



# The Explorer



The Monthly Newsletter of Fr.A. Leo Abendschoen Council 11615

Overlea/Rosedale, MD

Knights of Columbus

January 2018



## Happy New Year !



### Grand Knight's Message

Brothers,  
Christmas has just passed and New Year's day is right around the corner. It also means my first 6 months as your Grand Knight is in the books. The first 3 months we planned what we wanted to do. The second 3 months was following through on what we wanted to accomplish. With your help all events were completed.



Our big fundraiser, the bull and oyster, was the best ever. From setup, to running the event, to packing up at the end, the support was there. It is and was greatly appreciated. I tried to help at the Big 6 but couldn't get to the wheel because so many guys were there. Wayne handed me a pitcher and suggested I could help by refilling it. I can do that. John Gallup put a lot of time organizing and selling tickets for many weeks after most masses, while also selling 50/50 chances and bingo tickets. Johns wife Constance was in the background working on the seating layouts and keeping John straight, as our wives do. THANKS, YOUR A GREAT TEAM!

The weather did not dampen the holiday spirits at our annual Christmas party. Shawn and Helen Ruby pulled off another great event. The menu was excellent, the switch to small cupcakes worked well and most important the cheese cake desert table was awesome. That will always be the high light to our party. Deacon Franks wife, Darlene made the chocolates, while Frank carried the heavy box of goodies. The appearance of Fr. Justin was a surprise  
*(Continued in next column)*

### Assistant Chaplain's Message

Brothers,  
Our celebration of the Christmas Season will end on January 8<sup>th</sup>, the Feast of The Baptism of the Lord. Ordinary Time in the Church calendar will begin the following day. It is my hope and prayer for each of you that the New Year will not be an ordinary year but, one filled with all of the joys of Christmas past and one where all of your hopes and needs are fulfilled.



May Our Lord grant you a joyful and healthy New Year,

*Deacon Frank*

### Grand Knight's Message

*(Continued from previous column)*

to many.  
Thanks to Harry Payne for providing Fr. Justin's transportation.

I will close by wishing everyone Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

*Emrick Spacek*

Grand Knight

## Upcoming Meetings

**Officer's Meeting** – There will not be an Officer's Meeting in January.

**General Meetings** – Mondays, January 8<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 pm in the Annunciation Parish Hall. REMEMBER that Hospitality begins BEFORE the meeting at 6:15 pm.

## In Memoriam

On December 1, 2017, Brother Henry Boltralik, passed onto his Eternal Reward at the age of 94. There was only a brief viewing on the day of the funeral so there was no Rosary Call. Although the Grand Knight and two members of the Color Corps did attend the beginning of the funeral service. The family had requested "the presence" of the Knights of Columbus, and their request was granted. May Henry rest in peace.

On December 9<sup>th</sup>, we received notification in a round-about way, that one of our members had passed away almost one year ago. Sadly, he had not kept in touch and we had never been notified. For those of you who may have known him, SK Frederick C. Hogarth, passed away on December 20, 2016. He was a member of our council and the Archbishop Francis P. Keough Assembly.

May he rest in peace.

## Please Remember for When the Time Comes

Whenever a Knight passes on to his Eternal Reward, he is eligible for both a Rosary Call and an Honor Guard. His wife is also eligible for a Rosary call. But, the family of the deceased must request it. Please do not count on the church, the funeral director or anyone reading the newspaper to notify the council. The easiest way to obtain both the Council Rosary Call and/or an Honor Guard is to contact the Grand Knight of the Council. He can relay the request for the Honor Guard to the Navigator of the Assembly.

And please, if you would like to have a Rosary Call and or an Honor Guard at your viewing, please make sure your family members are aware of this so they can give the Grand Knight a call.

## Sick & Shut-In

Please remember Brothers Robert Priller and Ed Yeager, and sisters Joan Gresdo, Charlotte Schaum and Margaret Wyatt in your prayers. If you know of any Brother or Sister who is in need of our prayers, please contact Walt at 410-866-6546 or [wwanko@comcast.net](mailto:wwanko@comcast.net).

