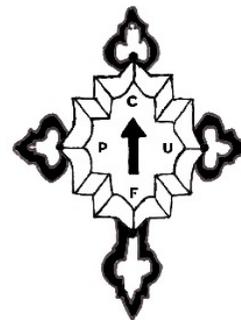




The Council Compass

Msgr. Henry O'Carroll Council #444

Knights of Columbus



Editor: Paul Desroches

1899 - *Over 118 Years* - 2017

May 2017

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This issue of the Compass is dedicated to the 100th Anniversary of the Apparition of Our Lady at Fatima on May 13. To honor that occasion I am re-printing the accounts of the six apparitions of Our Lady to Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta Marto of Fatima, Portugal.

In the year 1917, in a mountainous region at the center of Portugal, the Mother of God appeared six times to three young children.

Elsewhere on the continent the "Great War" raged, that would cost Europe an entire generation, over 37 million lives. Besides sending her own sons to die (in France and North Africa) Portugal was in political chaos at home. There was a dizzy succession of governments following a revolution in 1910. The monarchy had been replaced by a republic, with a new liberal constitution separating Church from state. Government officials, under the influence of Freemasonry, were not sympathetic to the Faith. But for the people themselves, the Faith was the air they breathed, as in the village of Aljustrel, a collection of whitewashed houses on a dusty road in the parish of Fatima.

There Lucia, Francisco, and Jacinta were born and raised in homes where the catechism was their daily bread, stories from the Bible their recreation, and the word of the village priest was law. Lucia de Jesus Santos was born, the youngest of seven children, to Antonio and Maria Rosa Santos, on 22 March 1907. She was a plain child with sparkling eyes and a magnetic personality, a natural leader to whom other children looked with confident affection. Blessed with an excellent memory, Lucia was able to learn her catechism, and make her First Communion and Confession, at age six. She herself became a catechist at nine. Lucia would be the constant guide and companion to her first cousins, Francisco and Jacinta Marto, through the trials that accompanied the apparitions of the Blessed Mother.

Leading their flock out from Aljustrel on the morning of the 13th of May, the feast of Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament, the three children passed Fátima, where the parish church and cemetery could be found, and proceeded a kilometer or so north to the slopes of the Cova. Here they allowed their sheep to graze as they played in the pasture land sprinkled with the occasional oak tree. After having had their lunch about noon they decided to pray a rosary, although in a somewhat truncated fashion, saying only the first words of each prayer. Shortly, they were startled by what they later described as "lightening in a clear sky." Thinking that a storm might be approaching they debated whether they should take the sheep and go home. Preparing to do so they were again surprised by a strange light.

And we began to go down the slope driving the sheep towards the road. When we were half-way down, near a holm oak there [the large tree which today is encircled with an iron fence], we saw another flash of lightening, and after a few steps we saw on a holm oak [a small one lower on the hillside] a lady dressed in white, shining brighter than the sun, giving out rays of clear and intense light, just like a crystal goblet full of pure water when the fiery sun passes through it.

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Grand Knight's Thoughts

On April 2, our Council completed another successful communion breakfast, beginning with Mass at 10 AM, at Sacred Heart Church, with breakfast following at the Powelton Club. All fifty five of us in attendance truly enjoyed the event. Our guest speaker, George Marlin's informative speech on the ongoing genocide of the Coptic Christians as well as all other Christians in the Middle East was well received. He also talked about the negative population growth in England, France, Germany and Italy. He talked about how, in the past, these countries had good sized Catholic or other Christian families, but now they have one or two children per family. Whereas the Muslims have large families and that in twenty years they will be the majority. So it won't be Muslim conversion by the sword, but by the vote.

I would like to thank the following; George Marlin; guest speaker, John DeLessio for recommending Mr. Marlin, and our Communion Breakfast Chairman, Joe Dennis for a good job done by all.

I would like to remind all of our Brother Knights about the mailing that was sent out on March 8, requesting you update your mailing address, e-mail, phone number and other information. Please don't forget to complete and return the information. Also in this mailing was the flyer for the council's annual Memorial Car Show, which will be held at the Newburgh Mall parking lot, next to the Sears store, from 10 AM to 3 PM. Please note the new date of June 25, with a rain date of July 2. One of the contacts for information and pre-registration is PGK Ken Ryan at 845-565-8015. Please invite your relatives and friends to register their cars, trucks and motorcycles and attend yourself.

