

BADGER BULLETIN

MAY 2026



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The Blessed Virgin Mary: Model of Faith, Courage, and Charity



FOR THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS, devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary is more than a cherished tradition. It is a call to live the virtues that define authentic Catholic manhood. Mary stands at the center of salvation history as the humble handmaid who freely gave her “yes” to God, trusting His will even when the path ahead was uncertain.

Mary’s faith was not passive. At the Annunciation, she embraced a mission that would bring misunderstanding, hardship, and suffering. Yet she moved forward with courage, confidence in God’s promise, and a heart rooted in prayer. For Knights, Mary’s example challenges us to place our trust in God not only in moments of comfort, but especially in times of trial, family responsibility, and moral decision-making.

Mary is also a woman of action and charity. After receiving the angel’s message, she hastened to serve her cousin Elizabeth. Later, at Cana, she noticed the needs of

others and quietly brought them to her Son, teaching us the power of intercession and the importance of attentiveness to those we serve. Knights of Columbus are called to imitate this spirit in works of charity, unity, and fraternity—seeing Christ in the poor, the vulnerable, and the forgotten.

At the foot of the Cross, Mary reveals the depth of her strength. She did not flee suffering, but stood firm, faithful to her Son until the end. In that moment, Christ entrusted her to us all. As Catholic men, we look to Mary as a spiritual mother who leads us closer to Jesus and helps us remain steadfast in faith amid a culture that often challenges Christian values.

Through the Rosary, Marian feasts, and acts of service inspired by her example, the Knights of Columbus continue to place their mission under her protection. May the Blessed Virgin Mary guide us to be men of prayer, courage, and sacrificial love—faithful disciples who bring Christ to our families, our communities, and our world.

Hail Mary, full of grace, pray for us!

Vivat Jesus!



AS I PREPARE THIS ARTICLE there are only 19 days until the start of our 125th Annual State Convention on May 15th, 2026 and only 65 days remaining in this fraternal year ending on June 30th.

There is still one area that many councils have been reluctant in completing in a timely manner: **Holding 2 Fraternal Benefit Events with either 10 or 14 attendees depending on the size of your council.**

This event is not optional, it's required, and it must be completed no later than June 12 to be confirmed by Supreme.

This only takes about an hour to complete and is also required for your council to achieve Star Council recognition.

Here is where I need your council's help now, and I ask that you take this request seriously.

Although we are setting new records in growth with 1,012 new members already added as of April 23rd and instituting many new Councils, Attaining Star Council Status is your council's ultimate goal.

Achieving "Star Council" means your council is continuing to be active in your communities and in your

parish and your council is growing your membership so as to maintain your good works for many years to come.

As your State Deputy, I am also challenged by Supreme to see that the State as a whole is continuing to grow. One of my challenges is that at least 51 or 17% of our 293 active councils achieve Star Council status.

You could have an 800% growth in membership, and without compliance of this Fraternal Benefit Event program you would not qualify for Star Council status and Wisconsin also would not meet its goal of a minimum of 51+ Star Councils.

As of today, 40 of the minimum 51 councils needed for Star already exceeded their intake goals

But only 26 councils or 9% are fully compliant in their Fraternal Benefit Requirements.

To date, one council has already met all their Star Council goals. **Congratulations to Council 746 in Baraboo!**

Can I get your commitment to get your Fraternal Benefit Event completed before the end of May?

Let's show Supreme and our communities and parishes that the Wisconsin Knights of Columbus have what it takes to succeed and grow by following Blessed Michael McGivney's mission.

Viat Jesus!



I HOPE THIS May Badger Bulletin finds you well! Spring is in the air. April showers bring May Flowers and Mayflowers bring pilgrims. State Cor & EFF Director Andy Orgavan and team promise us another fulfilling pilgrimage this year, so look for more details soon.

What a great time of year! We are in the final preparations for the 125th Wisconsin Knights of Columbus State Convention. It promises to be one for the books. We have tried to give Worthy State Deputy Patrick Reiff an event to cap off his successful and productive term.

I would like thank the many players that have worked hard to make it a memorable convention:

- The Host District Deputies and Grand Knights of D44, D45 and D47.
- The Resolutions Committee began their work in February and have done an exemplary job this year.
- The Program Director and his Program Coordinators identifying winners and all the crazy work that goes into that process.

- My brother State Officers, Rick Raulin and the quiet help of the State Ladies.
- Thanks to the Badger Bulletin Editor, Joshua Hopper, for taking over the creation of this year's Convention Book.
- I must pay homage to the hardest-working Knight in this process, Our Worthy State Warden, James Vosters. Thanks James for carrying the tremendous work load in making the Convention happen. We couldn't have done it without you!