## Upcoming Ceremonials

### Admissions (1<sup>st</sup>) Degree

Jan. 10<sup>th</sup> – Cardinal Gibbons Council, Fullerton  
Jan. 17<sup>th</sup> – Patapsco Council, Catonsville

### Formation (2<sup>nd</sup>) Degree

Dec. 20<sup>th</sup> – St. Ignatius Loyola Council, Ijamsville

### Knighthood (3<sup>rd</sup>) Degree

Jan. 13<sup>th</sup> – Fr. Rosensteel Council, Silver Spring

### Patriotic (4<sup>th</sup>) Degree –

The next Exemplification of the Patriotic Degree (4<sup>th</sup>) will be held on Saturday, March 24, 2018 at the Princess Royale Hotel in Ocean City, MD.

Anyone wishing to take any degree must contact Financial Secretary Walt Wankowski so that the proper paperwork can be prepared.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Degree Team

We are looking for alternate team members for our 1<sup>st</sup> Degree team. These include the six speaking parts and three non-speaking parts. If you would like to be part of our 1<sup>st</sup> Degree team, contact Walt Wankowski at 410-866-6546, and we will get your training started.

### *The Explorer*

Published monthly by the  
**Fr. A. Leo Abendschoen Council # 11615**  
of the

**Knights Of Columbus**  
Meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday  
at 7:00 pm at the

**Church of the Annunciation**  
**5212 McCormick Road**  
**Baltimore, Maryland 21206**

**Grand Knight:** Emrick Spacek 410-687-0529  
[elspacek@comcast.net](mailto:elspacek@comcast.net)

**Editor:** Walt Wankowski 410-866-6546  
Email: [wwanko@comcast.net](mailto:wwanko@comcast.net)

**Chaplain:**

**Assistant Chaplain:** Rev. Mr. Frank Zeiler

**Wish You Were Here!**

Did you know you can win money just for showing up at a meeting? Every member corresponds to a number on the roster and if your number comes up, you win! Our Attendance Prize winner for the December 11<sup>th</sup> meeting would have been Robert F. Miller. And of course, there was no meeting on December 25<sup>th</sup>. If you are not sick or a shut-in, why not try making a meeting once in a while? It could prove profitable.

**Time to Pay Up !**



Billings for annual dues were mailed on Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>. We ask that you remit your dues as quickly as possible. If you did not receive yours yet, please contact Financial Secretary Walt

Wankowski at 410-866-6546. Only Priests, Honorary Life Members, and those certified by the Supreme Council as Disabled are not required to pay dues.

In addition to the bill, you also received the annual Survey of Fraternal Activity, and a request for personal information. The Survey allows us to report to Supreme the types of activities and the number of hours that each of you expend on an annual basis in helping your parish and your community.

The request for personal information will provide us with information that will be used to update our Member Management database. It also gives us the information we need to publish our Happy Times. All personal information is kept confidential between the Financial Secretary and the Supreme Council. **Note: When providing Wedding Anniversary dates and Wife's Birthday dates, the entire Month, Day & Year are needed. Supreme's Member Management database does not accommodate partial information. If we don't have the month, day and year, we can't put it in.**

After we receive your annual dues, your 2018 Membership Cards will be mailed to you.

Congratulations and Thank You to Frank Charvat, who was the first member to send in his dues.

**Happy Times**

The following members of our Council family are celebrating Birthdays in January:

- 1 - Shawn T. Ruby
- 2 - Kathleen Loman & Darlene Zeiler
- 3 - David H. Gresdo
- 4 - Dennis G. Cieslak & Frank A. Kelly II
- 9 - James M. Ashley, Jr.
- 11 - Kevin J. Vaeth
- 13 - John M. Meaney & Mary Schaefer
- 17 - Kristen Johns & Rev. Jacques-Luc Bakouba
- 20 - Patrick A. Saladini
- 24 - Michael J. Thomas
- 30 - Phyllis Sewell

**Anniversaries**

- 4 - Dennis & Debra Cieslak
- 19 - John & Connie Gallup

Have Happy Times you would like to see published? Weddings, Baptisms, Births, Graduations, Promotions, etc? See a birthday or anniversary that's incorrect or not announced? Send them to Walt at [wwanko@comcast.net](mailto:wwanko@comcast.net)

**BINGO**

Our next Monthly Cash Bingo will be held on **Saturday, January 6<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm** in the Annunciation parish hall. The \$500 Jackpot will be played for 55 numbers or less. This is our most important source of regular income and has been for the last 10 years.