Also in this mass mailing were two raffle tickets that our council is assisting with the Hudson Valley Chapter of the Knights of Columbus for their annual charity drive to raise funds for the restoration of the Shrine of Our Lady of Martyrs in Auriesville, N.Y. I thank all who have sent in their donations for two or more raffle tickets.

Our Francis J. Gorman Assembly 696 Color Corp has been invited by the American Legion Post 1796 of New Windsor, to attend and lay a wreath during the New Windsor Memorial Day event on Sunday, May 21, at the town's Veteran's Memorial at the intersection of Routes 9W and 94. This event is being held a week early so it won't interfere with other Memorial Day events in the area. I hope to have our council Knights attend with the Color Corp. We will meet on May 21, before 10:30 AM at the Quassaick Firehouse parking lot at 275 Walsh Ave in New Windsor. We will walk less than ¼ mile to the Veteran's Memorial for the laying of the wreath at the memorial.

Next we will cross the street to the Calvary Cemetery for a short prayer at veterans' monuments there. We are then invited to the American Legion Post 1796 hall for snacks and soft drinks. We are looking for a very good turn out, because an attorney from Cornwall has been sending demanding letters to the Town of New Windsor Supervisor, George Greene, that the word God be taken off the Memorial. George Greene has stated that he will not remove the word God from the memorial.

Just a reminder, if you receive Catholic religious gifts in the mail, as I do, please drop them off to our council when you attend a meeting. We donate those items to the St. Mary's Food Pantry Outreach, to be given away at their food giving day.

Let us welcome our new Brother Knights to our Council; they are, Ike Broome, Curtis Bourdage, Nicholas Cracolic and Peter Vondras. Thanks to all of you for joining us.

We have two food pantries that help feed the hungry in our area. They need some of us Knights to volunteer to help. They are St. Francis Church Food Pantry, Paul Zalanowski (845-561-6406); and St. Mary's Food Pantry Outreach, Marietta Allen, (845-566-1425).

If you can visit some of our Brother Knights who can't get around on their own. Please call before you visit; Robert Webber, at 845-294-8176, he is at 214 Harriman Drive, Apt 3020, Goshen, N. Y., And Tom Shustack, Elant Nursing Home, Meadow Hill Road, Town of Newburgh.

I pray and hope that all had a Blessed Easter! God Bless and Vivat Jesus!

Joe Coyle
Grand Knight



PGK John DeLessio introducing George Marlin at the Communion Breakfast.

(Photo courtesy of James Peloso)

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We stopped astounded by the Apparition. We were so near that we were in the light that encircled her, or which she radiated, perhaps a meter and a half away”

“Please don’t be afraid of me, I’m not going to harm you.”

The Lady said.

Lucia responded for all three, as she would throughout the apparitions. “Where are you from?”

“I come from heaven.”

The Lady wore a pure white mantle, edged with gold and which fell to her feet. In her hands the beads of a rosary shone like stars, with its crucifix the most radiant gem of all. Still, Lucia felt no fear. The Lady’s presence produced in her only gladness and confident joy. “And what do you want of me?”

“I want you to return here on the thirteenth of each month for the next six months, and at the very same hour. Later I shall tell you who I am, and what it is that I most desire. And I shall return here yet a seventh time.”

“And shall I go to heaven?”

“Yes, you will.”

“And Jacinta?”

“She will go too.”

“And Francisco?”

“Francisco, too, my dear, but he will first have many Rosaries to say.”

For a few moments the Lady looked at Francisco with compassion, tinged with a little sadness. Lucia then remembered some friends who had died. “Is Maria Neves in heaven?”

“Yes, she is.”

“And Amelia?”

“She is in purgatory. Will you offer yourselves to God, and bear all the sufferings He sends you? In atonement for all the sins that offend Him? And for the conversion of sinners?”

“Oh, we will, we will!”

“Then you will have a great deal to suffer, but the grace of God will be with you and will strengthen you.”

Lucia relates that as the Lady pronounced these words, she opened her hands, and we were bathed in a heavenly light that appeared to come directly from her hands. The light’s reality cut into our hearts and our souls, and we knew somehow that this light was God, and we could see ourselves embraced in it. By an interior impulse of grace we fell to our knees, repeating in our hearts: “Oh, Holy Trinity, we adore You. My God, my God, I love You in the Blessed Sacrament.”

