

Founder of the Knights of Columbus.
 Venerable Michael McGivney,
 Apostle to the Young and
 Protector of Christian Family Life,
 Intercede for Us.


FATHER GABRIEL B. O'DONNELL, O.P.

Vice Postulator & Guild Director

Dear Guild Members:

The annual ritual of making New Year's resolutions tends to focus on our weak points as well as the most pressing needs of family and loved ones. As it is still early in 2015, it might be useful to acknowledge the deeper level at which these resolutions symbolize our confidence in the future and our hope that in the coming year the yearnings of our hearts will be fulfilled.

For the Christian man or woman, New Year's resolutions are as much an act of faith as a cultural ritual. Our faith in God makes possible a renewed optimism about the coming year. From this point of view, the year 2015 brings with it the promise of God's continued love and providential care. We can see this hope in the faith of the people of the Philippines, millions of whom have suffered so much from natural disasters in recent times. There are more than 300,000 brother Knights in the majority Catholic country, and they are at the heart of the optimism that has greeted the visit of Pope Francis in January, under the theme "Mercy and Compassion." Expressing his priorities, the pope was scheduled to visit not only the capital city of



Manila, where millions were expected for his Masses, but also the areas that were hit so hard by recent typhoons. In this, he showed through action the basic Christian principle of charity — the principle upon which the Knights of Columbus was founded and still operates.

September of this year will bring a special occasion for U.S. Catholics as well, as we look forward to welcoming the Holy Father to the United States for his visit to Philadelphia (and perhaps other cities), where he will preside at the World Meeting of Families.

For Guild members, 2015 is a year when we are called to pray intensely for the advancement of the cause of Venerable Father Michael J. McGivney. As we have written here in the past, a reported miracle has been submitted to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints at the Vatican. If this possible miracle is approved, the Holy Father can announce the beatification of the Venerable Servant of God. Father McGivney would be the first U.S.-born parish priest to be called Blessed. The example of his holiness and apostolic zeal in providing for the formation of Catholic men in founding the Knights of Columbus manifests his worthiness, and his beatification would invigorate the thousands of Knights in local councils throughout the world, and would also be an encouragement and source of pride for every parish priest. In addition, for the many millions throughout the United States and Canada (where he studied) who recognize him as a model of Christian virtue and a protector of family life, Father McGivney's beatification would be a cause for great joy.

As we move through the early days of a new year, optimism regarding

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FOUNDER'S HOMETOWN STATUE REFURBISHED

The monumental statue of Father Michael McGivney that stands prominently in his hometown recently received a facelift. The bronze, 8-foot statue, resting upon a tall, polished granite pedestal in the busy downtown area of Waterbury, Conn., depicts Father McGivney holding a copy of the Gospels in his left arm, as he lifts his right hand toward heaven.

On the four sides of the pedestal are bronze carvings showing the virtues of Father McGivney and the principles of the Order he founded.

Installed in 1957 by the city, the statue in recent years showed signs of cracking and weathering. The Supreme Council provided funds for the refurbishment of the statue and pedestal, as well as a complete renovation of the traffic island where they are located. The island is flanked by Father Michael J. McGivney Boulevard, which runs adjacent to city and state buildings.

The centerpiece of the renovation of the grounds was the installation of a bench in front of the statue on the traffic island, to allow visitors and passersby to sit and relax while considering the heroic virtue and vision of the holy priest. The area around the statue was repaved, and new shrubbery and flowers were planted.

The inscription on the pedestal now can be seen clearly from passing vehicles: "Reverend Michael Joseph McGivney, 1852-1890. Founder of the Knights of Columbus, New Haven, Conn., March 29, 1882."



A HOLY DEATH – 125 YEARS AGO

The hush of the room is conducive to meditation. The items locked within protective glass focus thoughts on life's end, but also on the hope of the resurrection and the joys of heaven. Here, in the McGivney Gallery of the Knights of Columbus Museum in New Haven, Conn., are objects displayed for veneration: the cassock he was buried in, a chasuble, a scapular, and an image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. All of them are second-class relics, since he wore them regularly during life.

These objects were taken from the original burial site when the remains of Father McGivney were disinterred from the family plot in Waterbury and reinterred in a marble sarcophagus in St. Mary's Church in New Haven, where he founded the Knights of Columbus while serving as a parish priest.

Why dwell on Father McGivney's death at a time when evidence of a possible miracle through his intercession is being studied at the Vatican? It happens that 2015 marks the 125th anniversary of his passing away, on Aug. 14, 1890. Father McGivney was a priest for

nearly 13 years when he died two days past his 38th birthday, a young but not uncommon age for a priest in America to pass away in the 19th century. Priests had tough lives in urban environments like New Haven. Parishes were understaffed, congregations were large, sick calls were many, and illnesses could spread quick and deadly in the days before antibiotics.

After serving seven years at St. Mary's, Father McGivney was named pastor of St. Thomas Church in Thomaston and the mission church of Immaculate Conception in neighboring Terryville. The Sunday Mass schedule — shuttling by horse and carriage five miles each way between the two churches — would tax a man of robust health. Yet Father McGivney performed his duties with faithfulness and cheer for six years.