All the while we have been preparing for the Convention, State Membership Director Les Kostera has been going about his business with you all and having one success after another. The numbers look great and you all are to be thanked as well.

We know, and it's indisputable, that councils are most successful with a District Deputy to support their efforts. Fraternal Year 2027 is going to be a great year if we can give each council that District Deputy. Will you help? We are in need of District Deputies in the following Districts: 3, 5, 6, 8, 14, 20, 22, 30, 44, 50, 55, 66, 80, 85 and 89. We really need guys to step up and help us lead! We have some great momentum in Wisconsin because of YOU! Consider being part of the support and success.

Vivat Jesus!

STATE MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR

LESTER KOSTERA

I HOPE YOU ALL ENJOYED a safe and blessed Easter. As we approach the end of the third quarter, I am pleased to report that our membership recruitment remains strong, and we are very close to achieving our April membership goal. We currently stand at 88.08% of our annual membership target.

To finish the year successfully, we need our inactive councils to reengage—both in recruiting new members and in submitting their program activities. Achieving Circle of Honor requires more than meeting our membership quota; we also need 51 councils to attain Star Council status. Let's stay focused and continue moving

forward together, one step at a time.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the State Convention in May. Please feel free to stop and speak with me if you have any questions or concerns regarding membership. With your continued dedication and support of our brotherhood, I am confident that we will accomplish our goals this year.

Vivat Jesus





I WANT TO START WITH SOME GOOD NEWS:

As of April 26, Online Membership in Wisconsin has exceeded what we brought in during the previous fraternal year. Thank you to all the Council Leaders that are continuing to use e-membership to grow the order.

As of April 26, 80 e-members joined the order in Wisconsin during the month. These are excellent numbers considering the Online Membership system was down for several days this month. Since July 1, we have brought in 649 e-members in Wisconsin. We are on pace to grow E-membership by about 20% this fraternal year, after growing 50% last fraternal year.

During April, Councils continued to do a good job of welcoming assigned e-members into their Councils. Since July 1, we still have about 173 e-members that have been assigned to a Council but have not yet taken an Exemplification or joined a Council. I expect to see this number reduced in May as Councils continue to work towards earning Star Council recognition. While in person exemplifications are preferred, if schedules are not working out, please use the On-Demand Online Exemplification to get these brothers into your Councils and then invite them to get involved.

Cards with the QR Code to join online are available from Supreme. These can be very helpful when inviting men to join. Your Diocesan Membership Directors and District Deputies should be able to help you get these cards if you need them.

As Councils work towards the Star Council Award, it is important that they review their Prospect Tab and invite those members to join their Council via an Exemplification of Charity, Unity, and Fraternity. WGK & WFS please frequently review your councils **Prospect** tab and if you are having difficulty in making contact, or any other issue, please email me regarding these outstanding assigned e-members and I will gladly assist you with reaching a remedy.

REMINDERS

WGK & WFS please frequently review your councils **Prospect** tab. Should you experience any difficulty with this process, please email me regarding these outstanding assigned e-members and I will gladly assist you.

Do not send Form 100's to Supreme for new members. Keep them for your council's records. If you must use a Form 100, scan it, email it to Supreme, and keep the original for your council records. Since Form 100's must be manually processed at Supreme, they can lead to data entry errors and delays. Utilizing e-membership or the

PROSPECT TAB

Shows you e-members that have joined online via the Supreme app. The date field is used to transfer them into your council when they have completed their exemplification. With e-membership, new members enter their own data and confirm their membership, and then they receive an e-mail from Supreme. These e-members are then part of the state council, and get assigned to a local council. Until the local FS enters the exemplification date, these members remain part of the State Council. Local councils get credit for them when the exemplification date is entered by the FS to transfer them into your Council.

Clicking on this blue box will take you to the Prospect training.

CANDIDATE TAB

Used when you recruit a member locally or are handling a member transfer request or a reinstatement of a prior member. The Candidate tab can best be described as an online Form 100. The candidate tab training covers new members and transfers into local councils.

Clicking on this red box will take you to the candidate training.

ONLINE CEREMONIAL

Click on this box to take you to the **Online Ceremonial** invitation site.

Candidate tab for new members are the preferred ways to bring in new members. **The date field is the date they were exemplified by your council. Once you enter those dates in either tab, the members will be automatically transferred to your council's roster within the next week.**

If you have any questions or concerns, contact me. I am in your State Directory.

Vivat Jesus!

FAITH IN ACTION: THE MOMENT IS NOW!

