

I've worked in a variety of positions of ministry...

I have never known men that have committed so much of their lives as Knights of Columbus.

We all joined the Knights for different reasons.

I joined the Knights of Columbus because ...

We are unapologetically Catholic

- We have always been in service to the Church
- We are men of faith
- We are men of prayer
- We are called to evangelize others
- We build our Domestic Churches

When I was a GK and permitted to speak about what it means to be a Knight and my explanation was always the same...

We...

Believe

Choose

Avoid

Believe

- It is **believing** that how you live your faith in your councils, at home, at your jobs, in parishes and in the community has a ripple effect that changes the world.

- As a Knight of Columbus, I've learned that I might be only person through which someone encounters Christ in any given day.
 - And how I act is a reflection of all my brothers around the world.

Choose

- It describes the imperfect person (you and I) who deliberately chooses to live contrary to what seems like a Godless world and says, "In our jurisdiction...our agency, our councils...our homes...our parishes...and in our community, we choose to live our faith boldly."
 - We put a stake in the ground!
 - And if you are ever mocked or ridiculed for living your faith...that's a badge of honor!!
- It's what we signed up for as Knights of Columbus. By choosing to be Knights, we have chosen to be different from secular society and to live our faith in truth and love.
 - It's supposed to be hard
 - There are monumental problems in the world and in our Church so what are we to do?
 - Base everything you do in prayer, **EVERYTHING.**
 - Live your faith in whatever situation you're in and you will literally impact the world.

- BE the light in the darkness...BE the example

Avoid

We must deliberately avoid that which pollutes our minds and hearts.

- Too often we think that because we are so-called devout Catholics, we can put ourselves in situations in which we will be tempted to sin.
 - We think we'll be fine...and once we've made that decision, we just claimed that we're smarter than the evil one...and we NEVER will be!
- If you truly want to know freedom, accept your powerlessness and surrender yourself completely to God.

My powerlessness...

Story: Autism diagnosis for two of our children who are 18 months apart

- Horrible,
- Devastating
- We (naively) thought we didn't deserve this because we thought we earned better from God
- I actually left the Catholic faith for a few years

A decision had to be made:

- Complete Abandonment to Jesus
- Join in the rebellion of the evil one
 - But then I would be in slavery

 - These are the only 2 choices in life that really matter.

- My wife and I realized that nothing is impossible for God
- *We had to mourn what we thought our children would become so that we could see the priceless gift before us.*

So I offer to you...

Be aware of where your moments of frustration, discouragement, “autism” in your role as Knights of Columbus. It may very well be God allowing you to suffer so that you can then open your eyes to a magnificent plan/gift for you.

So I ask you...

What are you prepared to do personally as a KofC, after we celebrate this Convention, to ensure that Christ and His church are the foundation of everything that you do?

And as you think about that...

REALITY CHECK

We DO NOT live in a Christian culture anymore.

- We are living in mission territory
 - Mission territory is not only in third-world countries. It's right outside these doors.

This is not about being negative. This is about understanding the world that we are currently living in – the dark parts as well as where there is great hope!

- Jesus tells us that we are the Light of the World and are meant to bring the light of Christ to others.
 - To do that we must know the reality we are living in and plan accordingly.

As you reflect upon this past year, did you apply the systems, schedules, meetings, and goals that have been in place for decades?

- While these things have served the Order well, depending on how old they are, they may very well be based in an assumption that we live in a Christian culture.
 - Ironically, the downfall of Christian cultures is, too often, that Catholics think we just need to maintain... “keep things going.”
 - We are not in a Christian culture and therefore any sort of maintenance plan simply won't work.

- Society (& dare I say our brother Knights) desperately needs us to be intentional about our prayer lives, our intention to emulate Christ through our actions (service) & our willingness share the gospel message with our words.
- As a Knight of Columbus, the world needs for my faith life to be public, both in what I do as well as what I say.

This makes some of us uncomfortable, and that's ok.

We've been uncomfortable before. It was March 29, 1882.

A group of men led by a young priest (I'm certain) felt unequipped and unqualified.

But the Eucharist was their foundation

.....Jesus Christ was their model

.....and they grew because the world needed the Knights of Columbus.

Being "uncomfortable" for Christ and His Church has worked well for us, don't you think?

My brothers, throughout the history of the Knights of Columbus, we have always become exactly whom God has called us to be.

- Therefore, it is very clear to me that ***You have an Apostolic Mission!***

I offer that this Convention is both a celebration as well as a commencement!

WHERE TO BEGIN:

1) The most important decision anyone will ever make is to follow Jesus or not.

Definition of evangelization: Inviting people to meet Jesus Christ.

2) Remember that the most perfect preacher in the history of the world had people turn away from Him.

3) Persevere in prayer

4) Preach the gospel... “Here is what Jesus has done for me.”

5) Be a credible witness to the faith. Your house must be in order but not perfect.

6) Everyone who has met Jesus Christ has a responsibility to share Him.

7) Lastly, there’s no silver bullet.

a. Evangelization is essentially relational.

What are you going to do with the time that you've been given?
It's entirely up to you.

Prayer:

(2 Timothy 4:1-5)

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingly power: proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching.

For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine but, following their own desires and insatiable curiosity, will accumulate teachers and will stop listening to the truth and will be diverted to myths.

But you, be self-possessed in all circumstances; put up with hardship; perform the work of an evangelist; fulfill your ministry.