



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS ALL SAINTS COUNCIL 9709 NEWSLETTER



January-March 2026

THIS ISSUE'S HIGHLIGHTS WITH MUCH MORE INSIDE!



Essay Winner



Spelling Bee



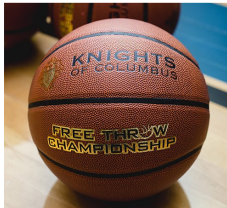
6th Grade Fonts



Pancake Breakfast



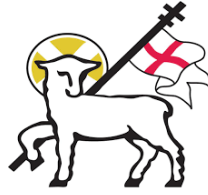
Welcome New Knights



Basketball Free Throw



Pilgrimage



Philanthropy



Highway Cleanup



American Red Cross

Spring Blood Drive

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2026!



Characteristic of our Council, we hit the ground running the very first weekend of 2026! We enjoyed a successful "Paint the Campus Blue" recruiting drive following all masses with a first time ever, announcement from all the Priests during Mass and an ambo announcement by our WGK, Tommy Dalton. The weekend produced a record **eight completed Form 100's** and four information cards. The next exemplification ceremony could lead to a full house in the Chapel!



Father Chris and our Worthy Grand Knight, Tommy welcome Candidates and their wives as they complete Form 100's and Information cards during the weekend "Paint the Campus Blue!"



JUBILEE YEAR OF SAINT FRANCIS



The Jubilee of Saint Francis has begun

In its official announcement, the Order of Friars Minor explains that the jubilee invites the faithful to follow Francis in living the Gospel '**sine glossa**,' without evasion or self-protection.

In January 2026, the Church began a rare commemoration: 800 years since the passing of Saint Francis of Assisi. Known as the *Transitus*, the saint's death on October 3, 1226, now anchors a **Franciscan Jubilee Year** running from January 10, 2026, through January 10, 2027.

This jubilee is not devotional shorthand. It is **a formally proclaimed Jubilee Year**, announced by the and established by decree of the Vatican's,

which grants a plenary indulgence under the usual conditions.

The jubilee centers on **Francis' final hours at the Porziuncola**, the small chapel within today's Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Assisi. Early Franciscan sources recount how Francis asked to be placed on the bare earth, relinquishing even his habit, and died praising God — a final, uncompromising witness to evangelical poverty.

The current jubilee should be distinguished from the series of 800th anniversaries marked by Franciscans in recent years. Since 2023, communities have commemorated milestones such as the approval of the Franciscan Rule, the Nativity at Greccio, and the stigmata at La Verna. These observances were official centenary celebrations, but **they were not jubilee years in the juridical sense**. The 2026-27 observance explicitly designated a Jubilee with a defined beginning and end and a universal spiritual concession recognized by the Holy See.

Pope Leo has already referred to St. Francis' anniversary on a number of occasions, notably in his address to diplomats from all over the globe, explaining that St. Francis appeals even to non-Catholics and is a model for seeking peace in a world so plagued by conflict.

Francis' death came not in triumph but in surrender. His final gesture — letting go of everything, even the garment that marked his religious life — continues to resonate in a world shaped by conflict, ecological strain, and anxiety about security.

Franciscan leaders have framed the jubilee as **a call to conversion, simplicity, and peace**. Coverage by Vatican News has emphasized how the jubilee echoes Pope Francis' repeated appeals for reconciliation, care for creation, and a Church marked by humility rather than power — themes deeply rooted in the legacy of Assisi's most famous son.



~ Source: *Aleteia* (aleteia.org) is an online publication distributed in six languages



2026 OFF TO A FAST START!



This year's Essay Contest winner, Kate Sullivan from TFS's Mrs. Dellasega's First Period Class reads her winning essay to our first Council Members meeting joined by her parents and WGK Tommy.. The Theme for this year's essay is *"The Three Popes I Admire the Most."* Her original work was posted in the December Newsletter.



Also happening the first weekend of January was the 2nd weekend collecting cell phones to support Interact Agency, focused on supporting victims of domestic and sexual violence. These phones are traded in for burner phones with direct lines to 911. It is no exaggeration that these old phones lying around in those utility drawers save lives.

"We had a good turnout for our cell phone and tablet collection. Our SFA parishioners donated 50 cell phones and 6 tablets. Thank you to our brother knights Anthony Rivezzo , Mark Baumgartner , Luis Villareal & David Payne for manning the collection table during the masses. During a separate drive at my 55+ community Creekside at Bethpage, we collected 52 devices. The total amount of devices collected during both drives is 108 cell phones and tablets. Best year yet!" ~Joe Azzopardi

Good job, Brother Joe Azzopardi!



