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Knights of Columbus
Fourth Degree
Fr. Louis Hennepin Province



January 2021

Dear Sir Knights and Ladies,

Happy New Year! 2021 has got to be better.

2020 was one heck of a year! When someone mentions the year 2020, the first thing that will come to everyone's mind will be the COVID-19 pandemic and not the Detroit sports teams. Unfortunately, some of us lost family members or close friends to this virus. We have resorted to wearing masks everywhere we go, social distancing instead of shaking hands or hugging, and virtual meetings and socializing with friends through Zoom. Life as we have known it has changed for the foreseeable future. These are the sad things we will recall, call me crazy, but I choose to think about the positive things that have resulted from this pandemic. You ask what good can come from this pandemic? Well, how about the people we have really gotten to know through more casual conversation, or taking care of ourselves through more exercise (most likely due to encouragement from our spouse), or maybe having the time to do the things we once thought about doing but didn't have the time. Sometimes problems bear fruit in opportunities; it's all based on how you look at things.

Let's discuss the **opportunity** it brought to membership growth for our Province. The last half of 2019, as a Province, we brought in 207 new members through in-person exemplifications. During the last half of 2020, we brought in 373 new members through virtual exemplifications. That is an 80% increase in membership for the same period AND during a pandemic. Why? Because we have found we can schedule more exemplifications with less effort, improve our flexibility as a District to better accommodate our candidate's schedules, and reduce the cost to the candidate in becoming a 4th Degree member. The candidate can now attend an exemplification being held elsewhere within the United States based on a virtual exemplification schedule published for all VSMs and Masters within the Order. What an opportunity!

Assembly meetings have also gone virtual and are reasonably well attended with all things considered. Business is being conducted and modifications to Assembly programs are being discussed to keep their programs active while providing no health risk to the workers or the beneficiary. Assemblies are also discussing new programs that can be initiated such as grave marker maintenance for deceased veterans, the placement of an American flag at the veteran's grave marker for Veterans Day, and luncheons for local community First Responders just to name a few programs under consideration,

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while still maintaining government health guidelines. It is forcing us to think out of the box as to how our programs are conducted. These are just some of the opportunities that COVID-19 has brought to the 4th Degree within the Fr. Louis Hennepin Province.

As for our Color Corps, we have seen the ranks increase ever so slightly...but an increase none the less. The participation of Color Corps has been limited to Casket Watches and Funeral Masses unfortunately. I am proud of the fact that we have had exceptional Color Corps participation due to more Assemblies working together. The "Black Mask" mandate from Supreme for Color Corpsmen to wear, has not been an issue. "The Supply Room," who is the new supplier for the uniform, has just released a light weight wool topcoat for Color Corpsmen to wear who participate in outdoor events during the colder months of the year.

The **Annual Fraternal Survey, Form 1728** is due January 30th. The form was updated two years ago so please make sure you complete it on-line. The hard copy of the survey can be scanned and emailed to Supreme at fraternalmission@kofc.org, your District Master and the (VSM) spwasmund@aol.com. On-time submission is a requirement for the "Star Assembly Award".

The Provincial Meeting for 2021 is being investigated as to its feasibility based on COVID-19 vaccinations, facility availability and the potential attendance. One possible location is the Somerset Inn in Troy Michigan. It definitely will **NOT** be held at the Wyndham Gardens Hotel in Sterling Heights. Your District Master will conduct a survey asking if your Assembly will be sending anyone to the Provincial Meeting if one is held. If you are unsure, then please say **NO**. I would rather underestimate than overestimate attendance for obvious reasons.

Lady Susan and I would like to wish you and your families a very healthy, safe and blessed New Year.

Fraternally Yours and God Bless,

Clifford F. Wasmund

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