The children remained kneeling in the flood of this wondrous light, until the Lady spoke again, mentioning the war in Europe, of which they had little or no knowledge.

“Say the Rosary every day, to bring peace to the world and an end to the war.”

After that she began to rise slowly in the direction of the east, until she disappeared in the immense distance. The light that encircles Her seemed to make a way amidst the stars, and that is why we sometimes said we had seen the heavens open.

The days that followed were filled with excitement, though they had not intended it that way. Lucia had cautioned the others to keep their visitor a secret, correctly perceiving the difficulties they would experience if the events became known. However, the joy of seven year old Jacinta could not be contained, and she rather promptly forgot her promise and revealed all to her mother, who patiently listened but gave it little credence. Her brothers and sisters piped in with their questions and jokes. Among the interrogators only her father, “Ti” Marto, was inclined immediately to accept the tale as true. He believed in the honesty of his children, and had a simple appreciation of the workings of God, such that he became the first believer in the apparitions of Fátima.

Lucia’s mother, on the other hand, when at last she heard what had transpired, believed her own daughter to be the instigator of a fraud, if not a blasphemy. Lucia would quickly learn what the Lady meant when she said they would suffer a great deal. Maria Rosa was unable to get Lucia to recant, event under threats. Finally she hauled her before the parish priest, Fr. Ferreira, with no better success. On the other hand, Lucia’s father, who was not especially religious, was practically indifferent, attributing all of it to the fancies of women. The next few weeks, as the children awaited their scheduled appointment with the lady in June, would reveal that they had few believers, and many detractors, in Aljustrel and Fátima.

In Portugal the 13th of June is a great feast, the feast of St. Anthony of Lisbon, known to most Catholics as St. Anthony of Padua. This Franciscan miracle-worker was born in Lisbon and had entered religious life as a Canon Regular of the Holy Cross, residing first in Lisbon and then Coimbra, before leaving the Portuguese order for the new Order of Friars and a hope of martyrdom. It was, and is, THE children’s feast in Portugal, so the parents of Lucia naturally thought that the festivities at the parish church in Fátima would distract her from the appointment at the Cova. However, undismayed by this tactic Lucia and the Marto children proceeded to the apparition site to keep their noon day rendezvous.

When they arrived they found a small crowd awaiting them.

After having said the rosary with Jacinta and Francisco and other people who were present, we saw again the reflection of light nearing us, (we used to say it was lightening), and following, Our Lady on the holm oak as in May.

“Please tell me, Madam, what it is that you want of me?”

“I want you to come here on the thirteenth of next month. I want you to continue saying the Rosary every day. And after each one of the mysteries, my children, I want you to pray in this way: O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fire of hell. Take all souls to heaven, especially those who are most in need.

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I want you to learn to read and write, and later I will tell you what else I want of you"

"Will you take us to heaven?"

"Yes, I shall take Jacinta and Francisco soon, but you will remain a little longer, since Jesus wishes you to make me known and loved on earth. He wishes also for you to establish devotion in the world to my Immaculate Heart"

"Must I remain in the world alone?"

"Not alone, my child, and you must not be sad. I will be with you always, and my Immaculate Heart will be your comfort and the way which will lead you to God."

The moment she said the last words, opening her hands, She transmitted to us, for the second time, the reflection of that intense light. In it we felt we were submerged in God. Jacinta and Francisco seemed to be in that part of the light which was rising to Heaven, and I in the part spreading over the earth. In front of the palm of Our Lady's right hand was a heart encircled with thorns which appeared to pierce it. We understood it was the Immaculate Heart of Mary offended by the sins of mankind, craving reparation.

The apparition then concluded as on the first occasion, with the Lady going off toward the east and disappearing in the "immensity of heaven." Despite the joy of those precious moments the sorrows of the children continued in the following weeks, moderated by the belief of very many at the Cova that day. They knew that something unusual had occurred - they saw the "lightening," some perceived a certain dimming of the sun, others a little gray cloud that came and went as the apparition did and they believed. However, the difficulties with their families did not abate, especially with their mothers, who became genuinely alarmed that the events were not just continuing but expanding. To this was added the painful caution of the parish priest, that after all it might be real but of demonic origin.

As the July date approached Lucia continued to be troubled by the words of her pastor that the devil might be behind the apparitions. Finally, she confided to Jacinta that she intended not to go. When the day finally dawned, however, her fears and anxieties disappeared, so that the noon hour found her in the Cova with Jacinta and Francisco, awaiting the arrival of the beautiful Lady.

