



# KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS ALL SAINTS COUNCIL 9709 NEWSLETTER

January-March 2025



## THIS ISSUE'S HIGHLIGHTS WITH MUCH MORE INSIDE!



Essay Winner



Special Recognition



Spelling Bee



Pancake Breakfast



Philanthropy



Basketball Free Throw



Welcome New Knights



Spring Highway Cleanup



American  
Red Cross

Spring Blood Drive

## HAPPY NEW YEAR 2025!



### What is the Jubilee?

The Jubilee, also known as the Holy Year, is an extraordinary and solemn event of the Catholic Church that occurs every 25 years. This special year is dedicated to reconciliation, conversion, and spiritual renewal, offering the faithful the opportunity to receive the plenary indulgence. It is a celebration that not only involves Catholics but also draws respect and interest from other religious communities and people of goodwill.

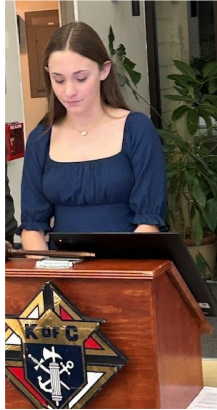
The Jubilee of 2025 will last from December 24, 2024, to January 6, 2026 and represents a moment of great significance for millions of faithful from around the world. It will be the second ordinary Jubilee presided over by Pope Francis, following the extraordinary Jubilee of 2015 dedicated to mercy.

May our Grand Knight's closing message from 2024 be the guiding beacon for our Council throughout 2025!

***Gentlemen, as we enter this Jubilee year, a year of hope, may we make our hearts a safe haven for this infant Jesus. May we continue to be a beacon of God's radiance within us to our families, our church and the least that dwell among us. Let our values of charity, unity and fraternity continue to wash away doubt and fear but rather build a refuge of peace that can only be found in a perfect relationship with Jesus.***



# 2025 OFF TO A FAST START!



Essay Contest Winner AnnaBlake Wallace and her family join our first Council meeting of 2025 to read her essay



WDD George receives coveted Star District Award from the State Treasurer, our own Joe McCarthy

## WHAT GOES UP, MUST COME DOWN



## COUNCIL BROTHERS AND FAMILY MEMBERS REMOVE THE TREE AND STORE CHRISTMAS



**PHOTOS COURTESY OF  
SAM STRAIGHT  
COUNCIL 9709  
JANUARY 13, 2025**





# SPELLING BEE 2025



On Tuesday, January 28th, our Council conducted the TFS Spelling Bee held in Fellowship Hall. Brother Paul Scaini returned as our pronouncer making sure the participants clearly understood the words and their meanings when necessary. Brother Mike Wrzesien is the pioneer who has helped to organize this event since its beginning and was the official recorder. Youth Director, Brother Will Austin, organized this event coordinating with Principal Dawn Smith and Ms. Iris Lacson at TFS. Will, along with Brothers Marty Schmidt and Sam Straight were judges and Brother Dave Payne provided set up. Council 9709 has been conducting this event since 2012!



The twelve participants were well prepared and provided impressive performances. Of note, third grader, Jameson Cooper gave an impressive performance, spelling into the 35th Round. The Ramirez brothers, Lucas (6th Grade) and Sebastian (8th Grade) went head to head from Round 36 through 66 with Lucas winning in the 67th Round. The previous longest Bee with 60 Rounds was held in 2020. Lucas has participated in the TFS Spelling Bee the past 4 years. In 2022 and 2023 he finished third and in 2024 he was the runner up. Congratulations, Lucas!



THE PANEL IS READY



BROTHER MIKE INTRODUCTIONS



PRINCIPAL SMITH  
WITH THE RAMIREZ  
BROTHERS



PRINCIPAL SMITH  
AND WINNER LUCAS RAMIREZ



OUR PROUD 2025 CONTESTANTS





# PHILANTHROPY



At our February Council meeting, Lori Shuler, assisted by her daughter Alison, provide detailed information about the good work performed at Hope Reins. Brother Ray Martin volunteers 500 hours per year at Hope Reins!



