



**FROM THE HELM OF:
THE FAITHFUL
NAVIGATOR
S.K. Tony Arrinelli**



My Worthy Brother Sir Knights,

As men of faith, we know that “He is the reason for the season”. I invite you to read this at your Christmas dinner table. If you have young children present, you might ask them to read it for your family and guests. Wishing you all a very merry Christmas.

1 And it came to pass, that in those days there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that the whole world should be enrolled. 2 This enrolling was first made by Cyrinus, the governor of Syria. 3 And all went to be enrolled, everyone into his own city. 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem: because he was of the house and family of David, 5 To be enrolled with Mary his espoused wife, who was with child.

6 And it came to pass, that when they were there, her days were accomplished, that she should be delivered. 7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him up in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. 8 And there were in the same country shepherds watching and keeping the night watches over their flock. 9 And behold an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God shone round about them; and they feared with a great fear. 10 And the angel said to them:

Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people: 11 For, this day, is born to you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. 12 And this shall be a sign unto you. You shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger.

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God, and saying:

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**From the Desk of the
The Worthy Captain**



As we approach the joyous season of Christmas and reflect on the first half of our Fraternal year, I want to take a moment to extend my heartfelt gratitude to each and every member of our Knights of Columbus council. Your dedication, generosity, and unwavering commitment to our shared principles of charity, unity, and fraternity have made a meaningful difference in our parish and community.

Throughout the past months, your collective efforts have brought about positive change—whether it was through organizing events, supporting charitable causes, or offering a helping hand wherever it was needed. Your service has not gone unnoticed, and it is through your hard work that we continue to embody the true spirit of the Knights of Columbus.

As we celebrate the birth of Christ, I wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas filled with peace, joy, and love. May this season be a time of rest, reflection, and renewal for all of us.

Looking ahead to the second half of the Fraternal year, I encourage each of you to carry forward the momentum we have built together. There are many opportunities for us to further our mission and serve others, and I am confident that, united in purpose, we will achieve even greater things. Let us recommit ourselves to our values and continue to work hard—side by side—for the good of our council, community, and the Order.

Thank you once again for all that you do. Merry Christmas and best wishes for a happy, healthy, and successful New Year!

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14 *Glory to God in the highest; and on earth
peace to men of good will.*

15 And it came to pass, after the angels departed from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another: Let us go over to Bethlehem and let us see this word that is come to pass, which the Lord hath shewed to us.

16 And they came with haste; and they found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. 17 And seeing, they understood of the word that had been spoken to them concerning this child. 18 And all that heard, wondered; and at those things that were told them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart. 20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God, for all the things they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

Luke 2:1-20, Douay-Rheims



Wreaths Across America is committed to teaching all generations about the value of their freedoms, and the importance of honoring those who sacrificed so much to protect those freedoms. In 2022, the organization launched its expanded TEACH program and collaboration with like-minded organizations focused on character development and service projects for young people of all ages, with lesson plans for all grade levels and learning abilities.

Wreaths Across America would not be successful without the help of volunteers, active organizations and the generosity of the trucking industry, which offer invaluable support to WAA's mission to remember the men and women who served our country, honor our military and their families, and teach our children about our freedom and those who protect it.



This year, as many past years our 4th Degree Assembly met on Saturday, December 14th to place wreaths at the graves of our fallen military brothers at the Gwinnett Memorial Park and Eastlawn Cemeteries. Assisting the assembly were:

Carey Scruggs - 13440
Alan Larkins - 13052
Mark Winsor - 13052
Charlie Busch - 13052
Tony Annarelli - 13052

Rob Barnard - 13440
Jimmy Koroma - 13052
Steve Jahns - 13052 Tom
Seabrook - 1305
Jose Martinez - 13052



Pastor's Corner **Fr. Henry, Pastor** **St. Lawrence Church**

On the Fourth Sunday of Advent, we have cause for great joy. Our hope intensifies as we draw nearer to the celebration of the birthday of Jesus Christ. This celebration truly offers us hope and peace in such turbulent times for despite the many ways God could have communicated himself to us, he chose to become one of us; to share in our human nature. In the gift of the

Emmanuel (God-with-us), God makes a permanent home for us in His heart. It doesn't get any better than that. Let's not forget to count our immeasurable blessings every day.