The apparition of July 13th would prove to be in many ways the most controversial aspect of the message of Fátima, providing a secret in three parts which the children guarded zealously. The first two parts, the vision of hell and the prophecy of the future role of Russia and how to prevent it, would not be revealed until Sr. Lucia wrote them down in her third memoir, at the request of the bishop, in 1941. The third part, usually called the Third Secret, was only later communicated to the bishop, who sent it unread to Pope Pius XII.

A few moments after arriving at the Cova da Iria, near the holm oak, where a large number of people were praying the Rosary, we saw the flash of light once more, and a moment later Our Lady appeared on the holm oak.

"Lucia," Jacinta said, "speak. Our Lady is talking to you." "Yes?" said Lucia. She spoke humbly, asking pardon for her doubts with every gesture, and to the Lady: "What do you want of me?"

"I want you to come back here on the thirteenth of next month. Continue to say the Rosary every day in honor of Our Lady of the Rosary, to obtain the peace of the world and the end of the war, because only she can obtain it."

"Yes, yes." "I would like to ask who you are, and if you will do a miracle so that everyone will know for certain that you have appeared to us."

"You must come here every month, and in October I will tell you who I am and what I want. I will then perform a miracle so that all may believe."

Thus assured, Lucia began to place before the Lady the petitions for help that so many had entrusted to her. The Lady said gently that she would cure some, but others she would not cure.

"And the crippled son of Maria da Capelinha?"

"No, neither of his infirmity nor of his poverty would he be cured, and he must be certain to say the Rosary with his family every day."

Another case recommended by Lucia to the Lady's assistance was a sick woman from Atougia who asked to be taken to heaven.

"Tell her not to be in a hurry. Tell her I know very well when I shall come to fetch her. Make sacrifices for sinners, and say often, especially while making a sacrifice: O Jesus, this is for love of Thee, for the conversion of sinners, and in reparation for offences committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary."

As Our Lady spoke these words she opened her hands once more, as had during the two previous months. The rays of light seemed to penetrate the earth, and we saw as it were a sea of fire. Plunged in this fire were demons and souls in human form, like transparent burning embers, all blackened or burnished bronze, floating about in the conflagration, now raised into the air by the flames that issued from within themselves together with great clouds of smoke, now following back on every side like sparks in huge fires, without weight or equilibrium, amid shrieks and groans of pain and despair, which horrified us and made us tremble with fear. (it must have been this sight which caused me to cry out, as people say they heard me do). The demons could be distinguished by their terrifying and repellent likeness to frightful and unknown animals, black and transparent like burning coals. terrified and as if to plead for succor, we looked up at Our Lady, who said to us, so kindly and so sadly:

"You have seen hell, where the souls of poor sinners go. It is to save them that God wants to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart. If you do what I tell you, many souls will be saved, and there will be peace."

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This war will end, but if men do not refrain from offending God, another and more terrible war will begin during the pontificate of Pius XI. When you see a night that is lit by a strange and unknown light [this occurred on January 28, 1938], you will know it is the sign God gives you that He is about to punish the world with war and with hunger, and by the persecution of the Church and the Holy Father.”

“To prevent this, I shall come to the world to ask that Russia be consecrated to my Immaculate Heart, and I shall ask that on the First Saturday of every month Communions of reparation be made in atonement for the sins of the world. If my wishes are fulfilled, Russia will be converted and there will be peace; if not, then Russia will spread her errors throughout the world, bringing new wars and persecution of the Church; the good will be martyred and the Holy Father will have much to suffer; certain nations will be annihilated. But in the end my Immaculate Heart will triumph. The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to me, and she will be converted, and the world will enjoy a period of peace. In Portugal the faith will always be preserved...”

[Here belongs the part of the Secret of which Cardinal Sodano spoke at the Mass of Beatification, and which the Congregation for Doctrine of the Faith published with commentary.]

“Remember, you must not tell this to anyone except Francisco. When you pray the Rosary, say after each mystery: O my Jesus, forgive us, save us from the fire of hell. Lead all souls to heaven, especially those who are most in need.”

"Is there anything more that you want of me?"

“No, I do not want anything more of you today.”

Then as before Our Lady began to ascend towards the east, until she finally disappeared in the immense darkness of the firmament.

