

KofC 1517 100 Anniversary- for Columbian News

By Tim Yaworski

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SASKATOON - Some 265 Knights of Columbus members, wives and families gathered Nov. 6 in Saskatoon to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Saskatoon Knights of Columbus Council #1517, the first in the city and diocese of Saskatoon.

The council received its charter Oct. 31, 1910 with 49 founding members and remained the city's only council for over 50 years.

Throughout its history the Saskatoon council touched the community in varied ways, including being instrumental in the construction of the K of C Army Huts project at the close of the First World War, funding for St. Patrick Orphanage in Prince Albert in the 1920s, reorganized the army huts in Dundurn at the outbreak of the Second World War, staged a Marion Year rally in 1954 attended by over 13,000, development of the Blackstrap Youth Camp south of Saskatoon, organization of the Knights of Columbus Indoor Games in the 1960s and, more recently, a relief project to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina in the Southern United States in 2005.

The celebration included a reception with a display of the council's history in Bishop Mahoney Hall at St. Paul's Cathedral, followed by celebration of the Eucharist.

Bishops Donald Bolen and Bryan Bayda, Abbot Peter Novecosky from St. Peter's Abbey, Msgr. John Radano from the Vatican and several priests from the diocese concelebrated the mass.

28 4th Degree Sir Knights provided the Honour Guard with Brothers Bart Austin and John Boskill proclaiming the readings. Council Chaplain, Fr. Len Cyr proclaimed the Gospel.

In his homily, Bolen expressed appreciation for all that the Knights of Columbus have contributed to the Church and the community over the past 100 years, reflecting on how much the men's organization and the Catholic Women's League have enriched our parishes. "We rejoice with thanksgiving, with hearts full of gratitude, for all that was been done, and continues to be done: for the witness that continues to be given by the Knights of Columbus, in this council and throughout the diocese and the province."

The servant leadership recorded in the gospel and the call of the reading from Micah to "act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with your God" is perhaps most profoundly reflected in the day-to-day faithfulness of Knights of Columbus members, said Bolen.

"It is something that gets lived out not just in the grand gestures and the big actions," he said. "It gets lived out on a daily basis."

He recalled his own father, who was a Knight of Columbus, and who died when Bolen was seven years old. "What I remember from him is receiving love, receiving a sense of stability, a sense of confidence, a sense of trust, a sense of the Church as my home, a deep sense of family," he said, suggesting this is a metaphor for the greatest contributions that members of the Knights of Columbus make in the world. "The greatest gift is one that's hidden. It's imbedded in the life of faith of all who have been a part of this community, it's imbedded in the sense of stability, confidence, faith, trust, love, that they have helped shape and form these past 100 years."

Bolen ended by encouraging the order to move into the future and to continue modeling and inviting youth "to find meaning in the Christian faith, to find meaning in their Catholic identity, to hear the voice of God calling them forth to service, to charity, to be instruments of unity, to be loyal people who build up the life of the community."

At the banquet at the Sheraton Cavalier that followed, Bishops Bolen and Bayda presented greetings, as did State Deputy Ed Gibney, Saskatoon Mayor Don Atchison and MLA Rob Norris.

Speaking on behalf of the St. Paul's Catholic Women's League, Kelly Donald said that 12 Masses will be offered for the council in the next year at St. Mary's Church in New Haven, CT, the parish where the men's organization was founded by Rev. Michael McGivney in 1882.

Gary Nolan, Ceremonials Chairman from Supreme Council in New Haven, also addressed the gathering.

In an after-dinner address, Novekosky recognized the good works of the council over the past century. He spoke of how the organization has been "a place for its members to develop leadership skills, community building skills, and to become aware of and reach out to those less fortunate in our society".

Looking forward to the next century, Novekosky challenged the Knights of Columbus members to continue to focus on Pope John Paul II's 2001 apostolic letter "Entering into the New Millennium." In that encyclical, the Pope outlined seven pastoral priorities for the Church: holiness of life, prayer, Sunday Eucharist, the sacrament of reconciliation, a focus on the primacy of grace, scripture and evangelization.