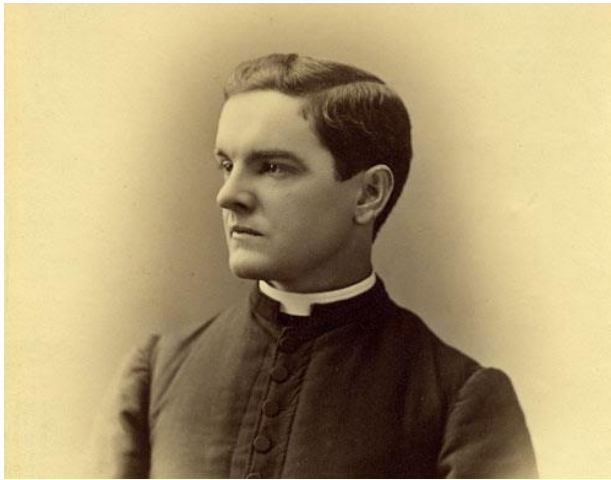


10 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THE FOUNDER OF THE K OF C

Father Michael J. McGivney is a timeless witness to the faith.

By Andrew Butler 9/1/2020



Credit: John Tierney

Maybe you're an old pro and already knew that Father Michael J. McGivney founded the Knights of Columbus in New Haven, Connecticut in 1882. Maybe you already knew that he envisioned a Catholic order that would help Catholic men to remain steadfast in faith while providing for their families' spiritual and material needs.

You may have even heard that the pope has recognized a miracle attributed to Father McGivney's intercession and that he will be beatified this year on October 31. But you probably didn't know *these* facts:

1. Not only Catholics, but even Protestants were inspired by Father McGivney's witness of faith.

Alida Harwood, the daughter of a prominent Episcopal minister in New Haven, frequented Mass at St. Mary's Church where Father McGivney served. When Alida

contracted malaria at the age of 25 and lay on her death bed, it was Father McGivney that she asked to see.

2. He was a surprisingly good baseball player.

We know that in one game with his seminary team he scored three runs, contributing to a big victory with a score of 23-6. He paved the way for a long history of baseball players who would join the Knights, including these MLB legends.

3. More forward-thinking than Yale? Father McGivney pushed the boundaries as a theater director.

At a time when, according to *Parish Priest*, nearby Yale University was limiting theater to only male actors, Father McGivney welcomed women to perform when he directed his parish's St. Patrick's Day play in 1880.

4. He helped young people take charge of their lives and create a better future.

Father McGivney saw that many young men were neglecting their religion and turning to alcohol abuse. In response, he founded St. Joseph's Total Abstinence and Literary Society, a group that helped young men stay strong in the faith and become active in their communities. No doubt, Father McGivney's experience with this group prepared him when he later founded the Knights of Columbus.

5. His vision for the role of the laity was very unusual for the time.

Seventy-seven years ahead of the Second Vatican Council, the idea that a Catholic organization could be led by laymen was quite extraordinary. Yet that was Father McGivney's vision for the Knights of Columbus.

6. He ministered to inmates.

Father McGivney was responsible for ministering to inmates in the city jail. One inmate was 21-year-old Chip Smith, who — while drunk — shot and killed a police officer. Smith was convicted for first-degree murder and sentenced to be hanged.

Father McGivney ministered to him daily, and, on the day of Smith's execution, the priest was filled with sorrow. Just before he died, Smith comforted him: "Father, your saintly ministrations have enabled me to meet death without a tremor. Do not fear for me, I must not break down now."

7. He was only 38 years old when he died in a 19th century pandemic.

And that's actually not surprising — life expectancy was short for priests in Connecticut

during this time in history, when the Catholic population was growing in America, disease was common, and the priests were overworked.

8. He's on the path to sainthood.

Father McGivney's beatification this year is the latest development in his cause for canonization. You can help promote devotion to this holy priest — Join the Father McGivney Guild.

9. His belongings were burned when he died.

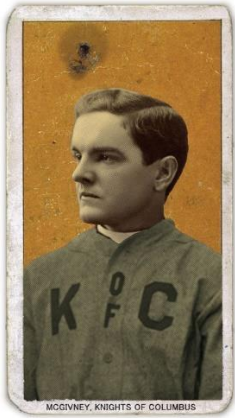
When Father McGivney died, his personal items were burned to prevent the spreading of disease. Only a small number of his writings and belongings remain.

10. He is known to intercede especially in four areas (from Columbia magazine):

- **Employment and finances.** Just as parishioners looked to Father McGivney for help when “No Irish need apply” was often included in job postings, so today many receive help when they are laid off or seeking a better job.
- **Substance abuse.** In Father McGivney's day, alcoholism afflicted the immigrant population, and many now find relief from drug or alcohol abuse after praying to him.
- **Family reconciliation.** Father McGivney helped immigrant families struggling to stay together and to make ends meet. Today, Father McGivney continues to respond to the prayers of families.
- **Return to the faith.** Father McGivney founded the Order to keep men from joining anti-Catholic societies. Today, many Catholics receive favors when calling upon him to help their fallen-away children return to Mass.

