
Mater Dei Council 9774 - Knights of Columbus - Rockville, Maryland
Council Meetings - 2nd and 4th Thursday - 8:00 p.m. - St. Raphael's Duffy Community Center
www.geocities.com/materdei9774

From the Grand Knight's Station



November is a month when we give thanks to God for all of the blessing which He has bestowed upon us. We also catch our breaths a bit after a busy Fall, as many of our endeavors of the previous months are completed.

Among the activities just completed is our Tootsie Roll campaign to help the mentally handicapped. I want to thank all the members of our council who helped raise just under \$8000. Special thanks goes to Don Novotny who (for the second year in a row) lead our council's efforts. Congratulations to Don and to John

Wolheiter for both receiving the Knight of the Month honors for their work on the Tootsie Roll Campaign.

I also want to thank Dick Bianchi, Patrick Grady and Dick Rhetta for joining those at the Uptown Abortion Clinic to pray the rosary for the lives of unborn children.

December marks the beginning of the Christmas Season with anticipation of gathering with family and friends to enjoy the holiday activities I remind us all that Christmas is above all else a time of giving. The council's Christmas party will be held on Dec 3, and in keeping with this spirit of giving, Mater Dei each year supports six seminarians. I urge you to be as generous as possible in this endeavor.

I wish all of you a happy and blessed holiday season. May God bless you and your families in the coming year. The holidays are also a time to remember those less fortunate than ourselves. Please be generous during the holiday.

Mary Queen of the Knights pray for us.

Fraternally

Patrick DeGraba
Grand Knight

SEMINARIAN FUND COLLECTION

A special collection to support several seminarians will be taken up during the Mater Dei Christmas Party on December 3rd. A tax deductible contribution should be made out to "Mater Dei Council Charities, Inc." Last year approximately \$2000.00 was raised to support seminarians - let us do as well or better this year.

If you cannot attend the Christmas Party, please consider forwarding a seminarian contribution to:

Mater Dei Charities, Inc.
1592 Kimblewick Roak
Rockville, MD 20854

District Deputy's Message



How quickly time goes by. It seems that the Fraternal Year has just begun, and now it is almost Christmas. This is a gentle indicator of how rapidly our lives pass. It should make us resolve to use the time we have productively, and not fritter away the opportunities we are given.

Christmas is a particularly difficult period to focus properly. The season is a mixture of religious and festal activities. It is hard to concentrate on Advent when being bombarded with reminders that there are only so many shopping days left, on preparing our souls when there is the press of sending untold numbers of greeting cards, on being in the presence of our Lord when presents are to be bought, wrapped and given, on the birth of Christ when Santa is to come down the chimney.

This is not a request to say, “Bah, humbug” to the festive aspects of the season, but just to keep them in perspective. The sharing and gift giving, the family visitations, the decorations and gathering around the Christmas tree are activities to be savored. They help children and parents, grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles to share a common time, to put themselves in a joyous frame of mind, and to renew the bonds of family. But do not let the commercial lures for our money mask the meaning of the feast of the Nativity.

Christmas is the beginning of a cycle that marks our redemption. Christ took the form of man, was born, lived a human life, suffered, died, and resurrected. He did so to atone for our sins. Celebrating the start of this cycle, however, reminding us of the Incarnation, of Christ as true God and true man, is too much for our secular society. Even the sweetened images of Christmas – angels, shepherds, a bright star, and a cute baby asleep in a manger – cannot be tolerated. This highly significant, cultural, religious and historic event must be obscured by transforming it into a winterfest, by highlighting with equal (or in many instances greater) emphasis the minor or newly established holidays of Hanukah, Ramadan, and Kwanza, by sanitizing any reminders of Christmas in words, music or symbols and replacing them with politically correct terms and images.

As we enter this holy season, keep Christ in Christmas. Do not just buy cards with religious images, or listen to “Silent Night” on your radio or CD player, or even just go to Christmas Mass – as important as these activities are. It is easy to do these things out of habit or as unthinking responses to our religious upbringing. Rather, Christmas is a time when we can reevaluate our relationship to Christ, to contemplate on our view of God, to better understand why we were born and what is the purpose of our lives, and to resolve to make good use of the time we have remaining on Earth.

Mary Susan and I wish each of you a very Merry and Blessed Christmas! May our Lord be with you and your family throughout this season and in the year ahead.

Vivat Jesus!

Lawrence P. Grayso
District Deputy #18



*The Officers of Mater Dei Council
wish you and your family
A Blessed and Joyful Christmas*

Freedom, Virtue and Conscience by Lawrence P. Grayson, DD, PGK, PFN

The great civilizations of history have all followed a similar pattern – they rose to world prominence, then deteriorated, declined, and fell. Each of them shared a significant, but common trait -- a forerunner of their decline was a turning away from their God or gods. If America is not to follow the same path, our public and private actions must be guided by the virtue and morality that is developed by religion and sustained by a belief in a Supreme Being.