*"We are privileged to serve kids aged 5-18 and their families free of charge at the ranch."*

*At Hope Reins, we believe hurting people need hope, especially hurting kids. Thousands experience acute crisis in North Carolina every day. Their trauma is a result of difficulties like physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse, neglect, violence, illness, or death of a loved one.*

*With severe reductions in state-funded mental health and limited accessible services, hurting children and families in our region have few options to pursue healing.*

*A child experiencing acute crisis needs the foundational elements of healthy relationship: safety and trust. Rescued horses have a unique way of connecting to these needs through their own stories of rescue and restoration. Through establishing a safe and caring relationship, a person of faith and a rescued horse can help the child begin the process of healing."*

**Since 2010, Hope Reins has helped over 2,000 kids in life crisis from 14 eastern North Carolina counties through its 33-acre ranch, rescued horses and restoration in Christ.**



**HOPE REINS**  
*True Hope. Real Healing.*



Grand Knight, Bryan, Mike Rock and Ray Martin present Lori Shuler a \$1,000 check





# PRESIDENTS' DAY PANCAKE BREAKFAST



Our Council conducted a special Presidents' Day Pancake Breakfast on Sunday February 16th. The menu included pancakes (including gluten free), sausages, donuts, fresh apples, orange juice and coffee. We served approximately 150 paid plates. Proceeds will go to support \$500 donations each to Father Joseph's and Father James's seminaries in their native countries of Nigeria and India. Many thanks go to Brother Nick Renga and his crew for an excellent job preparing and serving a great meal! And a special shout out to our Scouts who greeted attendees and helped clean up afterwards. All those in attendance raved about the excellent food and many returned for seconds,,,,and thirds! This was due, in large part, to our resident pancake aficionado, Brother Mike Wrzesien, who ensured the quality and consistency of each cake! The leftovers were delivered to three local fire stations to some very grateful first responders. Great job Council 9709!



Captain Renga and his crew ready to serve!



Ah yes—the Money Men greeters!



The Boy Scouts motto is "Be Prepared" and certainly made good on that today!





# ANNUAL BASKETBALL FREE THROW CONTEST



Council 9709 held the annual Basketball Free Throw Challenge on Saturday, February 22 at the Assisi Community Center Gym. Thank you to the many Brothers who volunteered and helped make the event a great success. A total of 17 participants competed in two age groups, 9-11 and 12-14. Jaxon Keating won in the older age group with 12 out of 15 baskets, and Grayson Reis won in the younger age group with 13 out of 15 baskets. Jaxon and Grayson will have the opportunity to compete in the state-level championship. Congratulations to the winners and all participants!

~ Will Austin, Youth Director



Stephanie and Tony taking care of registration



Great turnout—thank you!



Young athletes giving it their best!



Winners Grayson and Jaxon with Will—well done!







# WELCOME NEW KNIGHTS!



On Sunday, February 23rd, our Council welcomed in three new Knights awarding them with their Third Degree of Charity, Unity and Fraternity. Shawn Tenace and Scott Downer were taking their vows for the first time along with Jeff Kunkel, who joined online and was officially welcomed into the Order. Officiating were WGK Bryan Kozak, joined by Brothers Tony Anello, Sandy Gayle, and David Payette with Brother Ralph Guenther as our Ceremonial Warden. Our Presiding Priest was Father Joseph. Also present were dignitaries District Deputy George Beserock, Regional Deputy Denis Carter and District Secretary James Davisson. A special reception followed with a gourmet presentation by MaryBeth Bayle.



