

## The Edge of Light

*The past year has reminded us that death is close,  
but Christ is closer for those who hope in him*

By Supreme Chaplain Archbishop William E. Lori

<https://www.kofc.org/en/news-room/columbia/2021/january/lori-010121.html>



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DECADES AGO, there was a long-running TV soap opera titled “The Edge of Night.” Set in a city called Monticello, it featured a lawyer named Mike Karr. He and his colleagues solved crimes and exposed conspiracies that affected the lives of many citizens, among them the wealthy and the prominent. While Karr and his associates usually prevailed, the premise of this popular show turned on the idea that most people live on the threshold of death and disaster.

As the year 2020 passes into the history books, we too may feel that way. Only a year ago, it was hard to imagine the havoc and suffering that a pandemic would wreak on the world. Little did we imagine how it would radically alter how we live and work; it has made us keenly aware of the fragility of our existence. During this past year, I spoke with many people who lost loved ones or who were caring for seriously ill family members. A grieving mother put it this way: “I thought our lives were secure. Now I

know that death is closer than I ever thought.”

While we hope and pray that the coronavirus will ease its grip in this new year, we should not lose sight of difficult lessons that 2020 taught us.

First, it is easy for us to harbor a false sense of security. For example, we may readily assume that our families will remain in good health, only to face a sudden health crisis. We may count on the support of a lifelong acquaintance, only to suffer betrayal. Just when we think there is smooth sailing ahead, we may find ourselves mired in a controversy not of our making. In these and other ways, life can change, and not for the better.

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Second, while we should avoid a false sense of security, we should also avoid giving in to discouragement or despair. The opposite of discouragement is not

frivolity, and the opposite of despair is not optimism. No, the opposite of discouragement is courage and the opposite of despair is hope — hope in the promise of eternal life offered us only in Christ, hope that the light and love of Christ will ultimately prevail over the darkness of sin and death. Truly, we do not lead our lives on the edge of night, but on the edge of light.

One of the most luminous moments of 2020 was the beatification of Blessed Michael McGivney, a holy parish priest and the **visionary founder of the Knights of Columbus**. For most of his life, Father McGivney suffered from precarious health. One senses that the reality of death was never far from his mind and heart. His pastor at St. Mary's Church in New Haven, Conn., was in poor health and died at age 33, less than two years after Father McGivney arrived. A number of Father McGivney's priestly colleagues also died at an early age; indeed, in those days most priests did not live to age 50.

But this did not stop Father McGivney from giving himself completely to the Lord, to his parishioners, and to his beloved Knights. On the contrary, the nearness of death gave to Father McGivney's ministry a sense of urgency, infusing his priestly ministry with the light and love of Christ.

Conscious of his mortality, Father McGivney placed his whole life in the presence of the light of Christ. His parishioners perceived this about him, for even while he was among them, they spoke of his sanctity, his purity and his charity.

In many parts of the world, January is one of the darkest and coldest months of the year. Gradually, however, the days grow longer and warmer as spring approaches. This natural phenomenon is a good symbol for our spiritual lives. Instead of clinging to flickering artificial lights or giving in to darkness, let us resolve in this new year to live unabashedly in the light of Christ, as we look forward to that day when we shall see him face to face.



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## Our Pro-Life Commitment

*The Order has long stood at the forefront of the movement to protect human life— and that legacy continues*

by Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson

<https://www.kofc.org/en/news-room/columbia/2021/january/fromthesk010121.html>



\1/1/2021

**I TAKE THIS OCCASION** to recount how, for the past five decades, the Knights of Columbus has been a leader in the pro-life movement. In 1974, Knights helped organize the first March for Life in Washington, D.C. The next year, we provided \$50,000 to the U.S. bishops to support their pastoral pro-life efforts. We continue our partnership with both the March for Life and the bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities to this day.

In 1976, Supreme Knight John McDevitt said that “killing innocent human life is so monumental an injustice” that we must not be “lulled into acceptance of this evil,” and instead must work to reverse the Supreme Court’s 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision. The Knights of Columbus has consistently called for that “exercise in raw judicial power” to be overturned, and we have supported both the Hyde Amendment to limit tax dollars to pay for abortion and the Mexico City Policy to stop promoting abortion in U.S. foreign aid programs.

For many decades, we have had a three-part strategy to defend unborn children: mobilize nationwide support through the annual March for Life; support the pastoral ministry of our bishops; and work to restore legal protection to unborn children in our courts and legislatures.

More recently, we added several initiatives essential to building a culture of life.

***‘The defense of the unborn is a preeminent priority for the Knights of Columbus because abortion is the killing of innocent children on a massive scale.’***

The first began with the Sisters of Life. In 1998, their founder, John Cardinal O’Connor, hoped that one day the sisters would have a retreat center that would be “a place of peace, a place of tranquility, a place of light and refreshment, a place of love.” That dream became reality in 2004 when the Knights of Columbus established Villa Maria Guadalupe in Stamford, Conn. The center, operated by the Sisters of Life, is a source of healing for

many, including women experiencing the aftermath of abortion. Thousands of lives have been changed and many saved by the Sisters of Life, who help courageous women choose life despite all odds.

Second, in 2008, we began an annual national survey on abortion with the Marist Poll to understand public attitudes on abortion and help shape the national debate. In a series of groundbreaking findings, our polling showed that, among other things, 3 out of 4 Americans — including 6 out of 10 of those who describe themselves as “pro-choice” — want significant restrictions on abortion. The conclusion: The unlimited abortion mandate of *Roe v. Wade* is not supported by the majority of Americans.

Then, in 2009, we began our Ultrasound Initiative to place new ultrasound machines in pregnancy resource centers. We have since placed more than 1,300 ultrasound machines worth over \$60 million. Through this program, we have helped save hundreds of thousands of unborn children. Our program is building the culture of life one heart and one child at a time.

The defense of the unborn is a preeminent priority for the Knights of Columbus because abortion is the

killing of innocent children on a massive scale.

*Roe v. Wade* will ultimately fail because it is based on the falsehood that we do not know that the child before birth is a human being. And because it is false, we have worked to overturn it; to mobilize national protests against it; to educate the public about it; to help women heal who have been hurt by it; to help keep more women from being hurt; and to rescue unborn children from its deadly consequences.

Pope Francis writes that the “defense of the innocent unborn needs to be clear, firm and passionate, for at stake is the dignity of a human life, which is always sacred” (*Gaudete et Exsultate*, 101). Encouraged by his words, we will continue to build a culture of life in all the nations where we are active.

*Vivat Jesus!*



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