

It's a guy thing

Friday 2 April 2010 – at home in Old Dighton Village – Good Friday

Most guys want to keep busy. They crave action. They need to roll up their sleeves and get down to business. Guys say, “Don’t just stand there yakking, get to work.” Now, notice, please, that there are men in our worshipping assemblies.

I have found that an excellent vehicle for activating men is the parish is the world’s largest lay organization, the Knights of Columbus. Pastors, need something done? Call the Knights.

Our own parish-based council of the Knights of Columbus was chartered by world headquarters in New Haven, Connecticut, in December of 2009. St. Nicholas Knights of Columbus Council came into existence on Christmas Day. It is only fitting. Ho, ho, ho.

Since then, the men have been busy recruiting, organizing, and identifying what needs to be done. They are off to a good start, these men called Knights. Massachusetts State headquarters of the K of C were very helpful to the men.

Manny Ferreira was assigned to work closely with us as our D.D. (no, not Doctor of Divinity but rather District Deputy.) **Paul O’Sullivan**, who is in charge of new council development statewide, made frequent trips to the Town of Dighton. **Paul Langford** was assigned as our Insurance Agent and has been busy meeting with men individually (including yours truly.) Present “High Exulted Grand Puba,” **Bill Donovan** himself, was here twice and attended our major initiation ceremony, held at St. Margaret’s School in Buzzards Bay. Past State Deputies **Jim Sawyer** and **Vinnie Rumasuglia** visited here as well. These are the big guns. With help like this, organizing a new council is a piece of cake.

I heartily recommend that my brother priests who do not yet have a parish-based Knights of Columbus Council consider the possibility. All you have to do is tell the Knights what to do and where to go (in a good sense.)

This business of merging parishes can be very stressful on a parish priest. Sometimes, you don't know where to turn. I lived for two years in a rectory that was a step away from becoming a condemned building. When I just couldn't take it anymore, I turned to the Knights. I told the men I needed to move into my other rectory. The men rallied to the cause.

One Knight worked evenings and Saturdays to get the place in shape. He and his cousin painted every wall on both floors of my new (1927) place. They used white paint throughout so it would be brighter and more cost-effective by using the same color. Nothing was wasted. The men saved the parish hundreds of dollars.

Then the Knights helped me move. One night, following a Council business meeting, a caravan of vehicles wended its way down Route 138. It looked like a presidential motorcade. Now I live in an adequate rectory. What a gift!

Then I asked the Knights to help me prepare for sale two of the six buildings owned by the parish. The men were there in a heartbeat. One Saturday morning, all the accumulated junk went into a dumpster. Whatever was recyclable was set aside. I was amazed at how quickly the work was accomplished. Thanks to the Knights, with the help of a few good women, the place was tidied up for showing by a real estate agent. The buildings will bring a much better price on the market and the parish will benefit.

Then I asked the Knights to help provide some seed money for our parish's new community outreach initiative. The opportunity to create such a department had come up unexpectedly. It had not been foreseen in the budget. The Knights stepped up to the plate yet again. They decided to organize a "February Craft Fair," under the leadership of **Pete Foley**. The guys first admitted they were clueless in the matter of arts and crafts. They wisely decided to seek the assistance of the Women's Guild. **Jill Gurney**, who holds a black belt in craft fairs, came to their assistance. It's inspiring for a pastor to see parish organizations cooperating among themselves.

When all was said and done, the event exceeded expectations. The men cut a check to the parish outreach effort. This is what happens when men of faith know what needs to be done. They do it.

Two men, both local Jehovah Witnesses, were just at my door. Jehovah Witnesses pop up every year with the daffodils. “Do you know why Jesus died?” they asked. Duhh. The men had no idea that this was a rectory. We have a sign, but I haven’t yet gotten around to hanging it. “We’re impressed. We can see, sir, that you know your bible,” the Witnesses observed. I certainly hope so.

Jehovah Witnesses embrace a mission. Then they get out there and pound the tar. Heads up, you guys over at Kingdom Hall. Here come the Knights of Columbus.