Father James Prays



MC Tony Anello



WGK Bryan on Charity



Sandy Gayle on Unity



David Payette on Fraternity



WDD George welcomes new Knights



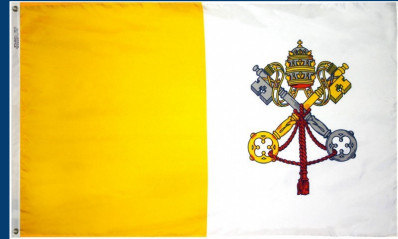
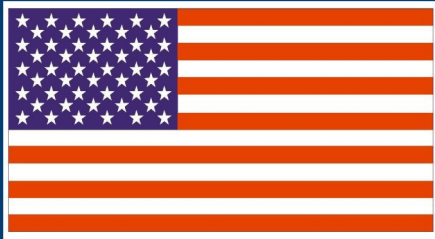
Candidates take in the good messages



New Knights receive their Rosaries from WGK Bryan

# DEDICATION OF THE FLAGS

On Sunday, February 23rd, Father Chris dedicated both the American and Papal flags purchased by Council 9709 and Assembly 3552. In attendance were Brothers from both the council and assembly. These flags will be displayed in the chapel and the church welcome center.



## WINTER CPO FOOD DRIVE

Good afternoon,

Thank you for such a successful food drive weather and all. You and along with the entire St. Francis community are generous supporters of CPO and of our mission.

Thank you, again for all your time and efforts.

Sincerely,

Susan Hicks

Health Education Specialist

Catholic Parish Outreach Food Pantry



Catholic Parish Outreach  
Food Pantry

A Program of Catholic Charities

Providing Help – Creating Hope – Serving All



This note from Susan Hicks was sent to SFA Parish Leaders, Mark and Theresa Baumgartner along with David Payne in appreciation for their efforts in arranging donation volunteers and truck drivers to pick up and return the truck for each drive. Brothers Ralph Guenther, Marty Schmidt and Michael Ames also assisted with driving. Over two weekends, our Parish donated over 7,000# of food and almost \$4,800 in cash! Our Council is proud to serve such a generous Parish Community by driving the trucks!





# “HEADIN’ DOWN THE HIGHWAY,,,,,”



Lookin’ for adventure” Okay so maybe not adventure—just good fellowship in concert with community service. Our Spring Adopt-a-Highway was a huge success with 12 Brother Knights and family members joining in on the fun. Early AAH pioneer, Brian Denison, confirmed this is our 22nd year conducting this Community Service. We are getting close to 90 events with an estimated 15Tons of trash and recycle removed from our neighborhood! Under the current leadership of Bob Bagin, the crews clean up between the Durham County line and the Union 76 Station on Leesville Rd. We laughed



about the variety of items found over the years from cash to dirty diapers to a pillow case full of solid silver serving dishes. Perhaps the most intriguing was Brother Wrzesien finding a full jar of pickles on one of his missions! Stay tuned for more crazy findings or, better yet, join us next time to seek your own treasure while enjoying the fellowship of Brothers and their families!



## FROM PREVIOUS CLEANUPS





# PHILANTHROPY



The first principle of our order is charity: *"Knights recognize that our mission, and our faith in God, compels us to action. There is no better way to experience love and compassion than by helping those in need, a call we answer every day."* Our Council is strongly committed to the support of those in need within our community through volunteering and by way of financial support. During this fraternal year the Council will donate more than \$17,000 to non-profit organizations that are aligned with our mission and the principles of Catholic Social teaching. Most of these funds serve those in need in the Triangle and over \$4000 provided to victims of Hurricane Helene in Western North Carolina. **In addition** to the \$17K, the Council provided \$3,500 of financial support to seminarians. It is also worth noting that in addition to funds from the Council budget, we collected **personal donations from individual brother Knights** totaling more than \$8,200 to be distributed by the Council to charitable needs (\$6,658 for victims of Hurricane Helene and more than \$1,600 for patients at Duke Children's Hospital). **In total, our council had a financial impact of nearly \$29,000 in FY24/25 alone!** The commitment our Council has to the principle of Charity is something we can all be proud of. ~*Worthy Treasurer, Mark Baumgartner*



Our Lady of the Rosary



**NO KID SLEEPS  
ON THE FLOOR  
IN OUR TOWN!**



# CATHEDRAL TOUR



On Saturday, March 15th, Father Chris conducted a tour of the Holy Name of Jesus Cathedral for Knights and their families. There were about 50 in attendance. He took us through a complete history of the Cathedral and the property it occupies. In 1899, Fr. Thomas F. Price and his sister, Sr. Mary Agnes of the Sisters of Mercy, founded a Catholic orphanage on the property that Price had purchased in his own name adjacent to the city of Raleigh. In the early 1950s, Bishop Vincent Waters transferred the high school students to Cathedral Latin High School at Sacred Heart Cathedral. Two years later the Nazareth Orphanage's elementary school closed. Bishop Waters built a new high school, Cardinal Gibbons High School, on a portion of the former Nazareth Orphanage site.

