

January 2015 Meeting

The Sacraments

Opening Prayer

Lord, teach us to pray: “*Our Father...*”

The Reading

(To be read by the Leader)

The Sacrament of the Eucharist – Part V

“The Holy Eucharist completes the Christian initiation. Those who have been raised to the dignity of the royal priesthood by Baptism, and configured more deeply to Christ by Confirmation, participate with the whole community in the Lord’s own sacrifice by means of the Eucharist.” (CCC 1322)

“Nevertheless, the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the source from which all its power flows. For the goal of the apostolic endeavour is that all who are made children of God by faith and Baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of His church, to take part in the sacrifice and to eat the Lord’s Supper.” (LG 10) Bottom line Brothers, the Eucharist is where the rubber hits the road. As stated in *Lumen Gentium*, the Vatican document on the Sacred Liturgy, the Eucharist is where all the Church’s energy needs to be directed and is the source from which all its powers flow.

We did not invent this ritual. Jesus Himself celebrated the Last Supper with His disciples and therein anticipated His death. He gave Himself to His disciples under the signs of bread and wine and commanded them from then on, even after His death, to celebrate the Eucharist. “Do this in remembrance of me.” (1 Cor. 11, 24) Brothers, as Catholics we believe that Christ becomes really present in what has the appearance of bread and wine through the process of transubstantiation. When we consume the Body of Christ, we in effect become a very real part of the Body of Christ and hence, the magnitude of the gift that we are receiving in the Holy Eucharist. Eucharist is a Greek word meaning thanksgiving. It makes perfect sense that we refer to the Eucharist as the heart and the summit of the Church’s life, for in it, through His sacrifice offered once and for all people, He pours out His graces of salvation on His Body which is the Church, which is us my friends.

We can talk about transubstantiation; we can talk about the real presence of our Lord in the Eucharist. But you know what gives me peace? If I ask you who created the heavens and the earth, you would respond God. So if I believe that God is the creator of all that was, all that is and all that ever will be and if He says He will be present in what appears to be bread and wine, I have no trouble accepting this as part of my faith in the Saviour of the world. Brothers, this is why our faith is so important in our lives; it allows us to believe and to trust in that which we cannot see nor fully understand.

What is the matter and form for the Holy Eucharist? The essential signs, the matter are wheat bread and grape wine. The form or formula is the blessing of the Holy Spirit that is invoked and the priest pronouncing the words of consecration spoken by Jesus during the Last Supper, “This is my body which will be given up for you...This is my blood, the blood of the new and eternal covenant....Do this in memory of me.” (CCC 1412) St. John Vianney, the patron saint of parish priests, said of the Eucharist, “Not to go to Communion is like someone dying of thirst beside a stream.”

The Reflection

(To be read by the Leader)

I dare say that the Holy Eucharist, regular reception of Holy Communion, is the greatest gift other than salvation that our Lord offered us on our faith journey. In becoming more fully the Body of Christ through receiving the Lord Himself, we receive the grace we all need to be more faithful witnesses and disciples within our gift of time here in the world. We are also able through the Eucharist to make a direct link with the Jewish Passover. “By celebrating the Last Supper with His apostles in the course of the Passover meal, Jesus gave the Jewish Passover its definitive meaning. With Jesus’ passing over to His Father by His death and resurrection, the new Passover is anticipated in the Supper and celebrated in the Eucharist, which fulfils the Jewish Passover and anticipates the final Passover of the Church in the glory of the Kingdom.” (CCC 1340) Brothers, our lives are a journey of faith for us and for those we love. Out of love our Lord and Saviour gave us Himself as food for the journey. You and I are invited to participate in this most Blessed Gift as often as we are disposed and able in our journey here in the world. “Do this in memory of me,” and we will, until He comes again. Amen.

Meditation Period

(The Leader now invites the members to spend a few moments in silent reflection, as the above text is not meant to be a ready-made answer but a starter for personal reflection on the theme.)

Fraternal Sharing

(The leader now invites the members to share with their Brother Knights any relevant thoughts that came to them during the meditation period.)

Closing Prayer

(Recited by all)

Let us pray:

“Almighty ever-living God, grant that we may always conform our will to yours and serve your majesty in sincerity of heart. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.”