He contracted pneumonia and was confined to bed in the St. Thomas rectory before passing away. The events surrounding his death, and the outpouring of love and gratitude shown him, will be covered in forthcoming newsletters leading up to his August anniversary.

EASTER NOVENA MASSES

As a parish priest devoted to his flock, Father McGivney offered Mass regularly for the intentions of his parishioners, both living and deceased. The Guild carries on his practice by offering a weekly Mass for the intentions of Guild members, as well as novenas at special times during the Church year.

In April, Guild members will be remembered in a novena of nine Masses offered by priests in Rome during the Easter season. Easter this year is April 5, 2015.

Guild members are encouraged to send in their intentions for placement on the altar during each Mass of the novena. You may submit your intentions by regular mail, by email or through the Father McGivney website (fathermcgivney.org) for inclusion in the Easter novena.

The deadline for submissions is March 25, 2015.

The mailing address is: Father McGivney Guild, 1 Columbus Plaza, New Haven, CT 06510. The email address is: guild@kofc.org.

FAVORS REPORTED

Dear Father

I make this testimony on my dad's behalf. A newsletter from the Guild was sent to me. After my dad read it, he tried to recommend his petition to Venerable Father McGivney. After some hours on the same day, an unexpected call came. His application which he made to a company many months before was acknowledged the very day he prayed for it to Father McGivney. His application is currently being presented to the company's president for approval. We thank God through Father McGivney for that quick answer.

Manila, Philippines

Dear Father

My granddaughter, who is 16, was diagnosed with lymphoma. I prayed to Father McGivney that the final biopsy result would be negative. After two weeks of waiting for the final test result and daily prayers, the biopsy results came back negative. I pray to him in thanksgiving every day. Our family shed many tears along with prayers waiting for the final biopsy result. Thank you, Father McGivney!

Florida

Dear Father

About two and one half to three years ago my 52-year-old nephew, a severe alcoholic, was admitted to the hospital with kidney and liver failure. He hovered near death for about two months. During this time our prayer group at St. Mary Church in Branford began praying to Father McGivney for a healing. Eventually he was released from the hospital to a nursing home and received kidney dialysis for several months. He was discharged home

where he continued to receive dialysis on an outpatient basis. About eight months ago the dialysis was discontinued because the kidneys began working normally! The doctors were amazed as you might expect. At around the same time an umbilical hernia began to become quite large and subsequently strangulated and once again he was hospitalized, this time for a bowel resection. After returning home, he slowly began a long recovery. He looked like a skeleton. There was talk of being put on the liver transplant list. He had an open drain in his abdomen, which I as an R. N. would change daily. His abdomen which previously was quite distended, is now fairly flat and the drain is just about sealed! Today he has put on weight, feels well, and although still on disability, continues to recover. He does not drink any longer. I am planning to go with him to the liver specialist to inquire about his liver's status. We continue praying to Father McGivney's intercession for a complete healing.

Connecticut

Dear Father

I requested a prayer petition for my immediate supervisor who had recently informed me of his stage IV cancer. At the time, he did not sugarcoat his situation, and I informed him in a supportive way that I would pray for a miracle. Subsequently, several months after putting in a prayer intention to Father McGivney's website, he has become well and cancer-free, returning to the work he loves once again. The joy and gratitude is palpable. Thank you, Father McGivney, for whatever intercession you were able to offer! At the appropriate time, I will tell my mentor of such a magnanimous gift from God.

New York

GUILD ITEMS

Please Send Items Below To:

Indicate the number of items desired in the space provided. All prices are in U.S. dollars and include shipping and handling, unless otherwise noted.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Country _____

Zip/Postal Code _____

- _____ Mousepad — \$8
- _____ Pen — \$8
- _____ Coffee Mug — \$12
- _____ #A/#B Note Cards (6-pack) — \$5
- _____ #A/#B Note Cards (12-pack) — \$10
- _____ 4-Foot Statue Flyer/Order Form
- _____ 4-Foot Statue — \$2,400 (Plus Shipping & Handling)
- _____ 8" Figurine (Fiberglass) — \$50
- _____ 8" Figurine (Wood) — \$150
- _____ Reliquary (Case with Second-Class Relic) — \$25 donation
- _____ 1" Sterling Silver Medal — \$25
- _____ 18" Women's Chain — \$14

- _____ 24" Men's Chain — \$15
 - _____ Guild Lapel Pin — \$7.50
 - _____ Red Rosary (PG-614) — \$10
 - _____ White Rosary (PG-615) — \$10
 - _____ Pewter Spoon — \$11
 - _____ Luggage Tag — \$5
- PRINTED ITEMS — FREE OF CHARGE, EXCEPT AS NOTED
- _____ Parish Priest (Paperback, 240 pp.) — \$12
 - _____ Parish Priest Study Guide
 - _____ A Model for Our Times booklet
 - _____ Prayer for Canonization
 - _____ Spirituality of Father McGivney flyer

COMPLETE AND RETURN TO THE FATHER MCGIVNEY GUILD, 1 COLUMBUS PLAZA, NEW HAVEN, CT 06510-3326.