For those who will travel during holidays, we wish you a very safe trip and a pleasant time with family and friends. For those who will stay in the Lawrenceville area, we invite you to join us to celebrate the birth of Christ. Our staff too will be taking some time off during the holidays to spend with their families. As such, the parish office will be working limited hours. Please, check the bulletin and website (www.saintlaw.org) for office hours, Mass times

during the Christmas holyday and holidays and for more information on the different events happening in the parish.

On behalf of the clergy and staff, I wish you all a very **MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR 2026**. I pray that the Lord will keep you safe throughout the holiday period and may He lead each of us safely into the new year. Be sure to share our regards and sentiments of hope and joy with your friends and families.

God bless you and please stay safe!

Fr. Henry

Listening with Humility

By St. Oliver Deacon and Brother Mike Chavez



I want to begin this reflection by admitting that I need to work on listening with humility, just as I'm sure some of you do as well.

Recently, I attended a retreat at the Monastery of the Holy Spirit, and this was the topic of the retreat. What follows is a blend of what I learned there, along with my own interpretation and personal reflections after days of prayer.

So, what is listening with humility?

It's an important question, one that requires time in silent prayer. Humility isn't sinlessness, modesty, or blind obedience. Take King David, for example: he was a murderer, an adulterer, and a king who conquered many lands. Yet, he was observant and listened to the Lord with humility and obedience. David also repented for his sins against the Lord, and the Lord forgave his sins, just as He forgives us when we come to Him in humility to confess our sins.



We, my brothers in Christ, need to listen more than we talk. This includes listening to someone we may disagree with, without planning a comeback before they finish speaking.

Here's an exercise to consider: Pair two individuals who hold opposite views on a topic (let's avoid politics—it could get messy). Choose something lighter, like who the best college football coach is. Each person gives a short explanation of why their chosen coach is the best. Then, the other person must relay those reasons back to the group with the same passion and spirit of delivery. Not that you must agree with the points of view, but you must reflect the spirit of the delivery. I suspect most of us would struggle to do this well. Why? Because we often block out points of view we disagree with, even when we are face-to-face with the person sharing them.

Listening with humility begins by removing the barriers we already have in our minds about a subject or opinion. It's also about listening to what is not said. Reading someone's body

language is part of listening, and sometimes a challenge for us, even with our wives. It's often the words not said that carry the most weight.

We are all created in the image and likeness of God, and in our own unique ways, reflect His love in what we say and do. Yet do we truly see Him in others? It can be a challenging and humbling experience to see His presence in individuals we disagree with. Humility is not blindness, its openness and having the grace to listen with open ears and hearts to everyone we encounter.



Jesus is the greatest example of humility we have. He listened to all His Father told Him—obedient for sure, but humble in His example to all that He was asked to do to save a wretched people. He humbled Himself to save us

all. For me this is modeled in the washing of His disciples' feet at the Last Supper, and He finishes by saying, "I have given you a model to follow... no slave is greater than his master..." (Jn 13-15,16).

I challenge you to read Philippians chapter 2: ***The Plea for Unity and Humility***. A favorite verse of mine from chapter 2 is, "*Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourself.*" (Phil 2:3)

As we begin the Christmas season and a new year, let us challenge ourselves to listen with humility, and to open our minds and hearts to those we encounter along the way. Let us also see past the façade of the person standing in front of us and open our hearts to encounter Christ who dwells in them. Through this lens, we will see life and love in the people we meet, opening our own hearts to a life in the Spirit that will guide us to reconciliation and peace.