The possession of the Secret proved to be very great trial for the three young ones. Family, neighbors, followers of the apparitions, even the clergy, tried unsuccessfully to get them to reveal it. Finally, as the day of the August apparition approached even the civil government, which was secular and virulently anti-clerical, alarmed by the numbers of people taking an interest in the Fátima events, attempted to wrest it from them and in the process expose the Church as a collaborator in a fraud.

Under the pretext of providing his personal automobile, so that the children could travel safely through the crowds pressing around their homes, the civil Administrator or Mayor of the district in which Fátima was located, arrived in Aljustrel on the morning of August 13th. A previous attempt on August 11th to obtain the "truth" from the children having been unsuccessful, Artur Santos, an apostate Catholic and high Mason, had devised a scheme by which he would take them into custody and force them to reveal all.

With a show of good will he now offered to take the three and their parents to see the parish priest, whom he claimed wished to see them, and then to the Cova. At the parish house he abandoned this ruse, and the parents, taking the children alone from there to the district headquarters in Vila Nova de Ourem, some 9 miles away. Here he tried bribes, threats of death and locking them in a cell with other "criminals" in order to get them to recant their story. It was to no avail. Despite their ages, their belief in the Lady and their courage was unshakeable.

Meanwhile, in the Cova at noon on the 13th the characteristic external signs of the Apparition appeared for the benefit of the crowd, the greatest crowd to that time. After they ended the crowd dispersed, as yet unaware of the trickery of the government.

The "trial" of the children, however, continued for two days, to the consternation of their families. Finally, on the Feast of the Assumption, August 15, the Administrator had them driven back to Fátima and deposited on the steps of the rectory. Here they were seen as the people, who had just come from Mass, were trying to determine from Ti Marto where the children were. Their anger was poured out on the driver, and on the Mayor when he arrived a little later, both of whom were no doubt glad to be rid of their little charges and to escape unscathed. It would effectively be the only serious effort of the civil authorities to interfere with the Lady of Fátima.

As it was the Lady's plans were delayed slightly. On Sunday the 19th Lucia, her brother John, and Francisco, were grazing the sheep at a place known as Valinhos. It was located on the side of the same hillock opposite Aljustrel where the angel appeared twice, though a little farther north. At about 4 o'clock, sensing that Our Lady was about to appear, Lucia tried unsuccessfully to get John to fetch Jacinta, until she offered him a couple pennies for the errand. As she and Francisco waited they saw the characteristic light. The moment Jacinta arrived the Lady appeared.

What do you want of me?"

“Come again to the Cova da Iria on the thirteenth of next month, my child, and continue to say the Rosary every day. In the last month I will perform a miracle so that all may believe.”

What are we to do with the offerings of money that people leave at the Cova da Iria?"

“I want you to have two ardors [litters to carry statues] made, for the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. I want you and Jacinta to carry one of them with two other girls. You will both dress in white. And then I want Francisco, with three boys helping him, to carry the other one. The boys, too, will be dressed in white. What is left over will help towards the construction of a chapel that is to be built here.”

Lucia then asked for the cure of some sick people
“Some I will cure during the year. Pray, pray very much. Make sacrifices for sinners. Many souls go to hell, because no one is willing to help them with sacrifice.”

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Having said that she departed as she had on the other occasions.

Despite the ridicule and jokes of the secular, atheistic press, more than 30,000 people gathered in the Cova for the September apparition. Whether drawn by devotion or curiosity, they prayed the rosary while awaiting the arrival of the visionaries and their vision. When at least the time came they could hear Lucia say,

"What do you want of me?"

"Continue the Rosary, my children. Say it every day that the war may end. In October Our Lord will come, as well as Our Lady of Sorrows and Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. Saint Joseph will appear with the Child Jesus to bless the world."

"God is pleased with your sacrifices, but He does not want you to wear the cords to bed. Keep them on during the day."

"I have the petitions of many for your help. Will you assist a little girl who is deaf and dumb?"

"She will improve within the year."

"And the conversions that some have asked to have brought about? The cures of the sick ones?"

"Some I will cure, and some I will not. In October I will perform a miracle so that all may believe."

With these last words still ringing in their ears, the Lady rose and disappeared in the heavens, as Lucia called to the crowd, "If you wish to see her --- look! Look!"