Joe and his elves conducting the drive at Creekside



Joe and AJ Pfander (Creekside Resident) deliver the phones to a grateful Brittany at Interact



2026 KNIGHTS IN ACTION



WHAT GOES UP, MUST COME DOWN

On Monday, January 12th Mark Baumgartner, Marty Schmidt, Tony Rivezzo, Ralph Guenther, Jesse Wood, Chuck Henneson, David Payne, Mike Kozak, Antonio Lopez, Luis Villareal, Scott Larrabee, Wes Evans, Paul Geisen joined forces with Theresa, Mary Beth, Kathy, Lilly, Barbara and Monica to “un-decorate” the church and remove the tree.



COUNCIL BROTHERS, WIVES AND VOLUNTEERS REMOVE THE TREE AND STORE CHRISTMAS





PHILANTHROPY 2025/26

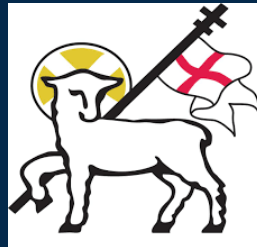


LAMB

“LAMB, “Least Among My Brethren”, was a program started by PSD Bill Scott which was adopted as a statewide program by the State Council in 1974. The sole purpose of LAMB is to support those with intellectual disabilities. These individuals have needs that most of us cannot imagine. The funds that our Councils provide, through various means of fundraising, help to meet some of those needs.”

“By its very nature LAMB touches just about every program we as Knights support; community, family, right to life, youth, church, you name it.”

~Richard White, North Carolina LAMB Director



LAMB Donations to date:

Philanthropy—\$1,000 FYTD



PHILANTHROPY 2025/26



Goals for Council Philanthropy Committee

Philanthropy Committee Established in FY 2021 with goals below

Monetary Support provided via approved council budget for:

Organizations aligned with the principles of the Knights of Columbus

Organizations aligned with the themes of Catholic Social teaching

Organizations that can achieve a sustainable impact for those most in need

Prioritize local organizations (Ministries of solidarity identified by parish Tithe/Stewardship Committee receive special consideration)

Prioritize organizations that resonate with younger Catholic men to facilitate membership



Our Lady of the Rosary





PHILANTHROPY 2025/26

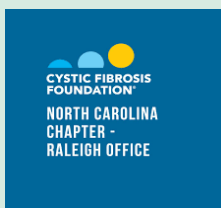
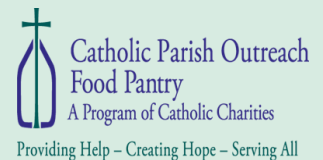
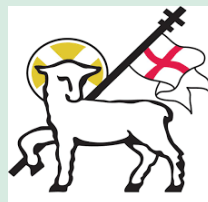


Philanthropy Committee FY 2025/26 – Distribution Plan/Phase 1

- \$500 ALS Association NC – Patient & family services, support research for cure
- \$500 Arlene Straight Endowment - Supports disadvantaged preschoolers at St. Francis of Assisi
- \$500 Bair Foundation—Christian-based foster care & adoption
- \$500 Camp Royall - Camp for people with autism located near Pittsboro, NC (Autism Society of NC)
- \$1000 Catholic Parish Outreach* – Food pantry; innovative solutions to address food insecurity
- \$500 Cystic Fibrosis Foundation NC Chapter - Patient & family services, support research for cure
- \$500 Note in the Pocket* – addresses clothing insecurity for local children
- \$500 InterAct of Wake County – Addresses domestic and sexual violence; emergency shelter and advocacy
- \$1000 LAMB Foundation of NC - Assists people who have intellectual disabilities
- \$1000 St. Joseph Primary Care of Raleigh – Primary Healthcare for the uninsured, the under-insured (Catholic)
- \$500 Tammy Lynn Center – Home, community and residential support services for individuals with Intellectual and developmental disabilities
- \$500 Healing Transitions—recovery from substance abuse, emergency shelter, and family services
- \$500 Centro Para Familia Hispanas*—emergency services for rent and utilities
- \$400 St Vincent de Paul—helping local citizens with essentials like rent, utilities and connecting with other agencies for assistance
- \$400 Urban Ministries– assisting locals with food, medicine and shelter since 1981

\$8,800 TOTAL DONATIONS FYTD!

*** ALSO RECEIVED COATS FOR KIDS DONATIONS**





2026 DC MARCH FOR LIFE



WASHINGTON — Tens of thousands of pro-life advocates gathered in the nation's capital Friday for the 53rd annual March for Life, marching from the National Mall to the Supreme Court to voice their opposition to abortion.

This year's event unfolded under unusually mild January weather, allowing participants to move steadily through the streets of Washington, even as the city prepares for a potentially paralyzing winter storm later in the weekend.

Vice President JD Vance, speaking for the second consecutive year, told those gathered that he and his wife, Usha, are expecting their fourth child, a third son, in late July, a personal note that drew hearty cheers from the crowd.

Vance leaned into his message that pro-life advocacy is not just about legal arguments but a broader cultural affirmation of life. "Let the record show you have a vice president who practices what he preaches," he said, referencing his family's news while framing family life as central to the cause.