February 2015 Meeting

The Sacraments

Opening Prayer

Lord, teach us to pray: “*Our Father...*”

The Reading

(To be read by the Leader)

Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick – Part VI

Through the apostle James, He has commanded us that “if any among you are sick, let them send for the priests of the Church, and they should pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith will save that sick person.... If that sick person has committed any sins, their sins will be forgiven them.” (*James 5:14-15*) My brothers these words are prayed every time we anoint one who is sick and what a comfort they must be.

Only fifty years ago this sacrament was known as “Extreme Unction” and was typically the last sacrament one received just prior to meeting the Lord. In fact, it was often said that the sure way to know that death was at the door was when one saw the parish priest approaching the household of the sick person. With understanding that occurred within the theology of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), this sacrament came to be understood as a sacrament of healing. It is a healing of mind, body and spirit. In many ways one might think that we should all be anointed because there are few who do not need healing of one sort or another. Anointing of the sick is a repeatable sacrament, meaning that we certainly do not have to be on our death bed in order to receive this sacrament.

So, who can receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick? The Church states that there are three basic conditions that qualify a person to receive the sacrament:

1. In the case of extreme or advanced age;
2. Prior to a serious surgery;
3. In the case of serious illness.

It is appropriate and right to avail ourselves of this sacrament when we find ourselves or our loved ones in difficult circumstances such as those named above. It can be a great source of peace to the individual receiving the sacrament and for the loving family members of the individual.

There is a further grace to this sacrament and hence the reason that only a priest or a bishop can administer this sacrament. It includes the Sacrament of Reconciliation, (confession). The Church teaches that whatever a person has in their heart, regardless if they are able to speak, that they desire forgiveness for, their sins are forgiven. “And if that sick person has committed any sins, their sins will be forgiven them.”

This presents a two-fold grace. One, in receiving the grace that is an integral part of any sacrament, and becoming more spiritually healthy, their energy can now be used for the process of physical and emotional healing. Two, within the reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation they are in a state of grace and in right relationship with the Lord. If the Lord calls the individual to be with Him they will be welcomed into the heavenly kingdom.

The fullest effect and grace that can be received in this sacrament is when one is able to receive Holy Communion within the sacrament. This is referred to as Viaticum, which means, food for the journey. The form and matter for the efficacy of this sacrament are the anointing on the forehead and the hands with the Oil of the Infirm in conjunction with the words prayed by the clergy. “Through this holy anointing, may the Lord in His love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit...May the Lord who frees you from sin, save you and raise you up.”

The Reflection

(To be read by the Leader)

Brothers, death is seldom an easy experience, because it involves those we love or ourselves. However it is non-negotiable and it is the door we must pass through in order to spend eternity in the heavenly kingdom. To be in the state of grace made possible by this most beautiful sacrament is truly a profound and beautiful way in which to prepare for the day that we will meet the Lord.

Meditation Period

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Fraternal Sharing

(The leader now invites the members to share with their Brother Knights any relevant thoughts that came to them during the meditation period.)

Closing Prayer

(Recited by all)

Let us pray:

“Almighty ever-living God, grant that we may always conform our will to yours and serve your majesty in sincerity of heart. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.”

March 2015 Meeting

The Sacraments: Sacrament of Marriage – Part VII

Opening Prayer

Lord, teach us to pray: “Our Father...”

The Reading

(To be read by the Leader)

“The Lord said: ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make him a helper as his partner.’”(Gen 2: 18)

“That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body.” (Gen. 2: 24)

‘He said in reply, “Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator made them male and female and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, no human being must separate.”’ (Mt. 19: 4-6)

The Reflection

(To be read by the Leader)

“The Sacrament of matrimony comes about through a promise made by a man and a woman before God and the Church, which is accepted and confirmed by God and consummated by the bodily union of the couple. Because God Himself forms the bond of marriage, it is binding until the death of one of the partners.” (Youcat 261) You might say that when you marry in the Catholic Church, you are signing a long term, no cut, no trade contract with the woman you love.