IN ONE REMARKABLE WEEK, a priest of the Diocese of Green Bay became a citizen of the United States and then took his place as a Fourth Degree Knight of Columbus.

Father Celestine Byekwaso was recently naturalized as a U.S. citizen. Just days later, on April 11 in De Pere, he stood among 48 Catholic men receiving the Patriotic Degree.



That is not just a great story. That is the standard.

The Fourth Degree exists to make our Catholic faith visible in the public square. Not in theory, but in action.

A man chooses to become a citizen. A priest chooses to serve his people. A Knight chooses to stand publicly for both. This is what Catholic patriotism looks like.

That same call is being answered by men across every walk of life. Among those receiving the Patriotic Degree in De Pere was State Senator André Jacque, standing alongside his brother Knights as a public servant choosing to live his faith visibly. Across Wisconsin, that witness continues. But now, we are being called to more.

Wisconsin has been challenged to step forward in a big way this year. On June 6 in Franklin, we will gather for our America 250 Patriotic Exemplification. This is an opportunity not just to participate, but to lead. This will not happen by chance. It will happen one invitation at a time.

Faithful Navigators and Grand Knights—this is on us. Not a number. Start with one. One man you know. One conversation you've been putting off. One invitation that gets him to June 6. Across Wisconsin, that's all it takes. Because the Fourth Degree does not grow by waiting. It grows when Catholic men step forward.

Father Celestine stepped forward.

Now it's our turn—one man at a time.

Vivat Jesus!



SPOTLIGHT LEAVING A LEGACY

HONORING THE TERM OF MASTER DUANE J. ZABOROWSKI



SIR KNIGHTS JAMES ZOELLNER AND DANIEL SPENCER were the honorees at the Fourth Degree Exemplification held on April 25, 2026. The event was held at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Marshfield WI. The host Assembly was Fr. John Eisen Assembly #1219 from Marshfield.

Duane J. Zaborowski, Master of the Western District of WI presided over the event. Duane's term as Master of the Western District will expire at the end of June. Duane has been the Faithful Master of the Western District since August 2022. There will be a new Master of the Western District appointed later summer. We want to thank Sir Knight Duane for his four years of service as Master.

We welcomed approximately **33** new Knights to the Fourth Degree. Special guests attending were Vice-Supreme Master for the Marquette Province Gerry Matix-Wand, WI State Deputy Patrick Reiff, and Master of the Eastern District of WI Jack Wrbanich were on hand to welcome the new candidates.



◀ **CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:** Class of 2026 new Fourth Degree Knights • Daniel Spencer and Duane Zaborowski • A knight receives recognition from Master Duane • WI State Deputy Patrick Reiff • James Zoeller and his Lady Joan



Photo credit Kathy Loy

NEED HELP WITH ULTRASOUND FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN?

There is a great pro-life organization out in Yelm, Washinton called [4US](#). They will help with 25% of the cost of the ultrasound. **Yes! Half** of your council's obligation! Here's their [website](#).

> We have no Ultrasound Projects going on at this time! Thank you for your support in this area! If you are thinking about heading one up, I have one for you to do **in Uganda!** Contact me [here](#).

STATE COUNCIL CULTURE OF LIFE FUND

If your council wants to contribute to the Culture of Life Grant Fund, please get your checks postmarked to State Council before June 30, 2026. So far we've raised about \$140,000, so any amount you can offer up for the babies would be excellent! Make your check out to:

Wisconsin State Council

P.O. Box 221

Brookfield, WI 53008-0221

ASAP GRANTS

Hopefully the month of April left your council's checking account **empty** after giving away all your money to pregnancy centers in your area. For every \$500 your council or assembly donates to a pregnancy resource center or maternity home (up to \$2,000), the match it with \$100. But, you have to [apply for it!](#) You only need two forms, a [Donation Receipt Letter](#) and a [W9](#).

CHOOSE LIFE WISCONSIN GRANT FUND

Any pro-life pregnancy center or maternity home can apply for a grant from Choose Life Wisconsin, the Choose Life Plate People! Apply [here](#) any time.

You can also purchase Pro-Life license plates. The more plates we have on the road, the more the pro-life message will be shared, and the more money there will be for the Pregnancy Resource Centers. The extra \$25 you pay for the plate is **tax deductible** if you itemize on Schedule A. More information [here](#).

Vivat Jesus!



JOIN THE FATHER MICHAEL MCGIVNEY GUILD



Honor His Legacy. Advance His Cause.

Strengthen Your Faith During the Jubilee Year of Hope.