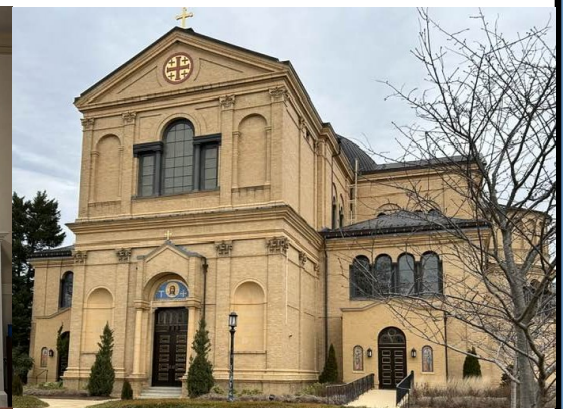
~Source: National Catholic Register



PGK's STEVE BECKER, KENT SIEFKES AND BRIAN DENISON PROUDLY REPRESENTING

"Brothers, PGKs Kent, Brian, and I travelled to Washington for the USCCB National Prayer Vigil & Mass for Life and the National March for Life. On the trip up we enjoyed catching up and engaging in conversations about our faith. We never had a quiet moment where we had to turn on the radio. Unfortunately, despite arriving 90 minutes early, every seat at the Vigil Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception was either filled or reserved. So, we headed over to the nearby St. John Paul II National Shrine across the street from the Basilica, owned and operated by the Knights of Columbus, and toured the exhibits and prayed at the Luminous Mysteries Chapel, which held a first-class relic of St. John Paul II. While in the area, we also visited the beautiful Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land exhibiting many real-life size replicas of famous Holy Land Shrines and visited our US Senator offices."

"The March was very well attended again this year, easily numbering in the tens of thousands. The enthusiasm of the young H.S. and college students is especially inspirational for the future Culture of Life in this country. Brother Kent and I have been to DC for this trip at least 10 times and every year return having deepened our faith – thanks to being with our brothers and the various moving sites that we visit. We are already looking forward to next year and would like to challenge more 9709 brothers to join us. In prior years, we've had as many as 10-12 brothers on this trip, which makes it even more enjoyable! The projected dates are January 21-22 2027!" ~ STEVE BECKER AND KENT SIEFKES





On Tuesday, February 3rd, 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 in 2012 and was the official recorder. Paul Geisen organized this event coordinating with Principal Dawn Smith and Mrs. Iris Lacson at TFS. David Payette along with Marty Schmidt and Scott Larabee were judges. The ten participants were well prepared and provided impressive performances going twelve rounds before the winner and runner up was decided.

Contestants this year included:

- 3rd Grade -William Hair
- 3rd Grade -Paige Huebler
- 3rd Grade -Finn Marston
- 4th Grade -Maddie Garvey
- 4th Grade - Nathan Koval
- 4th Grade - Gianmarco Lubrano Lavadera
- 5th Grade - Lily Kinane
- 6th Grade - Indy Nielsen
- 7th Grade - Kolbie Quarfoot
- 8th Grade - Patrick Robbins

BROTHER MIKE'S INTRODUCTION



THE PANEL IS READY



PRINCIPAL SMITH WITH WINNER PATRICK ROBBINS



PRINCIPAL SMITH WITH RUNNER-UP NATHAN KOVAL AND FAMILY



ALL THE PROUD CONTESTANTS WITH PRINCIPAL SMITH AND MS. LACSON



SPELLING BEE KNIGHTS WITH WINNER PATRICK AND RUNNER-UP NATHAN





For the third year our Council purchased St Francis Holy Water Fonts as gifts for the 6th Grade class. Three years ago Brother John Price reached out to Principal Dawn Smith about how we could use available grant money. Principal Smith came up with this idea to gift these fonts to the TFS 6th Graders and now it will become a tradition under Brother Sandy Gayle's leadership.



This year, on January 28th, following the blessing of the fonts and holy water by Father Chris, Principal Smith introduced the gifts recognizing that entering Jr High School as a "pivotal moment" in these students' lives. They are transitioning from the lower grades of Elementary School to being young adults and these fonts would be a symbol of how they may always remain in touch with their faith, even if there are those moments when they might wander away.

Brothers David Payne, Sandy Gayle, Bob Bagin and Zubair Simonson represented our Council as part of the ceremony.

Of note this year, Brothers Bob Bagin and David Payne enjoyed grandkids receiving their fonts.



