

THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY OT-A

Last Sunday on the feast of All Saints we heard the Gospel of the Beatitudes.

On the day before, Fr. Michael McGivney was declared "Blessed" by the Church.

Fr. McGivney founded the Knights of Columbus in New Haven, Connecticut in 1882 in order to assist widows and their families upon the deaths of their husbands.

It has grown into a worldwide Catholic fraternal order, with more than 2 million members carrying out works of charity and evangelization across the globe.

At the Mass of Thanksgiving on November 1st, Archbishop William Lori of Baltimore said that Fr. McGivney provides a model for both priests and laypeople of how to "live the Beatitudes."

He continued, "Anyone aspiring to holiness will exhibit those luminous qualities that Jesus perfectly exemplified."

"Having lived the Beatitudes so consistently, Fr. McGivney led his parishioners to holiness."

He mourned alongside poor families— many of whom were helped by the Knights— who had lost fathers and breadwinners.

He served his parishioners tirelessly, inspiring the old and the young alike to hunger and thirst for holiness.

He humbly directed the growing order of Knights as chaplain, ensuring that it would be an organization led by laymen rather than clerics.

Supreme Knight Carl Anderson said, "Fr. McGivney was determined that the social evils of his day would not overwhelm his parishioners.

He strove tirelessly to overcome evil with good, by putting a Catholic ethic of charity at the center of their lives."

Anderson noted how "innovative and extraordinary" was Fr. McGivney's vision of a fraternity of Catholic laymen, based on charity.

By founding the Knights, Fr. McGivney created a "practical path for millions of men" to put their faith into action, anticipating by nearly a century the Second Vatican Council's call for laypeople to "transform society in the light of the Gospel."

As we hear the parable of the wise and foolish virgins we are reminded of the need for "practicality" as we live our lives in anticipation of the return of our Master.

The first reading praises those who seek wisdom as "the perfection of prudence," which itself suggests making careful judgements and appropriate preparations.

Father McGivney prayed and thought long and hard about how to meet the physical and spiritual needs of those entrusted to his care.

The Order of the Knights of Columbus has developed into a world-wide fraternity that provides a practical charity-centered spirituality for its members.

They also sell life insurance.

If our hope is to "meet the Lord" and live with Christ eternally as St. Paul describes in today's second reading, then we need "spiritual life insurance."

In other words, holiness doesn't just happen.

If our long-range goal is heaven, we need to be like the wise virgins and have a plan.

Daily prayer, Sunday Mass, devotions such as the Rosary, spiritual reading, and of course, the Sacrament of Reconciliation are all necessary components of a "spiritual life insurance plan."

This "portfolio" must be balanced with the corporal works of mercy and charity, as well as the generous stewardship of our time, talent, and treasure.

Fr. Michael McGivney was a holy and a practical priest.

And now he is called "Blessed" as the first parish priest of the United States to be raised to the honors of the Altar.