As the Church celebrates the Jubilee Year of Hope, Catholics everywhere are called to renew their faith and walk more closely with Christ. What better way to respond than by drawing inspiration from our founder, Blessed Michael J. McGivney, who gave his life to strengthening families, building parish communities, and bringing hope to those on the margins.

By joining the Father McGivney Guild, you can (1) support his cause for sainthood and pray for his canonization, (2) deepen your spiritual life through his intercession during this Jubilee of grace, and (3) Publicly witness to our Catholic hope as a member of his spiritual family.

Membership is free and open to all who believe in his mission. Guild members receive inspiring newsletters, spiritual reflections, and invitations to special devotions honoring Blessed McGivney. Let's help make our founder a saint.

McGivney Guild Chairman

Jack Wrbanich, PSD



WE ARE MOVING TOWARDS the end of the fraternal calendar. Keep up your great work!

A question that we have to ask is what have we accomplished this year? Have we sent in all of our reports including the 10784, SP-7?

Now is the time for us to do some tasks. First of all, we need to finish this year off strong. This will get you off to a great start for next year.

Secondly, start setting goals for your programs now, and do not wait until next year. Have an idea of the programs you are planning on running, and think about adding some new ones. When we add more programs, the more Knights we will be able to bring in.

We will be having our State Convention this month,

and it will be a great opportunity to ask questions from all the Staff that are there. Please talk with us, as we truly care about you and your council.

I am very proud of our Faith in Action Directors:

Community – William Frayer

Faith – Dennis Bednarek

Family – Jim Hooyman

Life – Dan Miller

Make sure you thank them for the wonderful job they are doing this Fraternal year.

The big question for me is: Does your council have the two Fraternal Benefits finished yet or are you putting it off? I just want to remind you that you are helping the State Council not just your council. We need **all** of the councils to help, not just a few.

I want to thank everyone for the honor being your State Program Director.

Vivat Jesus!



HAPPY MAY 2026: Spring is on our doorstep in Wisconsin and a very pleasant time of the year! Trees are budding, perennials are opening up, farmers are in their fields & spring projects are underway! Family activities are also springing up in each household as well as each Council and/or Assembly. There are "Family" Mother's Day activities as well as

"Family" celebrations for all the Boy's & Girl's who are preparing to receive the Blessed Sacrament of Holy Communion to name just a few family get-togethers. May is also a great month to thank Our Blessed Lady and the many Mothers of each parish for everything they do for their family! Please encourage your Council with a devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe & our Moms by praying the Rosary as a Council and a family! We could also organize a traveling statue of Our Lady to visit the homes of the families of the parish and council. Visit the [Imitating Saint Juan Diego](#) page for resources. A 15" statue as well as an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe are available on Supplies Online.

Family of the Month

Family is a very blessed gift! In honor of Mary in this month of May, can your Council acknowledge a Family of the Month in your Parish? Look around next time in church and you will certainly see some deserving families! Can you find time to recognize a family? Let's keep our families strong and please take time to enrich a deserving family in your Parish however that works for your Council, monthly, quarterly or yearly.

Food for Families

As Spring approaches, you can also encourage your Council to participate in the Food for Families program to

ensure that their food pantries are well stocked and ready for the spring season and beyond. Remind them that for every \$100 or 500 pounds donated, they will receive a refund of \$100 up to a maximum of \$500. Let's attempt to ensure that no one needs to go hungry! On a side note, please be sure to fill out the Food for Families Reimbursement Form so that you receive the proper refund for your Council's donation.

Faith, Family and Fútbol! – Special Soccer Challenge Incentive

Encourage councils to watch this summer's international soccer games and host a special-edition 2026 Summer Soccer Challenge! Soccer Challenge winners from each state or province will win a state champion t-shirt. The Councils that host a 2026 Summer Soccer Challenge and exemplify three members between June 1 and July 31 will also receive two commemorative t-shirts for members of their choice. This is a great opportunity for Councils to gain credit for the Columbian Award. Click here for a guide to run the events and required entry forms.

Submit Form #10784

Finally, for all your programs, remember to file Form #10784 when possible, soon after you complete the activity while still fresh in your mind. After completing the form hit "Submit" and it will then be sent to Supreme. Almost immediately, you will receive an email from Supreme in a PDF format which you will need to send to the [State Forms address](#). We need this step completed to keep track of your Council's activity. It is also a good idea to CC your District Deputy and keep a copy for yourself/Council as well.

In closing, from my family to your family, we wish you a safe and enjoyable spring and a productive May. Until we meet again: Take care, stay healthy, and God bless us all!

Vivat Jesus!