Photos Courtesy of Mr. Ed Manville, TFS Religious Studies



KNIGHT OF THE MONTH



JANUARY 2026

MARK BAUMGARTNER



WDGK Mark's resume is an inspiration to serve. He has been a parishioner of St. Francis since 1999 and a member of the Council for over 18 years. During that time, he has been an active volunteer and leader for multiple programs and is a past Church Director. After retiring in 2021, he served as the Council Treasurer for four years and was instrumental in the formation of the Philanthropy Committee. He led the committee activities and remains an active member after transitioning leadership responsibility to David Payne. Since the Philanthropy committee was formed in 2021, it has donated over \$100,000 to worthy charities. Mark also continues to maintain the Council's online Square storefront website activities. This FY, Mark agreed to step up to assume the role of Deputy Grand Knight and lead several special projects. He coordinated logistics for the special Fraternal Benefits night that was video-cast to all councils in the state and was a key member of the Christmas Party Planning Committee. He coordinates scheduling brother Knights to drive the trucks for all the parish food drives. He is a member of our Council's NC State Raffle Team and is the lead for all aspects of the Lenten Pilgrimage logistics to Emmitsburg, MD in

March. He has assumed responsibility for our Council's Faith in Action report forms to Supreme and State. Working with WDK Tommy, Mark is developing a repository to store Council documents and establish written processes and best practices. Mark and his wife, Theresa, have led several different ministries and initiatives at SFA. They led the CPO food drive ministry for 3 years. Mark is a lector and supports Theresa in her lead role as the parish Environment and Arts ministry responsible for decorating the church throughout the year. Mark leads Knights in support for decorations for the big liturgical events such as Christmas and Easter. Mark truly sets the bar high for how a brother Knight lives out his Oath to serve and lead not only within our Council but the entire parish and Catholic community.

FEBRUARY 2026

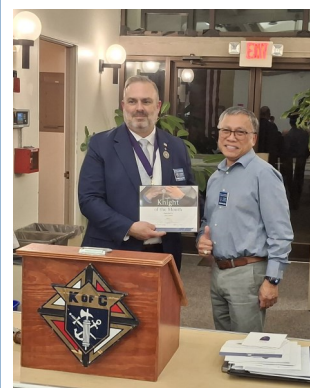
TONY RIVEZZO



This Sir Knight could affectionately be known as the "Godfather of St Francis." His presence and leadership are realized through his many years of service to the Council, Parish and Community. Tony is a selfless volunteer and active participant in the Philanthropy Committee as indicated by his many visits to deliver checks, Coats for Kids and smiles to the many agencies that we serve. For the past five years, Tony has taken the role of Program Director to new heights and just this FY passed the baton over to Wes Evans to fill those big shoes. Tony is reluctant to be in the limelight but his work as the pioneer of our the Newsletter 12 years ago and other roles that include Council Advocate and Warden speaks volumes to his energy and commitment. He is a relentless advocate for our police and fire fighters as he organizes our Annual First Responders Recognition dinners for the past 10 years and delivers food to the local firehouses following our events and monthly meals. He continues to perform inspired work as a volunteer and we can thank our lucky stars that he will be a force of nature well into the future. We are involved in Francis Fest and many other Parish programs thanks to Tony's leadership. He says he owes his life and spiritual passion to his wife, Judy of 45 years along with his 5 children and 9 grandchildren and is soon to be a great grandpa. Rock on, Brother Tony!

MARCH 2026

JULIUS FAJARDO



Every so often we are blessed to have a new Knight join our Council who immediately gets involved in every event, every signup and every meeting. We like to refer to these enthusiastic, energetic Brothers as "Being on Fire!"

When asked, Brother Julius responded, *"Really appreciate the award. The variety of activities and the brotherhood demonstrated by our brothers kept me engaged to serve Jesus and our community. The bond of unity and charity has inspired me to volunteer in these worthwhile and unselfish activities.*

Thanks for all your guidance and support since my exemplification. God bless." ~ Julius Fajardo



FAMILY OF THE MONTH



JANUARY 2026 THE PAYETTE FAMILY



This selfless couple lives the Gospel's call for solidarity with the poor and prioritizes those most in need. They repay God's blessings by generously sharing their time, talent, and treasure to benefit others. David and Elisabeth have been blessed with a daughter, Katie, who is being raised with these same values. David serves as the Council's Chancellor and has been active with membership/retention activities. He is a prolific volunteer at Council events often accompanied by Elisabeth. He lives the principle of fraternity and is a generous supporter of Council events e.g. First Responder Dinner, NC State Raffle. Council 9709 was proud to award the Payette's, "Family of the Month" at the January 2026 member's meeting.

FEBRUARY 2026 THE BOB BAGIN FAMILY



If you attend the 9AM mass on Sunday, there's a really good chance that you might witness three generations of the Bagin Family in roles that include Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors, Altar Servers, greeters and ushers—sometimes filling all those roles at one Mass. Bob took over our Adopt A Hiway programs a couple of years ago and has it buzzing as efficiently as ever. Bob is a familiar face at most of our events as a volunteer filling many roles from chef to trash hustler. Bob and Arlene's son, Chris, also a Knight, and his family are also active in the Parish and TFS events and activities including being readers at our Good Friday outdoor Stations of the Cross held by the Knights. A snow storm had cancelled all normally scheduled masses so a special mass was set up as live stream or in-person attendance if safe to do so. The Bagin Family was there in force in roles as Lector, Altar Server, EM and ushers. Truly a family who sets a high bar for service in our Parish and Community.