The profits enable us to conduct many of our programs. As always, we could use additional help both in the Kitchen and on the floor. No experience is necessary. We will show you what to do.

Everyone working inside the kitchen should try to report by 4:00 pm. Everyone else needs to report by 5:00 pm or as close to it as possible. The Bingo starts at 6 pm and we are usually finished by 9:15 pm. So everyone gets home at a reasonable hour.

We hope you will find the time to pitch in and help.

## Membership

It's January. We're half way through and we still have not recruited any new members. How about if we all make a New Year's Resolution to talk to ONE guy about joining the Knights of Columbus. Imagine if we could get just 7 guys to successfully recruit one guy each. Talk to guys in church, at work, in your community, talk to their wives! We need to grow this council. If we do, we can do great things. Keep in mind that any prospective member doesn't have to belong to any particular parish. The only requirement is that he be a practical Catholic male, 18 years of age or older.

Be ready to talk about the programs we get involved in, the contests we run for youth, the things we do for the parish, the things we do in the community, etc. And have a Form 100 and a pen ready when you do.

And keep in mind that it's not enough to get them to fillout and sign the Form 100; we also need to get them to take their 1<sup>st</sup> Degree.

## Church Programs

### **Religious & Seminarian Vocation Program**

Just a reminder that our Council is continuously collecting money for those studying for the priesthood and the religious life. If you'd like to contribute to the cause, you can place your donations into the transparent acrylic boxes that sit near the doors of Annunciation Church, or contributions can also be sent directly to Walt Wankowski, 5211 McFaul Road, Baltimore, MD 21206. Checks should be made payable to "Knights of Columbus 11615."



We generally collect enough money to award \$500 per year to five different Franciscans.

We thank you in advance for your generosity.

## Pro-Life Programs

### **Pro-Life Rosary**

All members are invited to join in on the monthly Rosary for Life which is held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month at the Beltway Plaza Shopping Center, 7702 Belair Road in Fullerton. This shopping center houses an abortion clinic. The next date for this activity will be Saturday, January 20<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 am. We hope that more of you will consider joining in.



### **March for Life 2018**

...will take place on Friday, January 19, 2018 at noon on the grounds of the Washington Monument, near the corner of 15th Street and Constitution Avenue in Washington, D.C. Following the Rally, the March will begin on Constitution Avenue between 15th and 17th Streets at 1:00 pm.

**The schedule is as follows:**

- 11:30 a.m.** Musical Opening.
- 12:00 p.m.** Rally Program.
- 1:00 p.m.** March up Constitution Avenue to Supreme Court and Capitol Building.
- 3:00 p.m.** Silent No More testimonies outside U.S. Supreme Court.
- 3:30 p.m.** Visit your Representative or Senator to advocate for life.

For more information go to <http://marchforlife.org/mfl-2018/rally-march-info/>

## Community Programs

### **Polar Bear Plunge**

January is almost here and the Council's 2 resident polar bears, Tony and Wayne Ciampaglia will once again brave the frozen Chesapeake Bay to raise money for Special Olympics. Over the past few years, Tony and Wayne have been the official polar bears for SOMD. They always are grateful that our K of C 11615 brothers have donated generously to the plunge. This year, they each hope to raise more than last year's \$1500 and are once again asking for donations from their brother Knights as they brave "The Preakness Infield On Ice" for the 16th year.

**And Volunteers Are Still Needed**

The Knights of Columbus invite you to **volunteer to work** at the 2018 Polar Bear Plunge to benefit Maryland Special Olympics on **Saturday, January 27, 2018** at Sandy Point State Park in Anne Arundel County. This is a day-long event that many Knights across Maryland and their families and friends have been involved with for several years now. But you do NOT have to have any affiliation with the Knights to participate, and you do not have to stay for the entire day.