So what is it that constitutes a valid sacramental marriage? For a marriage to be valid in the Catholic context:

- One needs to be free to marry, meaning no previous impediments, such as a previous marriage that has not been dealt with appropriately and according to Church law.
- One must be entering the marriage freely and of their own free will. What this statement implies is that one is giving of themselves to the other totally and completely with no qualifiers or caveats. Example, “I will marry you if you promise that you will make 100K per year.” “My girlfriend is pregnant, so I’m going to marry her because it is the right thing to do.” Morally or principally this may well be the right thing to do, but it does in fact detract from your free will.

- Finally for a marriage to be sacramentally valid in the eyes of God and the Church, it is to be unitive and procreative. The fruit of the total self-giving of a couple to one another is new life, the gift of children.

The Sacrament of Marriage is unique among the sacraments in two ways. In the Roman Catholic Church the bride and groom minister the sacrament to one another, with the clergy as the official witness. In all other sacraments, the clergy are the ministers of the sacrament. Another element that makes this sacrament so beautiful is that the primary purpose of this sacrament is for spouses to assist each other in getting to heaven. Five of the seven sacraments are primarily for our own individual salvation. The Sacrament of Matrimony and Holy Orders is about the salvation of others. Lastly and perhaps as important as any other element within the Sacrament of Marriage, is “The Sacrament of Matrimony signifies the union of Christ and the Church. It gives spouses the grace to love each other with the love with which Christ has loved His Church; the grace of the sacrament thus perfects the human love of the spouses, strengthens their indissoluble unity and sanctifies them on the way to eternal life. (CCC 1661) I am sure some of you brothers are thinking, “Boy, does my wife ever have her work cut out for her in getting me to heaven”. Fear not brothers, God and His grace are an integral part of this sacrament and indeed, “His grace is sufficient for us” (2 Cor. 12: 9) and for our spouses.

Meditation Period

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Fraternal Sharing

(The leader now invites the members to share with their Brother Knights any relevant thoughts that came to them during the meditation period.)

Closing Prayer

(Recited by all)

Let us pray:

“Almighty ever-living God, grant that we may always conform our will to yours and serve your majesty in sincerity of heart. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.”

April 2015 Meeting

The Sacraments: Sacrament of Holy Orders – Part VIII

Opening Prayer

Lord, teach us to pray: “*Our Father...*”

The Reading

(To be read by the Leader)

How does the church understand the sacrament of Holy Orders? “The priests of the Old Covenant (Old Testament) saw their duty as mediating between heavenly and earthly things, between God and His people. Since Christ is the one mediator between God and humanity (1 Tim 2, 5), he perfected and ended that priesthood. A Catholic Priest who administers the sacraments acts not on the basis of his own power or moral perfection (which unfortunately he often lacks), but rather “in persona Christi. Through his ordination, the transforming, healing, saving power of Christ is grafted onto him. Because a priest has nothing of his own, he is above all a servant. The distinguishing characteristic of every authentic Priest, therefore is humble astonishment at his own vocation, (Youcat 250).

So Christ is the one and only High priest and Christ is indeed the fulfillment and completion of what the priests of the Old Testament understood their particular roles to be. The man who is ordained a Priest receives the gift of the Holy Spirit, an indelible, permanent, non-removable mark that gives him a sacred authority conferred upon him through the Bishop who ordains him. Interestingly, the Sacred Chrism used to anoint the priest as he is ordained, is the same chrism that left an indelible mark on the souls of all of us when we were baptised and again when we were confirmed. The actual matter and form for the Sacrament is the imposition of the Bishop’s hands and the particular prayers for this Sacrament.

There are three degrees of the “Sacrament of Holy Orders.” The Diaconate, which can be transitional, (a step toward the priesthood) or the permanent Diaconate. The presbyterate, ordination to the priesthood and the Episcopate, ordination of a Bishop, which is the fullness of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, (Youcat 251). As stated in a previous formation article, five of the seven Sacraments are instituted by our Lord purely for our own individual salvation; e.g., I receive the sacrament of Reconciliation in order that I may live a more sanctified life, I receive the Holy Eucharist as often as I am able in order to receive the grace I need to live a life worthy of heaven. The Sacrament of Holy Orders (and marriage) were instituted by our Lord, for the salvation of others. When we enter the sacrament of

marriage, it is not with the goal of us getting to heaven, it is with the goal of assisting our beloved spouse in getting to heaven. In the same way the role of an ordained clergy, is solely with the intent of assisting others in getting to heaven. Brothers, when a grade II student says to me; “Father, what’s your job? What do you do?” My response is always the same. I tell them that my job is to help them get to heaven. Put succinctly, this is the essential role of the Priest. To assist others on their journey to heaven. “Priestly ordination is administered as a means of salvation, not for an individual man, but rather for the whole Church, (St. Thomas Aquinas).”