MIGHTY MCGIVNEY AT THE BAT!

The Baseball Legends Who Became Part of Another Team,
the Knights of Columbus



With the World Series underway, here is a fun fact: Blessed Father Michael McGivney, founder of the Knights of Columbus, played ball. And if one game is any indication, he was pretty good.

Father McGivney is hardly alone. Plenty of baseball legends have been active members of the Knights of Columbus.

These stars of the diamond applied the Knights' core principles – charity, unity, fraternity, and patriotism – that stretch over a century. But who are these legends? You'll never guess!

If we were in a fantasy league, this would be our starting line-up:

Manager: Connie Mack

Mack played for the Washington Nationals, Buffalo Bisons, and Pittsburgh Pirates during his 10-year career as a catcher; but he is more known for his over 50 years as a manager, compiling records for the most managerial wins (3,731), losses (3,948) and games managed (7,679). He won five World Series titles – the third most by any manager - coaching the Philadelphia Athletics to championship wins in 1910, 1911, 1913, 1929, and 1930. He was elected into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York in 1937

Pitcher: Ron Guidry

Called “Louisiana Lightning” and “Gator,” Guidry played his entire 14-year career with the New York Yankees, from 1975 to 1988. In 1978, he won the AL Cy Young Award after going 25-3, while posting a 1.74 ERA, and was elected to the All-Star team. Over his career, he was a 4-time All-Star (1978, 1979, 1982, 1983), a two-time World Series champion, and had his number retired by the New York Yankees.

Catcher: Mike Sweeney

Drafted by the Kansas City Royals as a catcher, Mike Sweeney – a 5-time All-Star (2000-2003, 2005) – also filled in at first base and as a designated hitter. He would go on to be the Royals’ captain from 2003 to 2007 and was inducted into the team’s hall of fame. He hit .297 after 16 years in the majors and amassed over 1,500 hits. On being a Knight, Sweeney said, “It was like putting on the armor of God. But I love the Knight’s message. You put on the armor, but you do things in Christ to raise his name not yours.”

First Base: Gil Hodges

Hodges played a majority of his 18-year career with the Brooklyn and Los Angeles Dodgers from 1943 to 1961, and then finished his career with the New York Mets in 1963. During that span, Hodges was an 8-time All-Star (1949-1955, 1957), won two World Series titles in 1955 and 1959, and hit four home runs in one game on Aug. 31, 1950. He went on to manage and win a World Series with the “Amazin’ Mets” in 1969. His number is retired, and he was inducted into the New York Mets Hall of Fame.

Second Base: Johnny Evers

One of baseball’s most famous poems – “Baseball’s Sad Lexicon” – is about one of the game’s fabled double-play combinations: Tinker to Evers to Chance. A three time World Series champion (1907, 1908, 1914), National League MVP (1914) and Hall of Famer, Johnny Evers played second base for the Chicago Cubs, Boston Braves and Philadelphia Phillies during his 27-year career. During World War I, Evers – a member of Troy (New York) Council 176 – was commissioned by the Knights of Columbus on War Activities as an athletic director of the K of C “Huts.” As director, he organized baseball games for the troops. “Believe me, I’m mighty glad the Knights of Columbus have accepted my offer,” Evers said in the *Daily News*, June 5, 1918. “I feel as though I can do great work in France.”

Shortstop: Hughie Jennings

“Ee-Yah” Hughie Jennings was a professional player, coach and manager from 1891 to 1925, winning three National League championships with the Baltimore Orioles and then two World Series as a coach with the New York Giants (1921, 1922). As a player, Jennings hit .311 lifetime and holds the major league record for most times hit by a pitch with 287. He was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1945 as a player by the Old Timers Committee. Jennings was a Knight from Pennsylvania, enrolling as a K of C secretary in 1918. He was going to be sent overseas during World War I along with Johnny Evers, but the war ended before his passport arrived. But at the time, *The New York Times* reported, “There is no man in the national game who is better known or more popular than Jennings, and he will be a valuable addition to the Knights of Columbus staff abroad.”

Third Base: Bill Coughlin

Nicknamed “Scranton Bill,” Coughlin played nine seasons in the major leagues for the Washington Senators in both the American and National Leagues, as well as the Detroit Tigers. In that span, he hit .252, with 972 hits, and 380 RBIs. But his claim to fame is pulling off the hidden ball trick at least seven times, the most in major league history. During World War I, Coughlin established and ran a school for umpires associated with the Knights of Columbus in Coblenz, Germany.

Left Field: Father Michael McGivney

While studying for the priesthood at Niagara University, McGivney and other Connecticut seminarians formed The Charter Oaks, according to Parish Priest, McGivney’s biography. On May 20, 1872, the Charter Oaks faced the Mohawks, another seminary team. McGivney started in left field, implying that he could run fast and could throw the ball far. He also batted clean-up. McGivney scored three times in the game as the Charter Oaks routed the Mohawks, 23-6. The game was called in five innings. The box score for the game was published in Niagara University’s school paper, *Index Niagarensis*.

