

Delegate Report on the 134th Supreme Convention

I was truly honoured to represent the Diocese of Hamilton as the representative for the North and South Zones at the 134th Supreme Convention held in Toronto, from Sunday, July 31st to Thursday, Aug. 4th. I was one of ten delegates to represent Ontario.

Our State Deputy, Alain Cayer, ensured that all delegates were properly prepared and briefed prior to and during the convention held in Toronto at the Sheraton Centre. All delegates attended a caucus meeting following the States dinner in preparation for the resolutions portion of the business sessions.

The event began with both the Ontario State Council Registration and the Supreme Convention, credentialed, delegate Registration Unity and Fraternity were widely demonstrated and shared throughout the convention with a special blitz meet 'n greet held in various suites throughout the hotel. Many knights took the opportunity to make new acquaintances and exchange souvenir pins.

We had the opportunity to partake in a magnificent, concelebrated mass each day. A "small" group of clergy would comprise a selection of a dozen or more cardinals, scores of bishops and priests. The largest mass, held on the Tuesday, enjoyed the participation of dozens of cardinals, upwards of 100 bishops and even more priests from many countries. We were inspired by not only the messages during the sermons but the beautiful singing of the choir of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception and selected symphony musicians from both the US and Canada. Our Fourth Degree Brother Knights formed an Honour Guard for each major event and mass.

The mosaics projected on the sanctuary screens and found within the program were taken from the St. John Paul II National Shrine's Redemptor Hominis Church and the Knights of Columbus Supreme Council Headquarters' Holy Family Chapel.

Recognition and Awards:

The Order continues to be challenged by efforts to build and sustain our ranks with qualified Catholic gentlemen as much as it is with active Knights. The convention did offer a backdrop to recognizing outstanding efforts made by individual knights, councils, round tables and states. Top achievers in the various activity areas of focus were also duly recognized.

I will share with you a few highlights that I hope you will find inspiring.

Recruiting is an ongoing call to action. I attended a membership seminar on the Monday of the convention where success stories and new support and training programs were shared with attendees. You will more of that from your District Deputies.

While many councils face various and perhaps common stumbling blocks, We do have shining lights. Think about the size of your council and area as you hear the top 10 recruiters for the 2015-16 fraternal year. They act as beacons of hope and example of what can be done:

In reverse order of ranking:

George A Sonnen: 79 members (Minnesota)
Norlo A. Gonzales: 83 members (Visayas, Phillipines)
Dennis F.S. Obcena: 88 members (Mindanao)
Arthuro T. Borneo: 88 members (Mindanao)
Jorge Ricardon Sevilla-Gonzales: 100 members (Mexico West)
Antonio S. Bunda: 143 members (Visayas)
Walter N Streit: 160 members (Alberta)
Felixberto CS Jampit: 182 members (Mindanao)
Jose Noel T. Alcubilla: 196 members (Visayas)
Danilo Leonor Martinez: 665 members (Visayas)

Now, if you think that these numbers are just aberrations, please note that in the Order:

373 members have each recruited 100 members
67 have each recruited 200 members
24 have each recruited 300 members
8 have each recruited 400 members
9 have each recruited 500 or more members

This past year, some 2,847 councils earned the Fr. McGivney Award for attaining recruitment and retention quotas. Be one of them this coming year.

While you are at it, support your field agents and the dream of Fr. McGivney and earn the Founder's Award, like 2,824 councils did this past year. This award recognizes excellence in insurance promotion and reaching insurance quotas. There are almost 600,000 brother knights (578,968) who are insurance members and collectively hold over 2 million certificates in the areas of life insurance, annuities and long term care.

Service awards recognize outstanding council programs in six key areas of outreach: Church, community, council, family, culture of life and youth. Each program category provides councils with the opportunity to demonstrate and exemplify charity. Done well, they serve as inspiration and provide a sense of purpose to councils and more importantly, Knights and their families.

I encourage all of you to engage your brother knights in these activities. Doing this gives you the opportunity to be recognized by the Order as recipients of the Columbian Award (minimum 4 service program activities in each category or one featured program in each category). This past fraternal year, 5,425 councils earned this award.

Go that extra step and join the ranks of Star Council Award, who numbered 2,147 councils this past fraternal year.

The "To Be a Patriot" Award recognizes the three best patriotic programs conducted by the Fourth Degree Assemblies each fraternal year. One winner took on a project entitled; Support and Promote the Special Olympics Movement which was comprised of 5 separate Special Olympics Events. The assembly built awareness of the Special Olympics movement and honoured Special Olympics by organizing and participating in these events. I am sure you will join with me in recognizing Pope John Paul II Assembly 3176 from Burlington for their internationally recognized project.

The Fourth Degree completes the cross of the virtues of the Knights of Columbus. It is part of, not apart from the Third Degree. You will hear a little more about that later from our area membership chair. We have 353,334 members of the Fourth Degree. They typically are also very active in the Order at all levels. Statistics demonstrate that knights who join the Fourth Degree are more likely to remain in the Order. That's good news for everyone.

Fourth Degree Pro Deo and Pro Patria (Canada) Scholarships are another foundation block of our collective service offering. Forty scholarships at \$1500 each were awarded this past year in Canada. A total of 373 students have received assistance from this program towards their college or university studies.

We voted on 100s of resolutions in a very efficiently run, tight yet enthusiastic business session. The organization of this business session shows how well things work when people follow protocol, stick to the points at hand and are organized and thoughtful in bringing tested ideas and recommendations to the Order. Most were approved. I will report on just a very few that were rejected and would be of broad interest.

The resolution to replace consecutive years of service before attaining life status (and no longer paying regular dues) with one where a brother knight can accumulate 25 years, with some breaks due to leaving and then returning to the Order was rejected. This includes members reaching the age of 65, applying for honorary membership, those reaching age 70 and applying for honorary life members.

The resolution to permit councils to remit monies electronically via major Canadian and US banks was also rejected. I was asked by our State Deputy to draft a more compelling resolution for resubmission that better reflects today's realities.

The resolution on putting the check box back on Form 11 to indicate a member's right to leave the order by obtaining a voluntary withdrawal card, provided he is current with all dues was rejected.

The Supreme Convention isn't all about the Order worldwide. A Canadian Association Meeting was held on the Monday of the convention focused on Canadian issues. It was attended by Carl Anderson, Supreme Knight, Cardinal Collins from Toronto and other dignitaries.

Here are a few highlights.

Some councils have taken on Catholic Missions in Canada as a pet project. You may wonder at how efficient some charities are. You may be asked about the efficiency of some charities. Consider that out of every \$1 donated to this charity, \$0.94 go to the actual causes leaving \$0.06 to cover administration.

Some \$74,300 has gone to Ft McMurray Relief plus \$3K from churches with another \$52,000 to come from fundraising efforts.

The Canadian delegates voted to support a documentary entitled; Vulnerable: the Euthanasia Deception, being produced by DunnMedia. Canada will provide \$10,000 and Supreme will pledge \$30,000 towards production. It will be seen amongst other venues, on Salt and Light TV.

All in all, the Supreme Convention offers a visual, sensory and emotionally charged opportunity to gather with brother knights to celebrate past accomplishments, share ideas and join in fraternity, united as one as we plan for the future of our Order. I appreciate your support.

Peter A. Wouters, PGK, FDD, PFN
Hamilton Diocese South Zone Chair