The Reflection

(To be read by the Leader)

Finally, a word on the vocation of the “Sacrament of Holy Orders.” Brothers it has been my lived experience that the priesthood is the greatest gift the Lord has blessed me with in this world. I say to you with sincerity that if our young men understood the benefit, the blessings and the wonder of the priesthood, they would literally be lined up at the doors of the Seminary to get in. Brothers, do not be shy about encouraging your sons to consider the Priesthood as a vocation. Simply encourage them to be open to God’s loving plan for them in their lives. God’s grace will provide the rest of what they need.

Meditation Period

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Fraternal Sharing

(The leader now invites the members to share with their Brother Knights any relevant thoughts that came to them during the meditation period.)

Closing Prayer

(Recited by all)

Let us pray:

“Almighty ever-living God, grant that we may always conform our will to yours and serve your majesty in sincerity of heart. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.”

May 2015 Meeting

The Sacraments: Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) – Part IX

Opening Prayer

Lord, teach us to pray: “*Our Father...*”

The Reading

(To be read by the Leader)

“Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” ‘And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the holy Spirit. Those whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and those whose sins you retain are retained.”’ (Jn. 20, 22-23)

The Reflection

(To be read by the Leader)

These words, spoken by Jesus to his disciples after his resurrection on Easter Sunday in the upper room were really the commissioning and the institution of this sacrament. Interestingly, Jesus instituted the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper just prior to his passion and cross. What does he do immediately upon his resurrection? He gives us the sacrament of forgiveness.

Why do you suppose he would do this as the very first step after his resurrection? Duh...Because we are all in extreme need of the sacrament of forgiveness. We are all in need of being reconciled to God in a variety of ways, shapes and forms. Brothers, make no mistake, we have been “created in God’s image and likeness, (Gen.1, 26).” Therefore, we are created good. We are far more good than anything else, but for clarity, scripture states we are created in His image and likeness. So by the grace of God we are created like Him, but most days we are a galaxy away from being perfect like Him. Hence the need for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

The reality of our human condition, from the time of our first parents, is that we have failed to fully live up to God’s loving invitation to be in relationship with Him. When we make selfish choices in our lives, we are placing ourselves before our brothers and sisters. Remembering that love is about the other and not about ourselves, we all fall short of achieving this goal at times. What results when we fail to love the other, is that we are in effect saying **NO** to God’s invitation to be in relationship with Him. When we sin, when we make selfish choices, there comes with these actions an implicit guilt. Guilt that results from our well-formed consciences, us knowing that we have acted or thought contrary to God’s law of love. When we have done wrong there is an inherent need within us for forgiveness.

Think about your children when they were very small. When they got into something they shouldn’t have or they had been fighting with a sibling, they really did not have to tell you, did they. The look on their face often told the story that something was amiss. Brothers, we are no different; we are simply older and we have a lot more practice at hiding it. This does not mean that we are not carrying around a burden, at times, buried deep in our hearts. We feel the wrongness of our acts and this affects the way we interact with others. When I do not feel good about myself because I am feeling bad about a wrong that I have done against my neighbour, this affects my ability to

be in good relationship with my God, with my neighbour and with myself. And you know, the beauty of our Lord and Saviour, being one like us in all things except sin, is that he understands our frailty, our failings and our weakness. He loves us unconditionally in spite of ourselves. “See what love God the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God, for indeed that is what we are.” (1 Jn. 3, 1) Our Lord loves us like we love our children. He knows we won’t get it right all the time but he loves us despite our failings. He simply waits for us to come like a repentant child and say, “Lord, I am sorry for what I have done.” His response to us, “I love you and I forgive you.” It does not get better than that brothers.