May the love of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all and our families today and always.



A Season of Faith, Hope, and Charity

Christmas is almost here, and it's a time that brings joy and warmth to our hearts.

For many children, the holiday is all about Santa Claus, Christmas trees, and gifts. But there's a deeper meaning to this special time of year. I found a wonderful movie, *The Nativity Story*, that beautifully tells the true meaning of Christmas—the birth of Christ. Over the years, I've had my grandchildren watch it. Whether it resonated and stayed with them or not, I can't say for sure. But I hope that as they grow older, they'll remember it and share it with their own children.

While we love to show our affection for our loved ones with thoughtful gifts, starting the day by attending Mass together

before opening presents and enjoying our family dinner traditions can remind us all of the true meaning of the season.

As we gather to celebrate the birth of Christ, let's reflect on the true meaning of Christmas—a time of renewed faith, restored hope, and shared charity. The Knights of Columbus Council 13440 has always been a beacon of service and fraternity, and this season reminds us why we joined the Knights in the first place—to live out these virtues in our daily lives.

Christmas is not only a celebration of God's greatest gift to humanity but also an invitation for us to give generously of ourselves. Whether it's supporting parish activities, helping families in need, or simply showing kindness to those around us, every act of charity reflects the love of Christ.

Let's also remember the importance of unity. In a world that often feels divided, our brotherhood stands as a testament to what can be achieved when faith guides our actions. May this Christmas inspire us to strengthen our bonds, deepen our spiritual lives, and continue our mission of service.

So put down the cell phones, shut off the T.V., put away the tablets and meditate on the gift of our Savior to the world.



From all of us in the Knights of Columbus, we wish you and your loved ones a blessed Christmas and a joyful New Year.

May peace and goodwill fill your hearts today and always.

(Summarized From [Christian Themes in Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol'](#))



Charles Dickens' **A Christmas Carol** is deeply intertwined with religion, using Christian themes like redemption, charity, and judgment to tell a moral story about Scrooge's transformation. While the story isn't a dogmatic religious text, it was written for a Victorian audience familiar with Christian teachings, and it incorporates elements like purgatory (Marley's ghost), a fear of damnation, and the celebration of Christmas as a Christian holy day. The ghosts, particularly the Trinity of Christmas Past, Present, and Yet to Come, are interpreted as religious allegories.

The novella begins with the introduction of Ebenezer Scrooge, a miserly old man who has lost touch with the spirit of Christmas and the values of compassion and generosity. His encounter with the ghost of his former business partner, Jacob Marley, sets the stage for his transformation. Marley's ghost, bound in chains, represents the consequences of a life devoid of charity and kindness. This image of purgatory serves as a warning to Scrooge, urging him to change his ways before it's too late.



As Scrooge is visited by the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Yet to Come, he is given a chance to reflect on his life and the impact of his actions on others. The Ghost of Christmas Past takes him on a journey through his own memories, highlighting moments of lost innocence and opportunities for happiness that he squandered. This ghost symbolizes the importance of self-reflection and the need to reconcile with one's past.

The Ghost of Christmas Present introduces Scrooge to the joys and hardships of those around him, emphasizing the values of empathy and generosity. Through this ghost, Scrooge witnesses the Cratchit family's humble but joyful Christmas celebration, despite their poverty. The character of Tiny Tim, with his unwavering faith and optimism, serves as a poignant reminder of the power of love and the importance of caring for the less fortunate.

Finally, the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come presents Scrooge with a grim vision of his own death and the legacy of indifference he will leave behind if he does not change. This ghost embodies the concept of judgment and the fear of damnation, compelling Scrooge to confront the consequences of his actions and the urgency of redemption.

In the end, Scrooge's transformation is a testament to the power of redemption and the possibility of change. By embracing the values of charity, compassion, and community, he is able to find salvation and a renewed sense of purpose. The celebration of Christmas as a Christian holy day underscores the novella's message of hope and renewal, reminding readers of the enduring significance of these themes.