Once again we will need volunteers to assist with directing parking, food preparation, food and drink distribution, memorabilia sales, arcade game operation, etc. **No one is asking you to jump into the icy Chesapeake Bay.** However, yes, some of the volunteers, especially the ones who volunteer to help with the parking, may get cold. But it's for a good cause. And it is a "party" day; especially for young people. There are celebrities, contests, people dressed in costumes, and prizes. Never a dull moment. Bring your camera!

If you are at least 16 years old (required by law), can stand being outside in the cold for several hours and can stay on your feet for that amount of time, you are eligible to be a volunteer. It will cost you nothing to park, nothing get in, you will witness one of the greatest "party" atmospheres of the year, and a lunch will be provided. And if you get one of the good jobs, the time should pass quickly because you will be very busy.

For more information, contact Walt Wankowski at 410-866-6546.

## Youth Programs

**Annunciation Soccer**

Our council is pleased to have become a sponsor of the new young adult soccer team that was established by Fr. Julio Martinez. They won their last three games, 8 to 5, 11 to 1, and 8 to 1. Their next game will be on Sunday, January 14<sup>th</sup> at 8:15 pm at the Maryland Sports Arena, 2723 Pulaski Highway, Edgewood, MD 21040. If you have the time, why not come out and cheer the team on?

**Keep Christ In Christmas Poster Contest**

The winners of the Keep Christ in Christmas Poster contest were as follows:

Ages 5 to 7:

1<sup>st</sup> Place – Sophia Karolkowski

2<sup>nd</sup> Place – Chloe Ann Te

3<sup>rd</sup> Place – Logan Tumminia

Ages 8 to 10:

1<sup>st</sup> Place – Maia Te

2<sup>nd</sup> Place – Natalie Karolkowski

3<sup>rd</sup> Place – Mirian Eleckwachi

Ages 11 to 14:

1<sup>st</sup> Place – Kina Soberano

2<sup>nd</sup> Place – Julia Wychryst

3<sup>rd</sup> Place – Summer Zubey

All 1<sup>st</sup> place winners were forwarded to the Maryland State Council for additional judging at the State Level.

Congratulations to all of them, and our thanks to everyone who entered.

**Box Tops For Education**

Box Tops for Education may be placed in the plastic pouch attached to the council display in the back of Annunciation Church or you may mail them to Jason Karolkowski, 1322 Chapel Hill Drive, Baltimore, MD 21237. All box tops collected by our council are donated to St. Clement's & St. Michael's School.

**James E. Pierce, Jr. Memorial Scholarship Fund**

Applications are now being accepted for the Jim Pierce Memorial Scholarship Awards. This scholarship was established to encourage the parishioners of Annunciation Church to send their children to St. Michael/St. Clement Mary Hofbauer School.

With the merger of St. Clements and St. Michael the Archangel (Overlea) schools now completed, the scholarship awards are now extended to both schools. Applications MUST be submitted by March 1<sup>st</sup>. Applications and other information may be obtained from the pouch in the K of C display in the back of Annunciation church or call Walt at 410-866-6546.

## District Message

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ONE AND ALL!

Now, finally it is all Over and Done, even the Shouting and Jumping for Joy! Santa’s been here and gone, all the presents are opened, the Champagne bottle is empty, and the hangover is gone. Only thing left to do is exchange a few items and then taking down and packing away all the Christmas Decorations.

New Year’s Day has always been a favorite of mine. Time to evaluate last year’s projects - thumbs up or thumbs down. Time to see where I’ve been and where I want to go from here. Time to plan new projects and goals and not even bother with the usual resolutions (I’ve already failed them many times over). This is my Spring, when I start to feel the warmth of renewal emerging from deep down inside.

I am sure the same thoughts apply to the council as well. The Officer’s meeting will make the same judgements about the programs for the first half year, and then roll out a new slate of projects that will carry them into early summer. It seems to me that this first half has been pretty successful, even in spite of a few road hazards along the way.