We may say or we have heard someone say, “I don’t need to go to a priest in the confessional; I can go directly to God.” This is true, particularly with sins which are venial or non-grave in nature. Remember, it is God who forgives sins; the priest’s role is that of mediator for this sacrament. The seal of the confessional is absolute. It is the safest and least judgmental place in the world for you to bring your dirty laundry. For sins that are serious in nature, we need to confess them to a priest, receive a penance and absolution. Why? Because you and I are very good at rationalizing things away. When you confess your sins to a priest there is no mistaking and no rationalizing the gravity or lack of gravity of a sin. We name it, it is real and the priest may have some helpful advice in how to deal with a particular area of struggle.

To hear the words of absolution and to know that our God forgives us because of His love for us is truly a beautiful gift that allows us to make a fresh start, in effect to be the love of God for those whom we love. I, a sinner, am very grateful for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. I partake in the sacrament on a monthly basis. From month to month I am actually able to keep track of whether I am growing in my faith journey or if I am slipping in a particular area. I love the gift of a fresh start and feeling that loving forgiveness. It truly allows me in a real way to be the love of God for others. Brothers, I encourage you to participate in this sacrament on a regular basis. We all need it and indeed it is a great gift of God’s love for each of us, His children.

Meditation Period

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Fraternal Sharing

(The leader now invites the members to share with their Brother Knights any relevant thoughts that came to them during the meditation period.)

Closing Prayer (Recited by all)

Let us pray:

“Almighty ever-living God, grant that we may always conform our will to yours and serve your majesty in sincerity of heart. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen

June 2015 Meeting

Sacramentals - Part X

Opening Prayer

Lord, teach us to pray: “*Our Father...*”

The Reading

(To be read by the Leader)

So what is the difference between what we know as the seven sacraments of the Church and what are often referred to as sacramentals? We know that “the sacraments are perceptible signs (words and actions) accessible to our human nature. By the action of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit they make present efficaciously (effective as a means) the grace that they signify (CCC 1084).” Or as St. Augustine so aptly defined the sacraments over fifteen hundred years ago, “sacraments are a visible sign of invisible grace”. Participation in and reception of the sacraments are in fact the most profound and effective source of grace that we can receive.

Sacramentals are not sacraments, but they have the ability to dispose us or prepare us more fully for the reception of the grace-filled sacraments. “Sacramentals do not confer the grace of the Holy Spirit in the way the sacraments do, but by the Church’s prayer they prepare us to receive grace and dispose us to co-operate with it, (CCC 1670).” “Sacramentals are sacred signs instituted by the Church. They prepare men and women to receive the fruit of the sacraments and sanctify different circumstances of life, (CCC1677).”

Brothers, it is important to note that every ritual, every action and every gesture that you participate in when you enter your parish Church bears a very specific and intentional purpose. That purpose is to draw you and me deeper into the mystery and the wonder of God’s love for all of us, His children. Sacramentals fall largely into this category. Though they are not grace-filled in and of themselves, as we come to understand their purpose, they serve to draw us closer to the Lord. We will never understand the fullness of the Lord’s love for us until we meet Him face to face. However, everything and anything we can do to enter more fully into this wonderful mystery here on earth will assist in our sanctification. Yes brothers, challenging as it might seem, you and I are called by God to be holy. Sacramentals assist us in a very gentle and subtle way in entering into the mystery of the Lord’s love for humanity.

Sacramentals always include a prayer. Often this is accompanied by a specific sign, such as laying on of hands, the sign of the cross, or the sprinkling of holy water. Once again when we focus on the meaning or the purpose of the action, we continue the journey of growing in our faith and in our relationship with the Lord. When you dip your finger(s) in the holy water fount upon your entry into the Church you are recalling

the day you were welcomed into the Christian community on the day of your Baptism. You are also reminding yourself that in fact our God is a triune God—one God, three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Simple yet powerful.

“Besides sacramental liturgy and sacramentals, catechesis must take into account the various forms of piety and popular devotions among the faithful. The religious sense of the Christian people has always found expression in various forms of piety surrounding the Church’s sacramental life, such as the veneration of relics, visits to sanctuaries, pilgrimages, processions, the stations of the cross, the rosary, religious medals, etc, (CCC 1674).”