"A Christmas Carol" remains a timeless story that resonates with readers of all backgrounds, offering a powerful reminder of the importance of kindness, generosity, and the potential for personal transformation. Through its rich religious allegories and moral lessons, Dickens' novella continues to inspire and uplift, making it a cherished classic for generations to come.

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Goal for 2026: Introduce Someone to the Truths of the Catholic Church

It's a lofty goal, for sure. But in 2026 ask God to help you introduce someone to the teachings of the Catholic Church. We'll even give you the tools to do it (more on that below)

The challenge to you: *How can I join or help someone join the Catholic Church?*

If you or someone you know is interested in becoming Catholic, you or he should seek out a nearby Catholic parish and inquire about its OCIA program. OCIA stands for the Order of Christian Initiation for Adults and has always been present, in some form, since the beginning of the Church. Acts 8:26-40 describes how the apostle Philip taught a servant of the Ethiopian queen about Jesus before he baptized him. In the second century, Justin Martyr described the process of being received into the Church this way:

As many as are persuaded and believe that what we teach and say is true, and undertake to be able to live accordingly, are instructed to pray and to entreat God with fasting, for the remission of their sins that are past, we praying and fasting with them. Then they are brought by us where there is water and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated.

In the twentieth century, the Second Vatican Council ushered in a period of renewal and standardization for the process of receiving converts into the Church. These prospective converts are called catechumens, which means "ones being instructed." They receive catechesis, or the "teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life" (CCC 5). In the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the council decreed the following:

The catechumenate for adults, comprising several distinct

steps, is to be restored and to be taken into use at the discretion of the local ordinary. By this means the time of the catechumenate, which is intended as a period of suitable instruction, may be sanctified by sacred rites to be celebrated at successive intervals of time (64).

In 1972, the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship fulfilled this exhortation and released a new rite for Christian initiation that is now known as RCIA. In 2021 The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops changed that to the OCIA. The rite is meant for adults, as well as children who have attained the age of reason, who seek to be full members of Christ's Church. OCIA is not mandatory; priests can determine if an alternative kind of formation would be more beneficial for a catechumen. Those who are encouraged to enter OCIA, however, will normally follow this process:

Evangelization and Pre-Catechumenate

Also known as the period of inquiry, this time allows prospective converts to learn about the Catholic faith and hear the good news of the gospel.

The Order of Catechumens

An inquirer who wishes to become Catholic enters the order of catechumens. In order to do this, he is required to select a sponsor, who will guide him through the process of becoming Catholic and be present when he receives the sacraments of initiation. After selecting a sponsor, the catechumen is welcomed into the community at Mass through the rite of acceptance or the rite of welcoming, depending on whether he has already been baptized. During this rite, the candidate stands before the assembly and states his desire both to be instructed in the Faith and to receive "a fuller sharing in the life of the Church." By formally and publicly expressing their desire to become Catholic, catechumens are joined to the Body of Christ's faithful, even if not yet in a complete way. This is evident in the fact that catechumens have a right to Christian burial even if they die before baptism (CIC 1183).

Catechesis and Purification

During this stage of the conversion process, the candidate is formally taught the doctrines of the Faith and instructed in how to live a holy, Christian life. This period culminates in the rite of election, in which the Church formally ratifies a candidate's desire to become Catholic. After this rite, the candidate engages in prayer and rites at Lenten Masses called "scrutinies" that prepare him for the reception of the sacraments.

The Sacraments of Initiation

The OCIA process reaches its climax at the Easter Vigil, during which non-Christian catechumens receive baptism, confirmation, and first Eucharist, and catechumens from other Christian denominations with valid baptisms receive confirmation and first Eucharist. It is a joyous occasion that celebrates how God has brought his children into full communion with Christ's "one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church."



Comical Closures

Judge: "What are you charged with?"

Prisoner: "Doing my Christmas shopping early."