FOR A LIST OF ALL PROGRAMS, [GO HERE.](#)



THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT and busy time of the year for your State Charity Committee Team! With State Convention just a few weeks away we are receiving, counting and depositing all the very generous ticket purchases

from individuals, councils and businesses that are rushing to our doorsteps! The final days to offer the State Charity Raffle Tickets are approaching so double the efforts of your council members to finish the season off strong.

After May 3rd, councils that sell any tickets should hold them and surrender them at the State Convention with their delegates. As usual, there will be turn-in tables available at the Convention for each Diocese. Just a reminder: Council Checks or Bank Drawn Money Orders will only be accepted for deposit payments at Convention. If cash is used—although it is discouraged—it **must** be exact change. Personal Checks will not be accepted due to concerns in past years.

Please refrain from turning in large batches of tickets at the State Convention. This can be challenging for my team and could cause a risk of ticket and funds discrepancies. Using safe and common-sense accounting practices helps make a more thorough and complete process. My team and I thank you kindly for your assistance!

The Council Charity Grant Form (2025-2026) was due May 1. A courtesy email to all council Grand Knight's and District Deputy's was sent back in late April as reminder. Please [email](#) the form directly to me as State Charity Director. If you're not sure the form was submitted on time, please reach out via email for a confirmation update.

These updates and delivery revisions have been to help better streamline the collection process to a single person for better uploading and accounting practices.

PRAYERS PLEASE!

Please keep in your daily prayers (personally, council, and parish communities) for the quick and full recovery of our Diocesan Charity Coordinator from Superior Dennis Berendes. He was seriously injured in a farming accident and continues to remain in critical condition. With this unfortunate accident his family has asked that firstly, we keep in prayer and secondly, respectfully request that he be released from his duties as Coordinator. With that being said, an urgent request for seeking his replacement beginning with the 2026-2027 sales year is underway. Anyone who would like to inquire about the role (no obligation) and its duties can reach out to me at the State Convention, phone, or email.

HELP WANTED!

Robert Pizur from the Diocese of Madison announced his retirement from the State Charity Committee at the end of this season. **We are actively seeking to fill his vacancy also beginning with the 2026-2027 sales year.**

Anyone who would like to inquire about the role (no obligation) and its duties can reach out to Robert and/or myself at the State Convention, phone, or email.

Brothers Dennis and Robert have served on the Committee for many years and have been a great asset to the State Charity Committee for their time and service. May God bless them for the sharing of their time and talent.

Looking forward to seeing you all at the State Convention!

Vivat Jesus!

The Lord Has Risen!

He Has Risen Indeed!

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Do Unto Others

Joshua Hopper

WHEN CONSIDERING THIS MONTH'S TOPIC, I received a request for our weekly staff prayer newsletter. The request was simply that we could all remember to love each other even in the face of differences. I feel like this is especially poignant in our current society.

Our politics have gotten to the point where we can't have a difference in our opinions without drastic repercussions. Friendships are lost. Families are torn apart. Hatred rears its ugly head. The devil wins when we allow ourselves to become divided against ourselves.

I want to make it clear that I am not endorsing either side of the political spectrum. I merely implore everyone to continue to pray that God will get us through any hardship, that our political leaders work in the interest of the people,

and that we continue to love everyone, especially those of us with whom we disagree.

What image do we show as Catholics when we become hostile toward those who don't share our set of beliefs? I would argue there's a bit of hypocrisy when we read the words of Jesus, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," or "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Ultimately, I prefer to keep my trust in God. Our world is broken, but we are not meant for this world. We are meant for eternal reunion with God in heaven. Let's mend our relationships, accept our differences, and love each other as Jesus does. Let's spread God's word to unite each other, not divide each other.

Vivat Jesus!



SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

- Keep articles below 500 words.
- Submit word docs to **kc2055pr@gmail**
- Send photos separately, clearly labeled, with credits.
- Prioritize quality content with articles.
- Proofread thoroughly for spelling and grammar.
- Avoid double spaces after periods.
- Be punctual! Late submissions will be excluded from future publications.



ON THE COVER: OUR LADY OF THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL

1830 was a year of multiple Marian apparitions. On July 18, 1830, St. Catherine reported that a "shining child" appeared by her bed and told her Our Lady was waiting for her in the chapel. The two of them talked for hours that night as Mary revealed that troubling times were ahead for France. Mary appeared to St. Catherine again several months later, urging her to keep her visions a secret from all except her confessor. St. Catherine was commissioned by Mary to create the miraculous medal, a medal that was worn by Marie Alphonse as a way to please his friend. By wearing this medal, he also received a vision of the Blessed Virgin and converted to Catholicism.

In service to One.

In service to all.