My wish to all of you is that you enjoyed a healthy, joyous, Christmas Holiday and you were able to celebrate with friends and Family in ways that kept the true spirit of the day. May the new year do the same for the next year. God bless each one of us!

Our Worthy State Deputy, Steve Cohen, has on several occasions in the last few weeks made it known to us District Deputies that he is pleased the how the State has come along in achieving their goals, thru our work and with yours as well. See – things do flow up hill from time to time.

Worthy Brother Knights – Tis not the time to rest but to keep pushing thru. Make the second half as productive as the first. Let’s make this one to fulfil our mission to serve our parish and our community with our abilities to improve the lot for all. Be safe and look after one another.

Vivat Jesus!

*Ron Koelbel DD28*

## Insurance News

### *Insurance Check-Up for 2018*

Where did 2017 go? It seems like it was summer yesterday and Thanksgiving was last week.

I hope you and your family had a great finish to 2017!

Hopefully, you’ve established a few goals for this year. I’ve learned a great tip regarding resolutions. First, write them down. It’s not too late if you haven’t already done this. Commit your goals to paper and post it someplace you will see it often. Writing down a goal is the first step towards achieving it. It may not make sense at first, but I’m sure you have heard stories of the success this simple task can bring. Whether your goal is to exercise more, give more to charity, read more or watch less television, you’re more likely to accomplish it if you write it down.

Second, resolve to have an expert look at your finances. I recommend that you have a team of experts help you, and I would love to be the first you sit with. Let’s schedule some time to meet together, and I, your professional Knights of Columbus insurance agent, will provide an “insurance check-up” (at no cost!) that will evaluate any gaps in your family’s life insurance protection. Now might be the perfect time to fill those gaps, not later. Keep in mind that unlike many other products, you don’t just need money to obtain life insurance; you also need good health, and no one knows when your health could change.

Did I mention my check-up is free of charge? When was the last time you received something for free that could provide value to you and your family for generations? Call me today.

Thomas A. Strassner, FICF  
410-258-0308  
[thomas.strassner@kofc.org](mailto:thomas.strassner@kofc.org)

Chuck Teal, FICF, LUTCF  
443-676-3892  
[norman.teal@kofc.org](mailto:norman.teal@kofc.org)

## 4<sup>th</sup> Degree News

The next meeting of the Archbishop Francis P. Keough Assembly will held on Tuesday, January 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm at Columbus Gardens. This will be our annual Renewal of Vows.



The next Exemplification of the 4<sup>th</sup> Degree will be held on Saturday, March 24, 2018 at the Princess Royale Ocean Front Hotel in Ocean City, MD.

## Chapter News

The next meeting of the Baltimore Chapter of Grand Knights will be on Thursday, January 11th, 2018 at Father Burgraff Council #6021, 4110 1/2 Pine Hill Rd., Perry Hall 21128. All Knights are invited and encouraged to attend.

## State Council News

### ***State Scholarship Opportunities Maryland State Council High School Scholarship Programs***

The Maryland State Council of the Knights of Columbus is the sponsor of several High School scholarships for its members and for Catholic Students in general. Below is the complete information on these scholarships and information regarding eligibility for scholarship awards. Awards may be applied to tuition payments only. Application period is from October 1, 2017 to February 1, 2018. All applications must be received in their entirety by the Scholarship Committee no later than February 1, 2018. Scholarship information and application information is included below (preferred) or write to:

Maryland State Council  
Knights of Columbus Scholarship Committee  
PO Box 165  
Westminster, MD. 21158

### ***The Frederick M. Gossman Memorial High School Scholarship***

Designed to assist members of the Knights of Columbus holding membership in councils within the jurisdiction of Maryland in paying tuition for their sons and daughters at accredited Catholic High Schools, two (2) grants of \$1,500.00 per year for up to four years, and one (1) additional grant of \$1,500.00 per year for up to four years funded by the Maryland Knights of Columbus Insurance Advisors, will be awarded. Awards will be made on the basis of academic excellence, personal qualifications, and financial need. Continued support after the first year is contingent on continued academic success. The children of deceased members are also eligible, provided the

member was in good standing at the time of death. Funds are applicable to tuition only. Application packet [MS Word](#) [PDF](#)