Center Field: Shane Victorino

The “Flyin’ Hawaiian” was an outfielder who played for the San Diego Padres, Philadelphia Phillies, Los Angeles Dodgers, Boston Red Sox, and the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim for 12 years. Victorino won 4 Gold Glove Awards (2008-2010, 2013), was a two-time All-Star (2009, 2011), and a two time World Series champion (2008, 2013).

His father, Michael, is a Past State Deputy of Hawaii as well as a Supreme Warden for the Knights. Shane is currently a member.

Right Field: Babe Ruth

George Herman "Babe" Ruth is the epitome of legendary baseball players. At one point, Ruth held major league records for career home runs (714), home runs in a single season (60), RBIs (2,213), slugging percentage (.690), on-base plus slugging (1.164), and bases on balls (2,062). He was also a seven-time World Series champion (1915, 1916, 1918, 1923, 1927, 1928, 1932), a 12-time AL home run leader, and a member of the first inducted class into the Baseball Hall of Fame. These only scratch the surface of his accomplishments.

And he was a member of the Knights of Columbus. A lifelong Catholic, Ruth joined the Order in 1919. He often visited orphanages, schools, and hospitals during and after his major league career. A year before his death, he established the Babe Ruth Foundation for destitute children. His dedication to charity – the first principle of the Knights of Columbus - would go on to impact millions of lives, especially children.

Not a fan of these picks? No worries! There are more choices, including:

John McGraw: Third Baseman/Manager

McGraw is best known for managing the New York Giants to three World Series championships (1905, 1921, 1922) in his Hall of Fame career. He ranks second overall behind Connie Mack for managerial wins with 2,763 and held the record for most ejections until Bobby Cox surpassed him in 2007. As a player, he batted .334 and led the National League in runs two years (1898, 1899).

Fred Clarke: Outfielder/Manager

During Clarke's Hall of Fame career with the Louisville Colonels and the Pittsburgh Pirates, he amassed 2,672 hits and batted over .300 in 11 seasons. As a player-manager, he led the Pirates to four pennants and won the World Series against the Detroit Tigers in 1909.

Danny Murtaugh: Second Base/Manager

In his rookie season, Murtaugh led the National League in stolen bases, but his career was soon interrupted after he joined the U.S. Army to fight during World War II. After returning in 1946 and ending his career as a player in 1951,

Murtaugh went on to manage the Pittsburgh Pirates to two World Series championships (1960, 1971) and posted a .540 winning percentage.

Tom Kelly: First base/Manager

Kelly only played in the majors for a few months with the Minnesota Twins in 1981, but in 1986 he was hired as the team's manager. Kelly managed the team to two World Series titles (1987, 1991).

Darrell Miller: Catcher/Outfielder

Miller played his entire, four year career with the California Angels from 1984 to 1988, hitting .241 with 8 homeruns and 35 RBIs. He is the brother of Basketball Hall of Fame members Cheryl Miller and Reggie Miller.

Craig Stammen: Pitcher

Stammen is a pitcher for the San Diego Padres. He previously played for the Washington Nationals from 2009 to 2015. Stammen has recorded 531 strikeouts, posted a 3.68 ERA, and has a win-loss record of 36-30.

Mark Kotsay: Outfielder

During his 17 years in the majors from 1997 to 2013, Kotsay finished with a .276 batting average, 127 home runs, 1,784 hits and 720 RBIs. He is currently the quality control coach for the Oakland Athletics.

Jim O'Rourke: Outfielder/Catcher/First Base

O'Rourke was the first player to hit safely in the National League when it was founded in 1876. He began his professional Hall of Fame career in 1872 with the Middletown Mansfields and finished in 1904 with the New York Giants. O'Rourke batted .311 and accumulated 2,643 hits and 1,729 runs. He was the National League home run leader in three seasons, hitting 5, 6, and 6 in 1874, 1875, and 1880 respectively.

Ed Walsh: Pitcher

During his 14-year career primarily with the Chicago White Sox, Walsh posted a lifetime ERA of 1.82, which is still a major league record, and he is one of two pitchers since 1901 to win 40 games in a single season when he did so in 1908. He led the majors in strikeouts in two seasons (1908, 1911), won a World Series title in 1906, and pitched a no-hitter on Aug. 27, 1911. He also has the second-best

WHIP (walks and hits per innings pitched) of all-time at 0.9996 behind Addie Joss. Walsh was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1946.

Whoever you pick, the Knights' team definitely has a chance to beat any squad in a best of seven series.

Our home games will be at the old Yankee Stadium – the Knights did own the land to the ballpark from 1953 to the mid-1970s. And the game would be called by, none other than, the former Los Angeles Dodgers' sportscaster and fellow Knight, Vin Scully!

You know, joining the Knights is a real homerun! Here is how you can be part of our Hall of Fame team. We need free agents, like you. Join today.