MARCH 2026 THE ALCALA-LOPEZ FAMILY



The Alcala-Lopez Family was an easy choice for Family of the Month given their living example of Servant Leadership in the Parish, Diocese and Community. Once Antonio and Aracely found St Francis, they immediately began getting involved in various ministries on campus. Celebrating 10 years of marriage in May, now with children ages 4 and 1, their example as a couple who embraces the Spiritual Sacrament of Marriage has led them to be a Mentor Couple at the Holy Name of Jesus Cathedral in Raleigh, NC.

Antonio has been a member of Council 9709 since 2017, holding various officer roles and currently serves as our Budget Director. He says that fraternity has been what has meant most to him by spending time with brothers after business meetings and creating stronger connections through officer roles.

It appears that the Alcala-Lopez family does not sleep! Aracely works for the Diocese of Raleigh and Antonio works at NC School of Science and Mathematics while starting a woodworking business and both volunteer at the Wake Co SPCA. "God has used my wife as an instrument to bring me back into the

faith since the moment I met her. Now we are both doing all we can to instill God's love in our children and in our community through our decisions and actions." ~ Antonio Lopez



WELCOME NEW KNIGHTS!



On Sunday, February 8th, our Council welcomed in nine new Knights awarding them with their Third Degree of Charity, Unity and Fraternity. This was the largest class on record for Council 9709 following successful recruiting efforts from the Ministry Fair and an early January "Paint the Campus Blue" recruiting weekend with pulpit announcements from all the priests. Jeremy Soule, Peter Sorge, Rick Bowers, Leon Arenas, Marc Graham, Oscar Ovilla, John Glowiak, Michiel McGrail and Tony Buglak took their vows and were officially welcomed into the Order. Officiating was Presiding Officer, Tony Anello, joined by Brothers DD/PGK Bryan Kozak on Charity, Sandy Gayle on Unity, and David Payette on Fraternity with Brother Ralph Guenther as our Ceremonial Warden. Our Presiding Priest was Father James. Also present were dignitaries District Secretary James Davisson and our own Worthy State Treasurer, Joe McCarthy. A special reception followed in the Founder's Room to welcome our new Knights and their families featuring Mary Beth Bayle's delicious homemade specialties.



Father James Prays



MC Tony Anello



WDD9 Bryan on Charity



Sandy Gayle on Unity



David Payette on Fraternity



WGK Tommy welcomes new Knights



Candidates take in the good messages



New Knights receive their Rosaries from WGK Tommy



KNIGHTS IN THE SPOTLIGHT



At the Assembly meeting on January 8th, Akuro Adoki was asked to tell us about his life—and what a life it has been for Brother Akuro! Here it is in his own words;

I was born in Okrika, a small island town in southeastern Nigeria. Nigeria as you may know is the most linguistically diverse country in the world with over 500 indigenous languages spoken while the official language is English.

Fishing and Trade were the primary occupations of the Okrika people. I remember growing up as a child and whenever we have a high tide, water flows into our compound and we all jump into the water and just have fun and when the water recedes, we go fishing with our bare hands for fish and crabs left behind.

The Okrika Kingdom was governed by Chiefs, and my grandfather “Chief Sampson Adoki” happened to be one of the prominent first-class chiefs in Okrika and in the country as well... Picture of Chief Adoki attached.

My mom had 10 of us and I am #3. We had 8 boys and 2 girls in the family, and we all grew up in Port Harcourt, which is the Capital of our state ... Rivers State. As a child, I attended various primary schools in three different states due to my father’s job transfers and finally, we settled in Port Harcourt after the Nigerian Civil War.

I attended one of the premier Secondary Schools in Nigeria that was sponsored by the United States Agency for International Aid (USAID) in collaboration with the Nigerian government. Since this was a premiere school for boys, we all had to sit for an entrance examination to be admitted into the school. The goal of the school was to offer broad education and practical skills to enable graduates that are unable to pursue higher education to gain meaningful employment after graduation.

Graduated from Secondary school in 1977 and was hired immediately by Mobil Oil Corporation as a “Warehouse Clerk.” I Worked with Mobil Oil Corporation in Nigeria for about 4 years in various capacities within the Warehouse and Terminal Operations and had the opportunity to save lots of money toward my college education in the United States.

Early in 1982, I applied into 3 Universities in the USA {Texas A& M | LSU - Monroe | Washington State and all three universities offered me admissions to either study “Petroleum Engineering” or “Industrial Management.” I chose Industrial Management and went to LSU – Monroe, Louisiana. Immigrated to the United States in August of 1982 to start my freshman year.