### ***The William J. O'Brien Jr., Memorial Catholic High School Scholarship***

Three (3) grants of \$1,500.00 per year for up to four years will be awarded. Eligibility for a grant under this program is open to Catholic students who are residents of the State of Maryland. Affiliation with the Knights of Columbus is not required. However, children and grandchildren of a member of a Knights of Columbus council within the jurisdiction of Maryland are also eligible. Applicants must have been officially accepted at or must be students at accredited Catholic High Schools. Applications will be judged on academic excellence, personal qualifications, and financial need. Continued support after the first year is contingent on continued academic success. Funds are applicable to tuition only.

For more information and to download forms go to <http://www.kofc-md.org/state1617/committees/scholarships.asp>

## Supreme Council News

### **THE KNIGHTS OF PUERTO RICO PLAY A BIG ROLE IN THE CONTINUING RECOVERY FROM HURRICANE MARIA**



Daily life for General Agent José Lebron-Sanabria drastically changed the instant Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico.

“I am surrounded by total devastation,” said Lebron-Sanabria of Las Piedras, a city on the island’s east side that was among the hardest hit by Hurricane Maria on Sept. 20. His office is no longer standing and his house has two rooms that remained structurally sound enough for him, his wife and two children to reside in.

It has been several months since the Category 5 storm made landfall on Puerto Rico. In its wake, the hurricane left residents of the Caribbean islands on a long and arduous journey of survival, recovery and reconstruction. Lebron-Sanabria credits Knights of Columbus founder Father Michael McGivney for his family’s

safety and that of every K of C council member on the island.

Becoming a field agent in 2014 allowed Lebron-Sanabria to earn a better living and the ability to prepare his family for hurricane survival and other emergencies. Lebron-Sanabria’s home is equipped with two gas stoves, a propane gas generator and a working refrigerator — the only one in his neighborhood. His house becomes a center from which supplies donated by the Supreme Council are distributed to surrounding communities.

“Our brother Knights have been amazing, a real lifeline for our communities here,” said Lebron-Sanabria. After the Knights in Puerto Rico found a way to communicate with the Supreme Council following the storm, arrangements were made to send containers of urgent supplies for distribution. But access to the island’s peripheries from the main port was made nearly impossible due to extensive damage to the island’s roadways.

Grand Knight Armando Vivoni of Mons. José Torres Diaz Council 3836 in Rio Piedras owns a construction material shipping company and immediately offered the use of his transports. With Vivoni’s company resources at their disposal, Lebron-Sanabria and seven other field agents were able to devise a plan to haul and distribute 20,000 lbs. of emergency supplies to 35 councils in only four days. “We’re talking councils in communities that have been left with no power, no drinking water, no food and no supplies,” said Lebron-Sanabria.

Another 10,000 lbs. of supplies from the Supreme Council were distributed to the island’s more remote locations with the assistance of Caritas International and their more than 1,500 volunteers. Lebron-Sanabria added, “Nothing would be possible without my field agents who, on top of having their own families to take care of, have been working tirelessly to help those in need.” Among the stories he shared, one field agent and his wife spent more than 12 days and nights in an orphanage that houses 15 girls. The building’s roof was completely blown off and the girls were left alone and afraid. He and his wife stayed to arrange shelter and provide security, water, food and comfort while they found a team of men to repair the damages, Lebron-Sanabria said.

He added that, in a town nearby, another agent, with the help of two councils, spent his days in a parish community café cooking and delivering more than 200 hot meals a day door-to-door to hurricane victims whose homes had no roof, no stove and no running water.

Lebron-Sanabria himself begins every day by trudging down a path he and his 11-year-old son manually cleared in the days following the storm. It was in the midst of the clearing that the two happened upon a buried residence of seven elderly priests who lacked the most basic needs. Since that day, Lebron-Sanabria and his son have been visiting the priests every morning to supply food, water and other assistance.