The freedom for which America was established is freedom under God, a God who endowed us with individual worth, free will, and inviolable rights. This American ideal is that of liberty ordered by universally recognized moral principles which exist independently of man. Its continuance is possible only when the people as a whole are self-disciplined in accord with the imperatives of a universal moral law. Then through the workings of political, social and other subsidiary institutions these norms are adapted to the secular order of the community as binding upon its actions. It is a delusion to think that a people who do not govern their appetites in their private lives are capable of self-government in public life. America, in this sense, is more than a political undertaking; it is a spiritual and moral enterprise.

A society cannot exist without order, and one that is free requires that order evolve upward from the people and not be imposed downward by the leaders or rulers of the nation. This is particularly true of America, which has been organized, through its Constitution, as a government of, by, and for the people. The authority to govern rests with the people, which they exercise through their freely-elected representatives. If Americans are to retain the freedoms they were given, then they must make responsible use of those freedoms.

The nation's Founding Fathers had a fundamental belief that only a virtuous people can remain free, and that the preservation of the American ideal would depend upon the virtue of the people who are part of it. Human nature, however, is colored by an individual's passions and self-interest. If these appetites are not restrained, and the universal moral values upon whose shared possession the self-discipline of a free society depends are not vigorous enough to restrain the selfish passions of men, the foundations of society are endangered. It was with this recognition that the British statesman and political philosopher Edmund Burke, in *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, in 1790, could state: "[W]hat is liberty without wisdom and without virtue? It is the

greatest of all possible evils; for it is folly, vice, and madness, without tuition or restraint."

Freedom must be fettered by adherence to a virtuous conscience. If one's actions are limited internally by moral principles, they do not have to be constrained externally by societal rules and laws. The more a moral conscience guides one's behavior, the less need there is for external controls and the more freedom one can have. Lord Acton, the 19th century, British, Catholic historian, viewed freedom as "not the power of doing what we like, but the right of being able to do what we ought."

It was a strong belief of the Founding Americans that the consensus upon which a free society depends for its strength and permanence could be developed and sustained by individual judgments, shaped by the virtue and morality that is taught by religion. Thus, a truly free society must develop in its people virtues, such as duty, responsibility, obligation, honesty, and self-sacrifice. It does this best through religion which teaches people about their individual worth, uniqueness, human dignity, and the equality of all people.

America is continuing to move toward secularism and moral relativism. Its treatment of irreligion as equal to religion, its recent emphasis on freedom without regard for moral and spiritual restraint, and the growing view that religious belief is strictly a private affair have relegated religion to having little more than a ceremonial role in public life. Freedom is becoming license, while agnosticism is rampant in the arts, entertainment, politics, economics, social norms, and culture in general. The key to the future revitalization and maintenance of the American ideal is the development of the individual conscience in accord with the tenets of a spiritual authority and under the guidance of religion.

President Ronald Reagan expressed his concern for America's future very well when he stated: "Without God, there is no virtue, because there's no prompting of the conscience. Without God, we're mired in the material, that flat world that tells us only what the senses perceive. Without God, there is a coarsening of the society. And without God, democracy will not and cannot long endure."

FRATERNAL BENEFITS

SCROOGE DIDN'T BELIEVE

We can all remember the story of Scrooge and his failure to believe in the spirit of Christmas. To all but the Scrooges of the world, the celebration of the birth of Christ brings with it a warm feeling of family ties, a joy and pleasure that out faith brings to others. That same warm feeling comes from owning life insurance. Just knowing that, because of what you have planned, your loved ones will have joys and comforts for years to come if something should happen to you. I don't think Scrooge would have believed in life insurance either, but men of good will do. And the world is a better place because of them. Through life insurance, they know that comfort and security will not be only for one day, but instead, a gift that will provide for their loved ones for years to come. This Christmas, give the gift of security and protection.

From my family to your family, a Blessed and Holy Christmas!

Fraternally,

Rick Morin 301.384.7627

Report on Loyola Retreat

The retreat at beautiful Loyola Retreat House on the banks of the Potomac in Faulkner, Maryland during the weekend of Nov. 11-13 proved to be a great experience for all seventy in attendance. St. Raphael's had three registering too late and were unable to attend. Those attending from our parish were: Elizabeth Lewis, Don Meyer, Richard Jasinski, John and Marilyn Keating, Jack Phillips, Louise Cox and Frank Della Penna.

The retreat began Friday evening with Eucharist in the Main Chapel followed by Orientation and a delicious crab cake dinner. After dinner, we had Introduction to Prayer with emphasis on Jesus and how Light interacts in our lives. Prayer Introductions continued on Saturday by the very effective Jesuits leading to Life, Love, The Gospel of St. John and ending with The Way on Sunday morning.