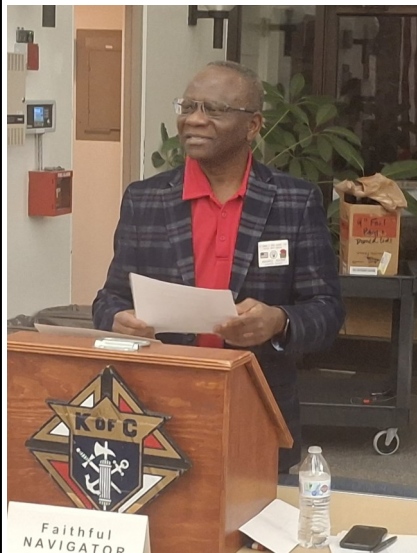
True story.... On my first weekend in the school, my roommate requested we go watch a Football game, that our university is playing against Alabama. I was excited because I was a footballer (soccer player) in Nigeria. I had no concept of the American football... never seen it before in my life. When we got into the stadium, I saw the players with helmets running with the ball in their hands and banging at each other. I was confused and asked my roommate when the football game is going to start... he said – you are watching it! I said come on... this is hand ball and not football!!



KNIGHTS IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Akuro, continued.....



I transferred from Louisiana to California after my freshman year in 1983 and Graduated from California State University, San Bernardino with a business degree, I met my wife in California and we got married in November of 1984... and still happily married for 41 years and counting! We have 3 children and 9 grandchildren.

After my graduation from California State University, I was rehired by Mobil Oil Corporation in California and had various jobs in manufacturing, gasoline Terminals and Pipe-line Controls operations. Mobil Oil moved us from California to New York and finally to Dallas TX.

I left Mobil Oil in 1996 due to another transfer request to New Jersey and Joined Kodak to in order to remain local to give my wife a chance to realize her dreams as an Opera Singer. She auditioned with the Dallas Opera and was accepted and sang with the Dallas Opera for 10 years as a Soprano.

I went back to grad school after leaving Mobil Oil and got an MBA in Supply Chain/Logistics Operations Management from the University of Dallas while working with Kodak. When Kodak filed for bankruptcy, I moved on and had several other Logistics Operations Management jobs and recently retired from STIHL as a Warehouse Operations Manager.

I Joined Knights of Columbus 1st Degree – 2001 at Council 5052 Farmers Branch/Dallas TX and received my 3rd Degree in March of 2002 - Council 5052 Farmers Branch/Dallas TX. Then I transferred to Council 9709 Raleigh, NC in 2003 and received my 4th Degree – October 29 th 2005

I have been a Knight for 24 years! Why did I join the Knights – Brotherly love and goodwill toward mankind!

~ Akuro Adoki, January, 2026



King "Grandfather" Adoki





NEWS AND REVIEWS



Every year, our Council distributes new coats under the Knights Coats for Kids campaign. While we realize a personal connection locally, this campaign has a huge impact globally.

Knights of Columbus Coats for Kids Has Another Banner Year

*“THIS WINTER, the Order is on track to give away more than 300,000 jackets through the Knights of Columbus Coats for Kids program, thanks to the work of councils in North America, as well as in Poland and Ukraine. In the United States, more than 10,000 coats were distributed to children in 45 states over Thanksgiving weekend, traditionally one of the most active times in Knights charitable efforts. New Knights in Canada, numbering 180,000 members across 2,000 councils, have distributed more than 40,000 coats over the course of the season. The latest distributions bring the total number of donated coats to **1.9 million** since the program began in 2009. About 1,200 councils participate each year.”*

~ Columbia Magazine, January/February 2026

MONTHLY SOCIALS



When asked, Brother Mike Rock could not recall how long he has been planning our Council monthly socials but believes it to be 6-7 years. He explained that he does not have an established list of places even though we have enjoyed several establishments more than once. He interviews and visits those places he feels will provide diverse menus while creating a cozy atmosphere for brothers and their wives to meet and mingle. This is a great way to spend time with brothers and their spouses to learn more about each other. Hope to see you next time!

MEET YOUR EDITORS



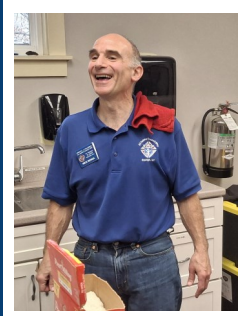
“We hope you enjoy seeing the many accomplishments, abundant generosity, and celebrations enjoyed by our Council during each quarter of the year. We enjoy bringing it to you and our job is made extremely easy because of all you Brothers who give so generously of your time, treasures and talents. Tony and Brother Brian Denison began this current Newsletter format in 2014. Brother Dave joined a few years ago when Brian retired” ~Tony and Dave



SENIOR EDITOR, TONY “GODFATHER” RIVEZZO

ROVING REPORTER, DAVID PAYNE

PRESIDENTS' DAY PANCAKE BREAKFAST



Our Council conducted a special Presidents' Day Pancake Breakfast on Sunday February 15th. The menu included pancakes (including gluten free), sausages, donuts, fresh apples, orange juice and coffee. We served approximately 120 paid plates. Many thanks go to Brother Nick Renga and his crew for an excellent job planning, preparing and serving a great meal! 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 local fire stations to some very grateful first responders. Mark even sold some State Raffle Tickets meaning our Charities enjoyed a generous day. Great job representing Service, Unity and Fraternity Council 9709!