The Reflection

(To be read by the Leader)

My brothers, sacramentals are a big part of what we would refer to as our religious observance, and once again we remember that each time we participate in a gesture, a sign or an action, the specific intent or purpose is to draw us closer to the love of God for us. The result being that as we come to know that our God loves us beyond our comprehension, our options are limited. We become vessels and sharers of that love with others in our lives. It is in knowing that we are loved that we are able to effectively love. The sacramentals, the devotionals, the prayers we participate in on a daily basis are the subtle instruments that assist you and me in becoming effective instruments of sharing that love with our families, our friends and those who do not yet know the love of God in their lives.

Meditation Period

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Fraternal Sharing

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Closing Prayer (Recited by all)

Let us pray:

“Almighty ever-living God, grant that we may always conform our will to yours and serve your majesty in sincerity of heart. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

September 2015 Meeting Principles of the Order

Opening Prayer

Lord, teach us to pray:
“Our Father...”

The Reading (To be read by the Leader)

Our Principles: Charity-Unity-Fraternity- Patriotism

My dear Brothers in the Lord; two Columbian years ago, we did a step by step through the Ten Commandments. Last year we took a bird's eye view of the Seven Sacraments and the sacrament that compliments these major sources of grace in our lives. As I reflected on topic for this Columbian year, I received some very good suggestions, which I intend to follow up on. These included the Social Teaching of the Catholic Church as well as Pope Francis' latest writing on care of the environment and the world we live in. Stay tuned for these important topics my friends.

I continue to reflect on the challenges we encountered at our 2015 State Convention in Red Deer, with the tragic sudden death of our State Deputy Elect, Brother Grant Mann. There was sense of an ensuing confusion and at times I would say quiet chaos that finally resulted in a State Board, that although it comprised some of the same players, no one was in the position they ran for during the Convention. It is interesting (providential) how the Holy Spirit is able to work through our human inadequacies and provide us with what we need to move forward in His service always for the greater glory of God.

The Reflection (To be read by the Leader)

Why the ramble about Conventions, Elections and the Holy Spirit? Because what came to me and I am sure you have experienced this thought whether with the Knights or with other endeavors is this: What am I in the game for? Why am I involved with this particular organization? What makes this group worth the sharing of my time, talent and treasure? Brothers

we need to step back and evaluate at times, why we are in the game. Is this life-giving for me? Is it fulfilling my basic human need to care for and help others? Am I serving the Lord through my membership and service within this group? One needs to ask these questions with a critical eye, in order that we optimize and make the best use of the gift of life we have been given by our Lord.

Well Brothers, I asked myself that question about my involvement with the Knights of Columbus and I came to a conclusion. I am proud to be part of an organization whose guiding principles are Charity, Unity, Fraternity and Patriotism. These are noble principles to aspire to and I do not believe they belong only within the Knights of Columbus. However, I am proud that my Knights, your Knights, our Knights espouse these principles as the guiding tenants that guide our service to our Church, our community and to one another. So if these are our guiding principles, I thought it was appropriate that we spend some time and effort understanding these principles with the goal of being able to live them more fully because we understand what these principles call us to. Charity, Unity, Fraternity and Patriotism. “So Faith Hope and Love remain, these three, but the greatest of these is love, (1Cor. 13, 13).”

Meditation Period

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Fraternal Sharing

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Closing Prayer (Recited by all)

Let us pray:

“Almighty ever-living God, grant that we may always conform our will to yours and serve your majesty in sincerity of heart. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.”

October 2015 Meeting Principals of the Order

Opening Prayer

Lord, teach us to pray:
“Our Father...”

The Reading (To be read by the Leader)

Our Principals: Charity-Unity-Fraternity- Patriotism

“So Faith, Hope and Love remain, these three, but the greatest of these is love, (1Cor. 13, 13).” We may not automatically think of love when we consider the meaning of charity. In preparation for writing this article I looked up the word ‘charity’ in my Comprehensive Dictionary of Theology, and do you know what it said? “See love.” “Charity is the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for His own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God, (CCC 1822).” Charity is the vehicle that allows us to love God and to love our neighbor effectively and sincerely above all things. Brothers, glance at the fellow sitting beside you. Do you love him as much as you love yourself? Yes, me neither. Why? Because we are lacking charity in our hearts. If charity is the vehicle, the means, that will allow us to love God with all our hearts and love our neighbor as we love ourselves, then clearly, I don’t know about you, but I know I am lacking charity. Yet our Order is founded precisely on this value, this essential virtue. These statements are not meant to demean any of us, or cause us to feel less than good about ourselves. Simply, charity is the virtue we need most abundantly in order to be effective Knights. Clearly, charity is in fact the virtue, infused or given to us by God, that we need to cultivate and nourish within our hearts in order to become more fully the loving human beings that our Lord has created us out of love to be, in His image and likeness.