Judge: "That's not an offense. How early were you doing this shopping?"

Prisoner: "Before the store opened."

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A Sign of the Times

A little girl climbed onto Santa's lap, Santa asked the usual, "And what would you like for Christmas?"

The Child stared at him open mouthed and horrifies for a minute, then gasped: "Didn't you get my E-mail?"

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The Virgin Birth

A woman takes her 16-year-old daughter to the doctor. The doctor says, "Okay, Mrs. Jones, what's the problem?" The mother says, "It's my daughter Darla. She keeps getting these cravings, she's putting on weight and is sick most mornings."

The doctor gives Darla a good examination then turns to the mother and says, "Well, I don't know how to tell you this, but your Darla is pregnant. About 4 months would be my guess."

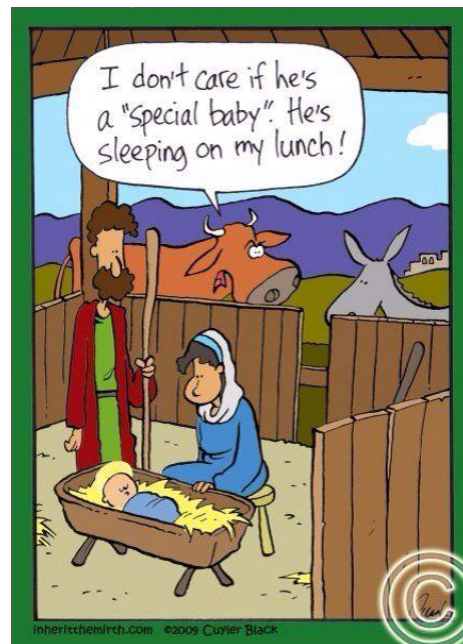
The mother says, "Pregnant?! She can't be, she has never ever been left alone with a man! Have you Darla?"

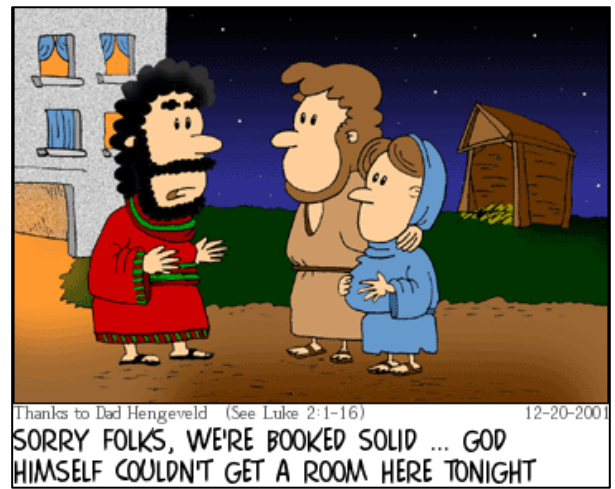
Darla says, "No mother! I've never even kissed a man!"

The doctor walked over to the window and just stares out it. About five minutes pass and finally the mother says, "Is there something wrong out there doctor?"

The doctor replies, "No, not really, it's just that the last time anything like this happened, a star appeared in the east, and three wise men came over the hill. I'll be damned if I'm going to miss it this time!"

SEVERAL PAGES OF PERTINENT CARTOONS FOLLOW





12-23-1997
I WAS SO EXCITED ABOUT THE BABY JESUS THAT I STARTED CLUCKING LIKE A FIEND ... AND THEN AN ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED BEFORE ME AND SAID UNTO ME ... "SHUT UP"



**From The Officers Of St. Michael The Archangel Assembly 3410
To All The Brothers
and Families Of Our Assembly**

May the joy of the Nativity fill your hearts with gladness and may the peace of Christ be with you and your loved ones throughout this holy season and into the New Year.

Let us continue to support one another in faith and fellowship, united in our mission to serve God and our communities.

Wishing you all a blessed and Merry Christmas!