There was plenty of time to experience the beach on the river and walk out onto the dock and be so at peace with the stillness of the beautiful water. Many of the retreatants walked out to the main entrance which covers about a mile on the 235 wooded acres. Some walked through the woods to the magnificent Bluff overlooking the flowing Potomac River. During all of this time, you experience a closeness of Jesus being right at your side giving you the opportunity of thanking Him personally for all of your Blessings.

I urge everyone to make plans now to attend next year's retreat on the second weekend in November. Don't be left out as we have had people closed out the past two years.

Frank Della-Penna

ENTERTAINMENT BOOKS ARE ON SALE

As you may know, Mater Dei Council is once again selling Entertainment Books as a fundraiser to assist in sponsoring our various church, community, council, family, and youth programs. This year we can earn a 50% commission if we can sell just 10 more books. Please consider a book for yourself, family, friends and co-workers. They make great Christmas Gifts.

The Entertainment Book pays for itself in just a few uses because it's loaded with 50%-off discounts on things you do every day - like dining, shopping, attractions, and more.

Filled with hundreds of half-off and two-for-one coupons, the Entertainment Book is the best way to save money on dining, entertainment and attractions, cultural and sporting events, air travel, cruises, amusement parks, rental cars, hotels, movies, merchandise, and even discounts at the beach. You can start using the special offers immediately and the price has been reduced to a mere \$25.

Books can be purchased at our KofC meetings or by calling Tom Sherman (301-340-2042) or Tony Cammarota (301-424-6138). Books are also available in 160 cities across America and make great gifts for your out-of-town friends and family. Out-of-town books range from \$20 - \$40 and best of all, you receive \$5 off the regular retail price! You can visit <http://www.entertainment.com/supp> [ort](http://www.entertainment.com/supp) to purchase your out-of-town Entertainment Coupon books. Be sure to enter group account # 127435, so our Council gets credit.

Thank you very much for your support. I hope you enjoy your Entertainment Coupon book!

Tom Sherman

Rosary at Uptown Abortion Clinic

Saturday, December 17th, is St. Raphael's Prayer Day at the Uptown abortion clinic. This is a call for all Knights and their families to get behind St. Raphael's project to combat the evils of abortion in our neighborhood. Come out, stand up and be counted for the unborn whose only crime is that God offered them the gift of life. Let's support this effort with a significant visible turnout of Mater Dei Council members and their families. Thanks to those who came to pray in November.

Directions to the Uptown abortuary: Take Rt. 270 to Shady Grove Road. Go east on Shady Grove Road to Comprint Court. Make a left on Comprint Court and park anywhere on the street. The rosary will begin at 10:00 AM at the second drive way on the left.

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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

December 2005

- Dec. 3 Breakfast with Santa - Trumpet Room - 9:00 a.m.
- Dec. 3 Council Christmas Party - Trumpet Room - 6:00 p.m.
- Dec. 4 Lunch with Santa - Trumpet Room - 12:30 p.m.
- Dec. 6 Executive Board Meeting - DCC - 8:00 p.m.
- Dec. 8 Council Meeting, First Degree - DCC - 8:00 p.m.
- Dec. 22 Council Social Meeting - DCC - 8:00 p.m.

Mark your calendars for these upcoming events

- January 23 March for Life
- February 24 and 25 Garage to Attic Sale
- March 11 Council Anniversary Dinner

Our Web Site

I want to thank Bill Arcieri, Camille Ng and Eric Gregrich for revamping the Mater Dei websight. You can view it at <http://www.geocities.com/materdei9774/>. There is lots of information about upcoming events and pictures of previous events. Enjoy!

**THE NEXT ISSUE WILL BE
JANUARY 2006**

**All articles for the JANUARY Issue
must be received by the Editor by
Tuesday, Dec. 27, 6:00 P.M.
editor9774@comcast.net**

EMAIL ADDRESS ? ?

Does the Financial Secretary have your email address? Please advise

John Frey

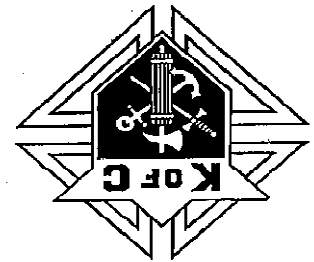
kofejfrey@comcast.net
if you now have email, or have a change of email address.

E-mail Update for Grand Knight

I am updating my e-mail list. If you have not received e-mails from me in the past week or so (or you have changed your e-mail address in the past couple of months) please e-mail me at pdegraba@comcast.net and I will add you to the list. Thanks!

BEST WISHES
FOR A
BLESSED
CHRISTMAS

DECEMBER 2005



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