Another effort to define charity is this. “The supernatural virtue, infused by God and having Him as its motive and object, that flows from God and constantly seeks the good of others. St. Thomas Aquinas states that charity is the highest virtue and the source of all the other virtues. One who possesses charity loves God above all things and loves his neighbor with the love of God as he loves himself, (Catholic Dictionary, 128).” So charity is a virtue infused within us by God. God is the source from which this virtue that is infused within us flows. But God is also the object or prime recipient of actions with which we live this virtue in our lives. So God is

the source of this grace, but God is also to be the primary recipient of this grace.

The Reflection (To be read by the Leader)

Realizing that Fr. Henry our former State Chaplain educated us on the virtues in his formation program a few years ago perhaps a wee refresher on a couple of words so that we are better able to grasp the principals that we espouse as Knights of Columbus. Virtue: “A good habit of the intellect or will that enables one to perform an action with ease. Some are infused (e.g. theological virtues: faith, hope and charity) while others are developed by practice (e.g. cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance). Virtue brings to fulfillment the powers and abilities that one possesses, (Catholic Dictionary 486).” Add to this “infused virtues” which are “those virtues of faith, hope and love that are imparted to the soul by God’s sanctifying grace and are not acquired by any human effort other than having the willingness to receive them, (C.D. 266).” Imagine, you and I are capable of being the recipients of the virtue of love (charity) the greatest of all the virtues and the foundation of the Knights of Columbus and all we need to do is have a desire and a willingness to receive them. Stay tuned Brothers.

Meditation Period

(The Leader now invites the members to spend a few moments in silent reflection, as the above text is not meant to be a ready-made answer but a starter for personal reflection on the theme.)

Fraternal Sharing

(The leader now invites the members to share with their Brother Knights any relevant thoughts that came to them during the meditation period.)

Closing Prayer (Recited by all)

Let us pray:

“Almighty ever-living God, grant that we may always conform our will to yours and serve your majesty in sincerity of heart. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.”

November 2015 Meeting

Principles of the Order

Opening Prayer

Lord, teach us to pray:
“Our Father...”

The Reading

(To be read by the Leader)

Our Principles: Charity-Unity-Fraternity-Patriotism

“So Faith, Hope and Love remain, these three, but the greatest of these is love, (1Cor. 13, 13).” Dear Brothers, as we continue this reflection on Charity, the founding principle of our order I wish to take a liberty and hence-forth will use the term **love** and **charity** interchangeably. They do differ in meaning to a degree but we are reminded that the Catechism of the Catholic Church defines charity in the following way. “Charity is the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for His own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God, (CCC 1822).” So the difference, the way I understand it, is that love is the essence of who we are created and called to be, while charity is the method or vehicle that we will live out this call to holiness. It is reasonable to say that an act of charity is really only charity if it is done out of a response of love. If we do a good work, but we do it with hearts that are resentful, or bitter because it is inconvenient, it is not done freely, it is done with a sense of obligation for the wrong reasons, then it is not fully charity and it is not a response of love.

In his first letter to the Corinthians (13, 1-3), St. Paul comments on the context within which our word, action and thought needs transpire. The synopsis; If I speak like an angel, if I have the gift of prophecy, the gift of knowledge, enough faith to move mountains, if I give away all I own, if I give my body to be burned, but do it without love (charity), I gain nothing. So if charity (love) is not my motivation for what I do, then I may as well not do it at all. “If I ...have not charity, says the Apostle, ‘I am nothing.’ Whatever my privilege, service or even virtue, ‘if I have not charity, I gain nothing’ (CCC 1826)”

The Reflection

(To be read by the Leader)

Brothers I have written for over two months about the theological understanding of “Charity.” Why? Because charity is the primary and essential mode that will enable us to love God and one another, in an efficacious way. We need to understand the absolute importance of charity not

simply as Knights but as human persons created in God’s image and likeness. As St. Paul says it matters not what I do or say, if charity (love) is not what motivates me, I am nothing.