During the night of 12-13 October it had rained throughout, soaking the ground and the pilgrims who make their way to Fátima from all directions by the thousands. By foot, by cart and even by car they came, entering the bowl of the Cova from the Fátima-Leiria road, which today still passes in front of the large square of the Basilica. From there they made their way down the gently slope to the place where a trestle had been erected over the little holm oak of the apparitions. Today on the site is the modern glass and steel Capelhina (little chapel), enclosing the first chapel built there and the statue of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fátima where the holm oak had stood.

As for the children, they made their way to the Cova amid the adulation and skepticism which had followed them since May. When they arrived they found critics who questioned their veracity and the punctuality of the Lady, who had promised to arrive at noon. It was well passed noon by the official time of the country. However, when the sun arrived at its zenith the Lady appeared as she had said she would.

"What do you want of me?"

"I want a chapel built here in my honor. I want you to continue saying the Rosary every day. The war will end soon, and the soldiers will return to their homes."

"Yes. Yes. Will you tell me your name?"

"I am the Lady of the Rosary."

"I have many petitions from many people. Will you grant them?"

Some I shall grant, and others I must deny. People must amend their lives and ask pardon for their sins. They must not offend our Lord any more, for He is already too much offended!

"And is that all you have to ask?"

"There is nothing more."

As the Lady of the Rosary rises toward the east she turns the palms of her hands toward the dark sky. While the rain had stopped, dark clouds continued to obscure the sun, which suddenly bursts through them and is seen to be a soft spinning disk of silver.

"Look at the sun!" From this point two distinct apparitions were seen, that of the phenomenon of the sun seen by the 70,000 or so spectators and that beheld by the children alone. Lucia describes the latter in her memoirs. After our Lady had disappeared into the immense distance of the firmament, we beheld St. Joseph with the Child Jesus and Our Lady robed in white with a blue mantle, beside the sun. St. Joseph and the Child Jesus seemed to bless the world, for they traced the Sign of the Cross with their hands. When, a little later, this apparition disappeared, I saw Our Lord and Our lady; it seemed to me to that it was Our Lady of Sorrows (Dolors). Our Lord appeared to bless the world in the same manner as St. Joseph had done. This apparition also vanished, and I saw Our Lady once more, this time resembling Our Lady of Carmel. [Only Lucia would see the later, presaging her entrance into Carmel some years later.] This would be the last of the apparitions of Fátima for Jacinta and Francisco. However, for Lucia Our Lady would return a seventh time, in 1920, as she had promised the previous May. At that time Lucia would be praying in the Cova before leaving Fátima for a girls boarding school. The Lady would come to urge her to dedicate herself wholly to God.

Politics, Factions and the Church

Ed Mechmann

At the time of the founding of our Republic, one of the great concerns was the danger that political factions would undermine the fragile unity of the new nation. This was so serious that the Founding Fathers specifically and repeatedly warned about the deleterious effects factions would have on the country. For example, George Washington, in his Farewell Address (a document that is amazingly prescient and relevant in our age) said:

The alternate domination of one faction over another, sharpened by the spirit of revenge, natural to party dissension, which in different ages and countries has perpetrated the most horrid enormities, is itself a frightful despotism. But this leads at length to a more formal and permanent despotism. The disorders and miseries which result gradually incline the minds of men to seek security and repose in the absolute power of an individual; and sooner or later the chief of some prevailing faction, more able or more fortunate than his competitors, turns this disposition to the purposes of his own elevation, on the ruins of public liberty. Likewise, James Madison in the Federalist Papers (No. 10) said this:

A zeal for different opinions concerning religion, concerning government, and many other points, as well of speculation as of practice; an attachment to different leaders ambitiously contending for pre-eminence and power; or to persons of other descriptions whose fortunes have been interesting to the human passions, have, in turn, divided mankind into parties, inflamed them with mutual animosity, and rendered them much more disposed to vex and oppress each other than to co-operate for their common good. So strong is this propensity of mankind to fall into mutual animosities, that where no substantial occasion presents itself, the most frivolous and fanciful distinctions have been sufficient to kindle their unfriendly passions and excite their most violent conflicts.

(Continued on next page)

There is no question that the spirit of faction is very widespread in our nation and that it is driving us further apart. The past election was a particularly bad season for this, and virtually everyone can tell about divisions in their families, uncomfortable or hostile conversations at dinner, being "un-friended" or seeing vitriol on Facebook, and so on. There is not just anecdotal evidence for this. A major study by the Pew Center last year documented the rise in partisanship and animosity over politics.

