituality, Church & Culture.
Visit: mbisccc.org

2019 FRIENDS OF THE Poor WALK
Society of St. Vincent de Paul
Saturday, September 28th
Belle Isle Park
Check in at 9:00 am
Join us for this family event,
3-mile walk and fundraiser for the
St. Vincent de Paul charities and organization serving the
needy in our communities.
Register online:
www.friendswalk.org

MOM to MOM SALES
St. John Neumann Parish
44800 Warren Rd. Canton
Saturday, September 21st
8:30 am to 12:30 pm
$2 admission for adults
Contact: Betty Nolan bnolan6850@gmail.com

St. Edith & St. Colette Parishes
15089 Newburgh Rd. Livonia
Saturday, October 5th
8:30 am to 12 noon
$2 admission
Contact: m2msale@stemcnpds.org

ANNUAL ROSARY RALLY AT
MADONNA UNIVERSITY
Saturday, October 12th
From 12 noon until 1:00 pm
1-96 and Levan Rd. Livonia
Contact: Ron 734-432-9744

ALHAMBRA: SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED
The International Order of Alhambra is a fraternal organization of Catholic men & women. Our vision is focused on providing assistance to persons developmentally
disabled through charitable programs & projects. Please contact us for interest and more
information: John Vella | 248-376-1555 | johnrvella@gmail.com

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