Brothers, on a more elementary note, charity in our lives in our Order is essential for getting us and our loved ones to heaven. Remember Brothers, our God loves us and He wants us to succeed. In His infinite wisdom, he knew that our fallen humanness would cause us to falter along the way. Hence the reason God imparted the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity into our souls, not by our human effort but as a freely given gift of “God’s sanctifying grace.” There is nothing we can do to earn these graces; they are given (infused) within us simply because of His love for us. We simply need a willingness to receive them. Perhaps willingness is not a strong enough word. We need a desire to receive these graces and if we profess the desire, our Lord who knows our hearts better than we ourselves, will give us what we need to succeed on our journeys of faith.

“The practice of all the virtues is animated and inspired by charity, which binds everything together in perfect harmony, (Col. 3, 14). It is the **form of virtues**, it articulates and orders them among themselves; it is the source and the goal of their Christians practice. Charity upholds and purifies our human ability to love, and raises it to the supernatural perfection of divine love, (CCC 1827).” Why spend so much time and effort on charity? Because “charity upholds and purifies our human ability to love.” Bottom line brothers without charity we are in a lot more than worldly trouble. We need to desire charity as God’s gift to us and then we need to strive to live our God-given charity in love of others. “If I ...have not charity, says the Apostle, ‘I am nothing.’ “So Faith, Hope and Love remain, these three, but the greatest of these is love, (1Cor. 13, 13).”

Meditation Period

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Fraternal Sharing

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Closing Prayer

(Recited by all)

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“Almighty ever-living God, grant that we may always conform our will to yours and serve your majesty in sincerity of heart. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.”

December 2015 Meeting Principles of the Order

Opening Prayer

Lord, teach us to pray:
“Our Father...”

The Reading

(To be read by the Leader)

Our Principles: Charity-Unity-Fraternity-Patriotism

“So Faith Hope and Love remain, these three, but the greatest of these is love, (1Cor. 13, 13).” My dear Brothers, previously we accepted the premise that although “love” and “charity” may be used interchangeably, we noted a slight nuance to their similarities in that: love is the essence of who we are created and called to be, while charity is the method or vehicle that we will live out this call to holiness. So how is it that we as those men they call Knights may live out the practical side of charity. What must we do in order that our charity lived out may be a response to the love that we have been created in His image and likeness.

“Charity is the power by which we, who have been loved first by God, can give ourselves to God so as to be united with Him and can accept our neighbor for God’s sake as unconditionally and sincerely as we accept ourselves, (Youcat 309).” Brothers, we can present all the theological constructs and underpinnings that we like to understand charity but perhaps the easiest and most profound understanding of charity comes from Jesus Himself.

“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest? He said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two laws,’ (Mt. 22, 36-40).”

With the greatest minds in the world pondering the virtue of charity for literally thousands of years, Jesus sums it up in two short sentences. Love God and love one another. Sounds easy, but I daresay it is easier said than done. I have spent much time on the theological

understanding of charity, but perhaps understanding charity as a way of living, as a worldview rather than a way of doing charity is an important start point. What do I mean by this?

The Reflection

(To be read by the Leader)

It is an easy default when we consider the virtue of charity to think of it as doing something rather than a way of viewing the world. We exist as an expression of the love/charity of God, therefore charity, although it is something that we do but rather, something that we are. “We love because He first loved us, (1 Jn. 4, 20).” “Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love, (1 Jn. 4, 8).” All this to say, God is perfect love/charity and we, created in His image and likeness are therefore a very imperfect likeness of love/charity. So our natural proclivity or tendency is an extension of being created in His image and likeness which is love/charity. I have taken a long but I hope a relatively basic mode of explaining that love/charity first and foremost is something that we are, (in his image and likeness). An extension of this then is that love/charity are expressions, (verbs, actions) of how we live out who we are, (noun).

“So Faith Hope and Love remain, these three, but the greatest of these is love, (1Cor. 13, 13).”

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