Lebron-Sanabria added: “The guys from Fraternal Mission have been everything to us: calling every day, asking about our members and our needs and providing guidance. I am humbled by the assistance from the Supreme Council, the state council, the Columbian Ladies, the agents, the district members, and all independent Knights and their families. With their help, my agents and I have been able to do more every day to help our Church and our people get back on their feet.”

The Order has earmarked a significant amount of money to be used for church repair efforts in Puerto Rico. The Knights of Columbus earlier donated \$100,000 to the Archdiocese of San Juan and has provided generators, food, water and other necessities to aid relief efforts.

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### ***Knights of Columbus Donates Nearly \$1 Million for Christmas Food for Iraqi Christians***

The Knights of Columbus is giving a 30-day supply of food to 12,000 displaced or formerly displaced Christian families in northern Iraq to coincide with Christmas.

“The Knights of Columbus is pleased to help bring a Merry Christmas to those displaced by ISIS or now returning home to recently liberated areas,” said Supreme Knight Carl Anderson. “These Christians have lost everything for their faith, and we want them to know that they are not forgotten and that their sacrifices inspire us in our own faith.” Valued at \$840,000, the Christmas baskets contain food staples such as wheat, rice, beans and meat,

along with cleaning supplies. With the assistance of the Chaldean Catholic Archdiocese of Erbil, the Knights’ gift will continue to be distributed to Syriac Catholic, Syriac Orthodox and Chaldean Catholic families, as well as Yazidis.

“Even though we are still in a time of great uncertainty, the knowledge that our brothers in the Knights of Columbus are in solidarity with us, especially at this time of year, brings great comfort,” said Archbishop Bashar Matti Warda of Erbil. “God bless them all.”

The Knights of Columbus has committed more than \$17 million in aid to Christians and other religious minorities in the region since 2014.

“We will be able to celebrate a true Christmas in our ancient Christian town of Karamles for the first time in years,” said Father Thabet Habib Yousif, parish priest of the town, which is located on the Nineveh Plain.

Karamles was a predominantly Christian town before ISIS overran it, driving out inhabitants, damaging or destroying homes, and desecrating churches. The inhabitants have been able to return in recent months, thanks to the defeat of ISIS and a commitment of \$2 million by the Knights of Columbus to help restore much of the town’s infrastructure.

“We will be giving thanks this year for the wonderful Christmas gift we have received — the return of our town,” said Father Thabet.

In addition to advocating on the behalf of persecuted religious minorities in Iraq, Syria and the surrounding region, the Knights also assisted Christian refugee programs in Lebanon and Jordan and provided aid to those targeted by ISIS in Egypt. The Knights led a major campaign urging the State Department to declare ISIS’ terrorism an act of genocide in 2016.

Articles for the February edition of *The Explorer* must be received by Friday, January 26<sup>th</sup>. Send all inputs to:

Walt Wankowski  
5211 McFaul Road  
Baltimore, MD 21206

Or by email to: [wwanko@comcast.net](mailto:wwanko@comcast.net)



Fr. A. Leo Abendschoen Council 11615  
Knights of Columbus  
5212 McCormick Avenue  
Baltimore, Maryland 21206



***Calendar Reminders***

- January 1 – New Year’s Day
- January 6 - Monthly Cash Bingo – 6:00 pm – Annunciation Parish Hall
- January 8 - Council General Membership Meeting – 7:00 pm – Annunciation Parish Hall
- January 9 – 4<sup>th</sup> Degree Assembly Meeting - 7:00 pm – Columbus Gardens
- January 11 - Baltimore Chapter of Grand Knights – 7:00 pm – Fr. Burgraff Council
- January 19 – March for Life – 12 Noon – Washington Monument - Washington, DC
- January 20 - Pro-Life Rosary – 9:00 am – Beltway Plaza Shopping Center, Fullerton
- January 22 - Council General Membership Meeting – 7:00 pm – Annunciation Parish Hall
- January 27 – MSP Polar Bear Plunge – Sandy Point State Park, Anne Arundel County