Captain Renga and his crew ready to serve!



Ah yes—the Money Men greeters!



Father Chris checking on Sam



Servers armed and ready!



“Brian, like this!



ANNUAL BASKETBALL FREE THROW CONTEST



Our Council 9709 held the annual Basketball Free Throw Challenge on Saturday, February 21 at the Assisi Community Center Gym. Thank you to the many Brothers who volunteered and helped make the event a great success under the Leadership of Paul Geisen and Paul Scaini. A total of 22 participants competed in two age groups, 9-11 and 12-14. Winner were Boys 9-11, Peyton Guillory—Girls 9-11 Vanna Medina - Boys 12-14 Jackson Riley and Girls 12-14 Emerson. All winners will have the opportunity to compete in the District Contest with a chance to move on to the State championship. Congratulations to the winners and all participants!



Father Chris monitoring check-ins



Young Athletes at their best!



Winners with Paul Scaini and Paul Geisen—well done Athletes!



Scorekeeper Marty



Volunteers and Athletes



WINTER CPO FOOD DRIVE



**Catholic Parish Outreach
Food Pantry**
A Program of Catholic Charities

Providing Help – Creating Hope – Serving All

From CPO’s Kelly Rappl *“In FY 2025, we gave a week’s worth of groceries to over 140,000 people thanks to the generosity of our Parish Communities”*

Over the weekends of February 15th and 22nd, St Francis Parish held its annual Food Drive for Catholic Parish Outreach.

Drive Leader, Ann-Marie Summers once again provided excellent leadership in arranging donation volunteers and collecting/organizing all the donations over two weekends. WDGK Mark Baumgartner arranges and schedules truck drivers to pick up and return the truck for each drive. Brothers Ralph Guenther, Marty Schmidt, Jim Hoose, David Payne and Sandy Gayle also assisted with driving. Over two weekends, our St Francis Parish donated over **6,593# of food and \$5,828 in donations!** Our Council is proud to serve such a generous Parish Community by driving the trucks to deliver the food and goods that will serve those most in need in our Community!



Ann-Marie and her crew collecting and sorting donations



TFS students Maddox and Charley save the day by raising the pop up tent ahead of the rain storm



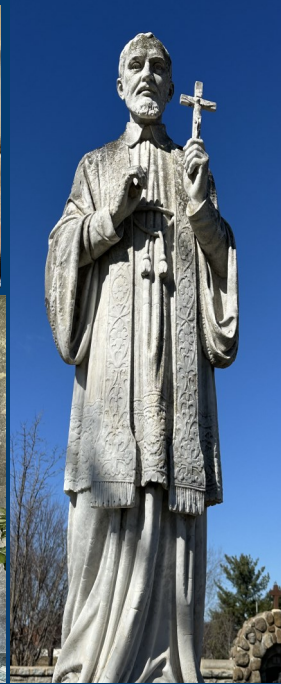
Marty's turn to drive!



The Generosity of St Francis Parish!



2026 PILGRIMAGE



At the request of Father Chris, our WDGK Mark Baumgartner organized and choreographed an outstanding, memorable Pilgrimage with the following itinerary that sold out almost immediately.

- National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Seton National
- Shrine Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes
- March 9 • Departed from St. Francis of Assisi Church 6:30 a.m.
- Arrived National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Seton • Lunch • Living history tour of historic homes/ explore grounds/museum
- Mass at Basilica (Father Chris presiding) • Check into Hotel: Best Western Gettysburg
- Dinner and Fellowship/Social Time at Hotel
- Tuesday March 10 • Breakfast (at hotel) • Visit Gettysburg Military Park Visitor Center/ Museum or local attractions • Lunch
- The National Shrine Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes • Self-guided tour grounds/museums • Mass at Chapel of St. Mary's on the Hill; "The Glass Chapel" (Father Chris presiding) Dinner (Group) • Fellowship/Social Time at Hotel
- Wednesday March 11 • Check out and depart with Boxed lunch enroute • Arrived St. Francis 4 pm





2026 PILGRIMAGE





SPRING ADOPT-A-HIWAY



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 23rd year conducting this Community Service. We are getting close to 90 events with an estimated 15Tons of trash and recycle removed from our neighborhood! Leader Bob Bagin took the day off to tend to his health so Brian and Sandy Gayle took the reins to oversee 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! This Saturday, the crew rounded up 16 combined bags of recycle and trash,,and a tire! 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!