American politics is becoming almost tribal in nature. A person's political affiliation is becoming a dominant aspect of their identity and it increasingly shapes not just their views on public issues but their friendships, associations, etc. Party loyalty is becoming one of the highest values and group-think is becoming the acceptable standard. Politics is also invading more and more aspects of life. It's becoming increasingly common at sporting or entertainment events for some athlete or singer to inject their political views into the show. Facebook is becoming more about political rants than pictures of the kids and silly cat videos. Corporations whose purpose is to sell us stuff are now seeing it as their role to tell us how to think as well. People on both the left and the right are bemoaning the fact that we are facing the politicization of everything.

This is not news, but I raise it at this time for a reason. The President recently said that one of his major goals is to eliminate something called the "Johnson Amendment". That's a provision of the Internal Revenue Code that bans certain tax exempt organizations -- particularly churches -- from engaging in partisan politics. This has long been a goal of many Evangelical organizations and some Catholics as well. They want pastors to be able to openly endorse political candidates from the pulpit and to lend them material support through their churches.

I think this would be a disaster for the Church and for our society -- and for our souls. Politics has its place, and its place is not everywhere. A healthy society has many institutions and activities whose purpose is to bring people together, not to divide them or to "kindle their unfriendly passions". One of the most important of these places is in Church.

The purpose of Church is not to contemplate or promote temporary solutions to worldly problems. The purpose of Church is to worship God, the Creator and King of the Universe. It is a time to separate ourselves from the Kingdom of Man and immerse ourselves in the Kingdom of God, which is our true homeland. It is a time to renew our communion with Our Lord Jesus Christ and with His Mystical Body -- with our fellow sinners of all political views. It is the place where we recall our solidarity with the Communion of Saints around the world, those who have preceded us and those who will follow us. We are called to lift our hearts and minds to God, to listen to His Word, and, if we are worthy, to receive His Body and Blood. In Church, nothing should distract us from trying to come closer to God in our hearts, minds and souls. Nothing.

Factions, parties, and partisanship -- whatever term we use for it -- have no place in the Church. They divide us in the most important place where we must stand united. St. Paul went so far as to call "party spirit" a work of the flesh, and compare it to many very wicked sins that exclude people from the Kingdom of God (Gal 5:19-21). We certainly need more guidance from our Church about the principles and demands of our faith, and how we can apply that to the issues of our day. But we cannot allow partisan politics to turn us against each other -- or against the Church -- and divert us from our real role in the world. In the famous Letter to Diognetus written way back in the second century, this was how the Christians were described:

... there is something extraordinary about their lives. They live in their own countries as though they were only passing through. They play their full role as citizens, but labor under all the disabilities of aliens. Any country can be their homeland, but for them their homeland, wherever it may be, is a foreign country... They pass their days upon earth, but they are citizens of heaven. Obedient to the laws, they yet live on a level that transcends the law... To speak in general terms, we may say that the Christian is to the world what the soul is to the body. As the soul is present in every part of the body, while remaining distinct from it, so Christians are found in all the cities of the world, but cannot be identified with the world... Such is the Christian's lofty and divinely appointed function, from which he is not permitted to excuse himself.

That is indeed a lofty function, one that we cannot allow to be diluted by politics or factions.

(Ed Mechmann is the Director of Public Policy for the Arch Diocese of New York and is a Fourth Degree Knight.)

A Blessed and very happy birthday to the following council members who will be celebrating their birthdays in the months of May, June and July:

