



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

Vice Postulator & Guild Director

Dear Guild Members:

Each year on March 29, the Knights of Columbus observes Founder's Day, commemorating the date in 1882 when the state of Connecticut approved the charter of the fraternal society established by Venerable Father Michael J. McGivney.

The highlight of the annual celebration is a Mass offered at St. Mary's Church in New Haven, where Father McGivney gathered a handful of men to make plans for the Catholic society that would provide spiritual support and solidarity for its members and a death benefit for widows.

In our present time, when our culture and politics are marked by hostilities and polarization, it is worthwhile to recall the founding of our Order, which was established at a time of social upheaval and exclusion. In 19th-century America, Catholics were treated as second-class citizens, denied work in many professions and under suspicion for their loyalty



to the pope in Rome. The ability of Father McGivney to rise above the social and ideological tensions of his day, and found an organization for laymen based on religious principles and in keeping with the American spirit, should serve as a lesson to Catholics today as we face an often hostile culture. The message of Father McGivney is to go forth bravely to do the good we must do, with great love for our neighbor, including those who oppose us.

One of the stirring moments recorded in *Parish Priest*, the 2006 biography of Father McGivney, occurs in the opening pages, when Father McGivney stands in New Haven probate court to guarantee a bond for the guardianship of young Alfred Downes, whose father had passed away. Due to anti-Catholic sentiment, it was unusual at the time for a Catholic priest to appear in a government venue, and it was risky for him, without significant personal funds, to secure a bond for the support of a child. To do so, he depended on the promise of a friend, a retired grocer, to provide the collateral if Father McGivney failed to find the funds himself. Yet this was not an isolated incident; rather, it was part of a pattern for Father McGivney. He was always ready to risk his security or reputation to help those in need.

He was also a humble young man, willing to collaborate with laymen of his parish and take their advice in areas where they had more

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WHAT MAKES A MIRACLE?

Since Venerable Father Michael McGivney is at the stage of the canonization process in which a miracle is needed for him to be beatified, the Guild often receives questions about what exactly is needed for a miracle to be accepted. What standard does the Vatican use in declaring some events miraculous and others not?

A book could be written on the subject, but to put the issue in simple terms, what the Vatican is looking for in most cases is a physical healing

that cannot be explained by medical science. Let's look a little more closely at the whole process of "making a miracle."

The first thing to understand is that only God can perform a miracle, since a miracle is understood to be a suspension of the created natural order. When we say that Father McGivney needs a miracle for beatification, what we mean is that a proven miracle must be attributed to his intercession before the throne of God.

Identify

With that important fact understood, we are ready to walk through the process of how a proposed miracle is brought to the Vatican's Congregation for the Causes of Saints. Step one is identifying a possible miracle for which people close to the situation prayed to a sainthood candidate—in this case, Father McGivney. The Congregation for Saints considers almost exclusively extraordinary physical healings and recoveries, since those incidents usually have verifiable facts such as medical tests and records, as well as objective and widely accepted measurements for diagnosing a serious condition and declaring a person healed. Examples of non-medical miracles that have been approved by the Vatican congregation include accidents that should have been fatal but the person survived without injury, such as falls from a church ceiling and while mountain climbing. Certainly, there are other types

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In the grotto of St. Patrick's Basilica in Ottawa, Canada, a display featuring a statue of Father McGivney encourages prayer and devotion to the Knights of Columbus founder.

FAVORS REPORTED

Dear Father:

Approximately two years ago, I was diagnosed with plasmacytoma (a cancer that can progress into multiple myeloma). I had part of my thyroid removed but the cancer was not defeated. I subsequently required a second surgery to remove what was left of my thyroid gland followed by 25 radiation treatments to my neck/throat. Through my involvement with the Knights of Columbus, I was familiar with Father McGivney and decided to begin praying the prayer for his canonization and ask for relief to get this cancer defeated so that I can continue to enjoy my 11 grandkids. I pray that prayer at least each morning and evening and occasionally during the day when I can. At a quarterly appointment with my oncologist, I was informed that my most recent CT scans and lab work tend to show no signs of the cancer.

Illinois

Dear Father:

I prayed a novena regularly for six months to Venerable Father McGivney imploring his help for my son and daughter-in-law to return to the Church. This month they enrolled in their parish and are attending Mass. My prayers were answered.

Virginia

Dear Father:

My husband persevered in prayer for Father McGivney to intercede for him to find a new job. My husband's prayers were answered.

Wisconsin

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of miracles that involve moral, psychological and spiritual phenomena, but physical healings are easier to investigate and prove in an objective, scientific manner.

Report

How would we identify a possible miracle through Father McGivney's intercession? Someone must report it. *We cannot stress this enough.* The only way for the Guild to learn about a possible miracle is for someone with knowledge of the case to report it to us. So Knights, their families and anyone devoted to Father McGivney must be on the lookout for possible miraculous healings.

Pray

Next to consider is how a possible miracle would be attributed to Father McGivney's intercession. There has to be positive evidence that people close to the event truly prayed exclusively to Father McGivney for the miracle. Again, this is why the Guild constantly urges prayer to Father McGivney, especially in cases of serious illness. When you know someone is facing a serious medical condition, start praying for a miraculous healing and ask others also to do so. Prayers should be offered by the sick person, his family, council members and friends. It is important to know that if one of these persons prays to other saints as well, there would be questions about the true and exclusive

intercession of Father McGivney. Yet additional prayers to the Blessed Mother are acceptable, since Mary is assumed to intercede in all prayers by anyone for any purpose.