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO: FATHER MCGIVNEY GUILD.

TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS MAY ALSO BE SENT TO THIS ADDRESS.

Write your intentions for the Easter Novena of Masses (submit by March 25, 2015)



Father McGivney Medal

This medal can be worn with a chain (not shown). 1" in diameter.

Chain sold separately.

Sterling Silver Medal: \$25

18" Women's Chain: \$14

24" Men's Chain: \$15



Collector's Spoon

Crafted in pewter by Fort USA. Features a color portrait of Father McGivney resting atop a winged dove of peace. Cross and K of C emblem also featured. Measures approximately 5". **\$11**

Luggage Tag

Pick out your luggage at the airport with this distinctive tag. An image of Father McGivney on one side and spaces for your name and contact information on the other side. **\$5**



Guild Pen

Featuring Father McGivney's face on the dome. Blue ink. **\$8**



Guild Lapel Pin

An attractive cast-bronze lapel pin featuring a color portrait of Father McGivney and the emblem of the Order. Approximately 1 1/4" in diameter. **\$7.50**



8" Figurine of Father McGivney

Crafted by Italian sculptors. Depicts Father McGivney holding a book with the emblem of the Knights of Columbus embossed on the cover. This figurine can remind us of Father McGivney's presence in our lives and his role as intercessor for our needs. Available in both fiberglass with a golden-bronze finish (left) and hand-carved, painted wood (right).

Fiberglass Statue: \$50

Hand-Carved Wood Statue: \$150



Full-Color Mousepad

Featuring Antonella Cappuccio's painting "Founding Vision: Father Michael J. McGivney and the Knights of Columbus." **\$8**



FATHER MICHAEL J. MCGIVNEY GUILD

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the future is the clarion call of Pope Francis. If we follow his lead in developing a more personal relationship with Christ, and if we express that relationship in our service of neighbor, we will become instruments of God's compassion and love. Our Holy Father continually warns against the danger of religion that is void of a personal relationship with God. In Baptism we are called to a vital and deepening commitment to Christ, and we encounter him regularly in the Eucharist. But such an encounter is incomplete if it does not lead us to look outside of ourselves to discover those who need our help. Most especially it is our own family, our spouses, children and parents, who become the face of Christ for us. Beyond the family are co-workers and neighbors who need a kind word or a helping hand. Learning the way of compassion, forgiveness and patient love is the most basic expression of an authentic spiritual life. Pope Francis never tires of pointing out how the ordinary life of ordinary Christians can become extraordinary when prayer, devotion and service to another are brought together.

These practices were at the heart of the spirituality of Venerable Father McGivney. While a very gifted man, he lived the life of a typical parish priest, celebrating the sacraments, preaching, visiting the sick and dying, and caring for the poor of his parish. True, we have many examples in which he manifested exemplary zeal and charity in his efforts to relieve the sufferings of others and better the situation of those he encountered, whether poor Irish immigrants or members of the Protestant upper classes so prominent at nearby Yale University. Nonetheless, the secret of his holiness and pastoral effectiveness lay in the way he took the ordinary demands of his vocation to a new level of dedicated service to those in need. This is the ideal and example that he lays before us. By fulfilling our duties and responsibilities in a spirit of faith and confidence in God, we can transform our ordinary actions into extraordinary graces for ourselves and others.

Christianity is a religion of the future. We are called to become disciples of Jesus Christ as we live here on earth in anticipation of an eternity with him in heaven. What we do today prepares us for what will come at the end

of life, and for this reason the Venerable Michael J. McGivney invested each ordinary duty with care and attention that were extraordinary. His inner spirit and disposition shaped his activities as a simple parish priest.

August of this year will mark the 125th anniversary of Venerable Father McGivney's death in 1890. His memory and legacy live on in the great works of fraternity and charity of his Knights. If we wish to truly follow the founder more closely, our faith must become more real and authentic. As Pope Francis so often warns, our Christianity must never become hollow, devoid of fervor and works. In spite of all the difficulties that face the Church in today's world, we must hold steady with hearts hopeful and joyful, for Christ himself accompanies us along the way.

Whether or not we have kept our New Year's resolutions, or can even remember what they were, it is faith in God and Jesus Christ that makes possible the optimism and simple joy that are so often the subject of the preaching of our Holy Father. Father McGivney always refused to be bested by the criticism and harbingers of doom around him. He sustained his brother priests and the people he served with a steady confidence in the presence and power of God. In the end, it is God's love that conquers all. As an apostle of charity, Venerable Father McGivney embodies the victory that can come to the world through Christ alone.

May 2015 be a year of renewed hope and confidence for all the members of the Father McGivney Guild, as we pray for his beatification.

Devotedly in Christ,

Father Gabriel B. O'Donnell, O.P.

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Guild Director

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