~ PHOTOS COURTESY OF BRIAN DENISON AND MIKE WRZESIEN



SPRING BLOOD DRIVE



On Saturday, March 21st, 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 potentially saving as many as 15,000 lives according to a Red Cross official! Spirits ran high for those in attendance to save the lives of many. This Drive was filmed by Ryan Howey and Ben Eizenga of Castletown Media who works with our Supreme Council. Our Blood Drives caught the attention of Supreme who selected us to be highlighted on Supreme's YouTube channel.

Stay tuned for more information! 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, biscuits and so much more. Sandy Gayle had help from Bob Bagin, Al Terzella, Frank McNally, John Brien, Tommy Boggs 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! Knights and their families making a difference!



Brothers Marc, Julius and Tony checking in our guests



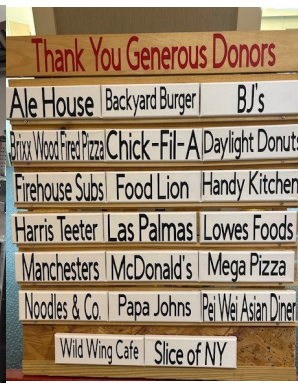
Blessings from Fr Joseph



Good job, Brother Nick!



Steve and Maria always here serving all this good stuff!



Father Chris lending an arm



Supreme's film crew at work



Great turnout donating 70 units today!

At right: Maria at USO with leftovers!





STATIONS OF THE CROSS DINNER



On March 27th our Council hosted a spaghetti dinner for those who attended The Stations of the Cross conducted by TFS middle school Youth Group in the School Courtyard. Chefs Al Terzella, Zubair Simonson, Leon Arenas and Wes Evans were supported by Brothers Chris Miranda, Mike Wrzesien, Sandy Gayle, Julius Fajardo, Jeremy Soule and Jeff Huckel along with Wes's wife Pat to serve an outstanding meal in Jacoba Hall following the Stations of the Cross Celebration. Over 135 plates were served! It was a highly appreciated, successful event as evidenced by the scores of "thank you's" and "great food" comments echoed throughout the evening. Attendees showed their appreciation by donating over \$550!!



Our Chefs made all preparations during the Stations of the Cross celebration in the TFS Courtyard



Al's Crew making sure the culinary delights were a big hit with all who attended including Knights and families!



Our Priests joined the packed house with thumbs up on a great dinner!



GRAND KNIGHTS MESSAGE

Worthy Brothers All,

What an extraordinary quarter it has been! As we move through the heart of winter and into the early days of spring, the activity within our Council has been anything but cold. From the very first weekend of January, Council 9709 has been on fire and the works you have accomplished in just these three short months are a testament to who we are as Knights of Columbus: men of faith, men of charity, and men of action.

We hit the ground running with a record "Paint the Campus Blue" recruiting weekend, producing twelve completed Form 100's, the most in our Council's history. That momentum carried into February, when we welcomed nine new Brothers into our family through Exemplification in the largest class ever recorded for Council 9709. Brothers, when we lead well and serve visibly, men want to join us. That is a powerful witness.

Our philanthropy has been equally inspiring. Phase 1 of our giving plan has now distributed \$8,800 to worthy causes in our community from Catholic Parish Outreach and LAMB to Healing Transitions and St. Joseph Primary Care. Additionally, our Coats for Kids efforts and food drives have clothed children and filled pantry shelves for those most in need. The generosity of this Council and our parish community never fails to move me. Even now, there is a motion to improve the current budget by \$12,000 to add to more charitable programs in the next few months.

The list of service goes on: a sold-out Pilgrimage to the National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Seton and the Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes; a Presidents' Day Pancake Breakfast that served 120 guests; our annual Spelling Bee at The Franciscan School; Holy Water Fonts gifted to TFS 6th graders; the Basketball Free Throw Contest; the Winter CPO Food Drive yielding over 6,500 pounds of food; our Spring Blood Drive, now potentially responsible for saving up to 15,000 lives since 1996 and which even caught the attention of Supreme Council who came to interview and video the drive for a segment on Supreme's website; a Spring Adopt-a-Highway cleanup; and a Stations of the Cross dinner beautifully prepared for our parish. Brother Brian Denison's, with PGK's Steve Becker and Kent Siefkes even traveling to Washington for the 53rd March for Life, proudly representing Council 9709 on a national stage.

Brothers, when I look at this list, I am humbled and honored to be a member of this Council. Each one of these events required someone and/or many of you to give of your time, talent, and treasure without counting the cost. That is the hallmark of a great Knight, and it is the hallmark of this Council. (I think the best of the 138 in the state).

As we look ahead to the final quarter of this fraternal year, let us carry that same spirit of generosity and fraternity forward. There is still much to be done, and I know this Council is more than equal to the task. Let us finish strong, support one another in prayer and service, and never lose sight of the reason we wear this cross: to bring Christ to the world through the example of our lives with Faith in Action.

Thank you for the privilege of serving alongside each one of you.

Vivat Jesus!

Tommy E. Dalton

Grand Knight, Council 9709