So let's say we have an extraordinary physical healing of someone who prayed exclusively to Father McGivney (and Mary), as did all those close to him. We now have a strong case that is worth investigating.

Investigate

The initial investigation would be conducted by the vice postulator of the canonization cause in New Haven, who will interview people close to the case, including doctors. If there is a general sense that there is no apparent medical explanation for the healing and that Father McGivney was exclusively invoked, then the evidence will go to the cause's experienced postulator in Rome. If the postulator finds that the case is strong enough, he will send a request to the bishop of the diocese where the possible miracle occurred, asking him to form a tribunal to conduct an official inquiry into the case.

Tribunal

The diocesan tribunal is a formal ecclesiastical court, convened under the local bishop, that calls witnesses, gathers testimony, collects medical records and other supporting documents, and ultimately makes a judgment on whether to refer the case to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. Once the case reaches the congregation in Rome, it is reviewed by experts in canon law, medicine and theology who meet in separate panels to examine and discuss the evidence and then vote whether or not to approve the case as a miraculous healing that involved the intercession of Father McGivney. The case would then go to a board of cardinals and finally to the Holy Father, whose approval is needed for the acceptance of a miracle.

Join. Pray. Report.

The process is long and painstaking for good reasons. The Church does not want to declare as miraculous any event that may later be called into question. We hope and pray that a miracle will finally be attributed to the intercession of Venerable Michael McGivney. You can help the process with the simple formula: "Join. Pray. Report." Join the Guild. Pray the Prayer for Canonization daily. Report any extraordinary healings.

Together, we will move the cause forward.



Members of Atlantic Council 18 at St. Thomas parish in Thomaston, where Father McGivney passed away while pastor, dedicated a statue of the founder in the rear of the church in 2012.

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
- _____ 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*

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 petitions and send them by April 3, 2017, for inclusion in the Easter Triduum of Masses.



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

(BACK IN STOCK)



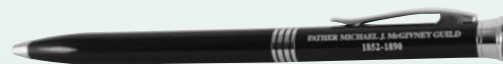
Collector's Spoon

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**



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 fiberglass with a golden-bronze finish. **\$50**



Guild Pen

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



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 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**



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

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS • 1 COLUMBUS PLAZA • NEW HAVEN, CT 06510-3326



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Triduum of Masses

Guild members and their intentions will be remembered in a triduum of three Masses during the week following Easter Sunday, which is April 16, 2017. Guild members are encouraged to send in their intentions for placement on the altar during each Mass. You may submit your intentions by regular mail, by email or through the Father McGivney website (fathermcgivney.org), for inclusion in the Easter triduum of Masses. The deadline for submissions is April 3, 2017. The mailing address is: Father McGivney Guild, 1 Columbus Plaza, New Haven, CT 06510. The email address is: guild@kofc.org.

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experience and expertise. This was an unusual practice by a priest of his day, when "Father" generally was seen as the ultimate authority figure, and it anticipated by many decades the Second Vatican Council's recognition of the "universal call to holiness." In founding the Knights of Columbus, Father McGivney could have taken the position of supreme knight, but he encouraged James T. Mullen, a Civil War veteran, to fill this key leadership role.

Mullen and other founding members tutored the young priest in fraternal and ceremonial aspects of the fledgling Order, and also informed him of the political climate and the consequences for working men of the societal shift from agriculture to manufacturing. They explored with the ardent priest the influence of emerging corporations, big business, the beginnings of the labor movement and emergent workers' unions. With industrialization, the sense of the individual, his worth as a person and the dignity of his labor were being lost. Add to the mix the number of immigrants who strained the job market, the various social ills prompted by unemployment and poverty, and a rather stark picture of 19th-century America emerges.

Carefully considering the insights of these informed and self-made men in New Haven, Father McGivney came to see that for young Catholic men to take their place in the world, the bond of friendship with fellow Catholics was indispensable. United in faith, mutually committed to family and nation, and ready to serve the needs of the Church and society, a strong community of brothers would form mature Catholic men prepared to create a future filled with hope and optimism. Father McGivney's Knights, called to stand tall for God and country, stood shoulder to shoulder against the many challenges they faced. He took the risk of entrusting to these men his vision of a Catholic fraternal society wherein men would take their place as leaders and good citizens without compromising their faith or neglecting their families. Father McGivney

was a bridge builder who was able to relate to men of varying political, religious and social standing, and that openness to others enabled him to undertake the improbable project of founding a fraternal society for Catholic men that would encourage in them the same openness of mind and heart.

The risk factor in Father McGivney's vision was evident from the beginning. The first attempts to form the Knights of Columbus did not meet with immediate success. Some judged the founder to have an inflated opinion of himself. Others saw the organization as a duplication of other Catholic societies. The prospect of entrusting a parish leadership position to a group of laymen was too novel for many pastors to accept.

However, Father McGivney never wavered. Keeping his eye on the needs of the present and planning for challenges in the future, he exerted great effort and employed unusual wisdom in getting his Order off the ground. Trusting in God, his vision would endure and grow into the largest Catholic men's organization in the world. On this Founder's Day, we pray for the courage to follow in his footsteps with minds and hearts prepared to face the many challenges of our day, and a charity open to all—brother Knights and their families, fellow Catholics and non-Catholics, those in need in our communities, and even those who oppose us.

Venerable Father Michael J. McGivney, give us a share in your vision, so that we may face the problems and challenges of today.

Devotedly yours in Christ,

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

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Guild Director
Vice Postulator