5/1	John G. Flannery	5/1	William J. Pushman
5/2	Rev. Bladi Socualaya	5/3	Roberto O. Criollo
5/3	Jude. T. Martini	5/6	Christopher J. Wing
5/12	Joseph F. Panoski	5/14	Jorge L. Sardina
5/16	Francisco R. Miranda	5/17	Ediberto Soto
5/19	Charles J. Alexander	5/20	Stephen J. Gaba
5/26	Kevin S. Petrarca	5/30	Thomas Shustack
5/30	Rev. Fernando A. Hernandez		
5/31	Christian J. Vondras		
6/1	Salvatore J. Aulogia	6/1	Thomas DeBenedictus
6/5	Andrew R. Civale	6/6	Kevin J. Jones
6/7	Eric R. Meah	6/12	Samuel A. Sodano
6/14	Charles F. Koran	6/15	Rev. William Scafidi
6/16	Harry G. Birch	6/19	Gregory T. Gaetano
6/26	Robert J. Specht	6/26	Clarence J. Starsiak
6/29	Most Rev. Charles D. Balvo		
6/30	William J. Rogers		
7/1	Thomas J. Amodeo	7/1	Bro. Luke Wittmann
7/2	Salvatore Accolla	7/3	Dale Rodriguez
7/6	Charles O. Aregbesola	7/11	Charles Piper Jr.
7/12	Timothy J. Brink	7/14	Anthony T. D'Angelo
7/14	Richard P. Kelly	7/14	I. Scott Watkins
7/15	John A. Grimm	7/17	Steven Giammattei
7/20	Dr. Parry A. Peet	7/21	Jerome L. Wyant
7/24	Edward J. West	7/25	Vincent G. Calosso
7/25	Terry L. Shepardson	7/29	E. Bryce Lee
7/30	Deacon William W. Castellane		
7/31	James S. Hutlock		

(Our thanks to Tony Cracolici for providing this information)

Lift High the Cross

**Knights of Columbus Council #444
Sears Auto & Saturday Night Cruisers**

**7th Annual Msgr. Henry O'Carroll
Memorial Car Show**

Newburgh Mall - Sears Parking Lot

**1401 Union Ave, Route 300
Newburgh, N.Y.**

**Sunday: June 25, 2017 - 10 A.M. - 3 P.M.
(Rain Date - July 2)**

**We need your help to make this a success
To volunteer, please call:
PGK Ken Ryan 845-565-8015
Charles Smith 845-561-8647
PGK Dan Keenan 845-562-9353**

Calendar of Council Meetings

- 02 May: Regular Council meeting at 8 P.M.
- 09 May: Fourth Degree meeting at 8 P.M.
- 16 May: Social Meeting at 8 P.M.
- 23 May: Officers' meeting at 8 P.M.
- 30 May: Corporation Meeting at 8 P.M.
- 06 Jun: Regular Council meeting at 8 P.M.
- 13 Jun: Fourth Degree meeting at 8 P.M.
- 20 Jun: Social meeting at 8 P.M.
- 27 Jun: Officer's meeting at 8 P.M.
- 03 Jul: Regular Council meeting at 8 P.M.
- 10 Jul: Fourth Degree meeting at 8 P.M.
- 17 Jul: Social meeting at 8 P.M.
- 24 Jul: Officer's meeting at 8 P.M.
- 01 Aug: Regular Council meeting at 8 P.M.
- 08 Aug: Fourth Degree meeting at 8 P.M.
- 15 Aug: Social meeting at 8 P.M.
- 22 Aug: Officers' meeting at 8 P.M.
- 29 May: Corporation meeting at 8 P.M.

Note: The Rosary will be said before every regular and social meeting at 7:30 PM

Knights of Columbus Charity Ball

Saturday, June 24, 2017

St. Mary's Council

339 Route 82, Hopewell Junction, N.Y.

6 P.M. - 10 P.M.

\$40 PP

Contact GK Joe Coyle at 845-561-7384

Cancer Relay for Life

June 3 at Cronomer Hill Park, Town of Newburgh
Fun, Family Orientated Activities Starting at 12
Lumenaria Ceremony at Dusk
Mass at 11 PM .Celebrated by Fr. Bill Damroth

We Need Help at 8 PM to Set Up for Mass.
Please Contact PGK Ken Ryan 845-565-8015

St. Mary's Outreach

Volunteers are needed the third Thursday and Friday of every month from 8 A.M. To 1 P.M. Thursdays are set up days and Fridays are the "giving" days. Report to Mannix Hall (The old St. Mary's School next to St. Mary's parking lot.)

St. Francis of Assisi Church Outreach

Need volunteers on Friday and Saturday mornings from 9 A.M. to Noon. Report to 145 Benkard Ave, Newburgh.
If you can help or have questions, please call Linda or Paul at 845-234-8564..

Help Collect Box Tops for Education

We are asking all fellow Knights to help collect "box tops for education". Just look for the symbol below on almost any dry good that you get from the store, clip it, and bring it in to the Council. We are supporting the Academy with donations. For information Scott at 564-



Nora Cronin
these
additional
contact PGK
0339.