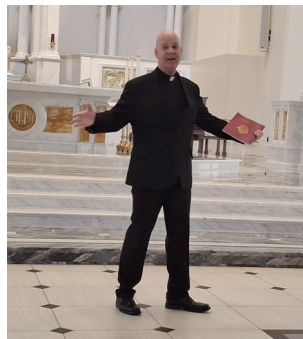
The Nazareth Property housed the Diocese of Raleigh Catholic Center, which serves as the headquarters for the bishop and administrative staff of the diocese until 2014. In 2011, Bishop Michael Burbidge announced the construction of a new cathedral to replace Sacred Heart Cathedral. Fundraising began and groundbreaking took place in January, 2015. At a cost of \$43 Million, the cathedral was dedicated in July, 2017.

Other details covered by Father Chris included the fact that the Cathedral is 43,000 sq ft in the form of a crucible and was designed by architect James O'Brien. The copper clad dome weighs 162 tons and was placed by a large crane. Also the bell tower reaches 154 feet high and features a 50 bell carillon. The seven stained glass windows were salvaged from the Church of the Ascension in Philadelphia. The Opus 147 pipe organ was designed and built by CB Fisk and installed in the fall of 2018.

Knights and family members were invited to do readings at the Ambo to hear their own echo in the Cathedral. Following a group photo, all were invited to enjoy a pizza lunch in the Parish Center. A big thank you to Sandy Gayle and Tony Rivezzo for ordering the pizza and setting up serving area with drinks and salad!



Fr Chris teaching us details of the Cathedral



Ave Maria by Kathy Payne



Inside the 162 ton Dome



The Opus 147 Pipe Organ



St Francis



Moon and stars as seen on Easter 33 AD

# SPRING BLOOD DRIVE



American Red Cross

On Saturday, March 29th, our Council once again sponsored the Red Cross Blood Drive held at Fellowship Hall. Started in 1996 by SK Tom Dupree, we have collected over 5,000 units of life-saving blood! Our donations were down based on past years but spirits ran high for those in attendance to save the lives of many. Under the leadership of WGK, Bryan, the event was a well-oiled machine. A huge thank you to all the Brothers and wives who hosted and served an assortment of



meals. A big shoutout to the "Food Runners" who ran down the donations of food that included Asian, pizza, wings, hot dogs and so much more. Sandy Gayle had help from Bob Bagin, Nick Renga, Frank McNally, Mike Wrzesien, and as always, Steve and Maria Nicolas. Steve and Maria didn't get enough spending the day feeding donors. Then they hauled all the leftovers to the USO that evening! Making a difference!



Mike, Steve and Maria serving up a feast!



Sandy and Bob with the full Assortment of chow!



Something for everyone!



Smiling Donors make it happen!



Brother John lends an arm



Father Luke from Cardinal Gibbons joins The Kozak's for a well-deserved snack!



American Red Cross







## GRAND KNIGHTS MESSAGE

Dear Brothers,

As we continue through the sacred season of Lent and look toward the joy and hope of Easter, it is an opportune time for us as Knights to reflect on the meaning of this important liturgical season and the renewal it brings to our faith and our lives. Lent is a time for personal conversion, sacrifice, and renewal, but it is also a season of expectation—a time when we are invited to reflect on the suffering and death of Christ and to prepare ourselves for the triumphant joy of His resurrection on Easter Sunday.

Lent is a journey that leads us from the ashes of repentance to the new life that Easter promises. It is a season marked by prayer, fasting, and almsgiving—practices that bring us closer to God and enable us to serve others more selflessly. As Knights, we are called to embody these Lenten practices in both our personal and communal lives, and to use this time as an opportunity to deepen our faith, strengthen our fraternity, and share the love of Christ with those in need.

### **The Call to Conversion and Growth**

Lent challenges us to look inward. It is a time for us to evaluate our relationship with God and with one another. This season is not just about giving something up for forty days; it is about embracing a spirit of transformation. It is an invitation to examine where we have fallen short in our commitment to living as faithful Catholic men and to seek a deeper conversion of heart. Lent calls us to recognize the areas of our lives where we need to grow in holiness and to allow the grace of God to renew us.

As Knights, we are called to be men of integrity, virtue, and service. Lent offers us the opportunity to take stock of how we are living out the principles of Charity, Unity, Fraternity. Are we putting the needs of others before our own? Are we working to “Build the City of God” in our homes, our communities, and our church? Are we living the values of our Order in our daily actions, or have we become complacent?

The practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving that define Lent are meant to draw us closer to Christ and purify us of all that keeps us from living fully for Him. Prayer deepens our relationship with God, fasting strengthens our will to resist temptation, and almsgiving calls us to act with compassion and generosity toward those who suffer. These are the ways we can open our hearts to the transformation God desires for us, and they prepare us to celebrate the glory of Easter with renewed hearts.

### **Looking Toward the Joy of Easter**

As we journey through the challenges and sacrifices of Lent, we do so in anticipation of the joy that Easter will bring. Easter is the culmination of our faith, the victory over sin and death that Christ won for us on the Cross. It is a time of celebration, but also a time to reflect on the new life we have received in Christ’s resurrection.

The resurrection of Jesus is the ultimate expression of God’s charity. Through His death and resurrection, Christ conquered the darkness of sin and opened the doors to eternal life for all who believe. As Knights, we are called to be witnesses to this hope, sharing the message of Christ’s victory over death with all those we encounter. We are called to be men who live in the light of Easter, people whose lives are marked by the hope, peace, and joy that flow from the resurrection.

Easter is not just a day on the calendar; it is a way of life. It is a call to live as new creations in Christ, to live with the joy and freedom that His resurrection brings. As we move from the austerity of Lent into the celebration of Easter, let us carry with us the lessons learned during this season—lessons of sacrifice, selflessness, and service. Let us enter into the joy of Easter not just as a one-time celebration, but as a way to renew our commitment to live as men of faith, hope, and love every day of the year.

Continued on page 14,,,,,



## GRAND KNIGHTS MESSAGE

Continued,,,,,

### **Our Call to Serve During Lent and Beyond**

One of the hallmarks of the Knights of Columbus is our commitment to service. During this Lenten season, we have numerous opportunities to put our faith into action by serving others. Whether through supporting our parish's Lenten efforts, volunteering at local charities, or contributing to those in need, we are called to live out the message of Christ's love and compassion. Our work during Lent serves as a reminder that the journey to Easter is not just a personal journey, but one that calls us to walk with others, particularly those who are most vulnerable and in need.

Let us also be mindful of the significance of the Easter season in the lives of those we serve. As we reflect on Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection, we are reminded that many in our communities continue to face trials and hardships. In our service, let us not only be generous in our time and resources but also in our compassion and understanding. Let us seek to be a source of hope to those who may be struggling, helping them to see that through Christ, all things are made new.

### **A Final Thought: Living the Resurrection**

As we move forward in this season of Lent and toward the joy of Easter, let us remember that our lives as Knights are rooted in the resurrection. We are not merely commemorating an event that happened nearly 2,000 years ago—we are living in the light of that event every day. Christ is risen, and we, too, are called to rise with Him. Our Lenten sacrifices, our prayer, our fasting, and our almsgiving are all ways in which we prepare to experience the fullness of that resurrection in our own lives.

I am grateful for each of you, for your dedication to our Order and to our shared mission of service and charity. As we approach the celebration of Easter, let us renew our commitment to live as men who are not just followers of Christ, but who are living His resurrection every day. Let us be men of faith, hope, and charity, shining the light of Christ in all that we do.

May God bless you and your families this Lenten season, and may the joy of the risen Christ fill your hearts and homes on Easter and always.

Vivat Jesus!

Bryan Kozak

Grand Knight