

Blessed Michael J. McGivney, Priest

Founder of the Knights of Columbus



The Mamakating Council of the Knights of Columbus will attend Mass on Friday, August 13, the date assigned for the Memorial of Blessed Michael J. McGivney, founder of the Knights of Columbus. They invite you to join them at St. Joseph's Church in Wurtsboro at 8:00 AM.

Michael Joseph McGivney was born on August 12, 1852, to Irish immigrant parents, Patrick and Mary (Lynch) McGivney. He was the eldest of 13 children, six of whom died in infancy or childhood. His father worked as a molder in a Waterbury CT brass mill. Michael attended the local Waterbury district school but left at 13 to work in one of the brass mill's spoon-making departments.

In 1868, at the age of 16, he entered the Séminaire de Saint-Hyacinthe in Saint-Hyacinthe, Quebec, Canada. He continued his studies at Our Lady of Angels Seminary near Niagara Falls, NY (1871-1872) and at the Jesuits' St. Mary's College in Montreal, Quebec. He had to leave the seminary, returning home to help finish raising his siblings after his father's death in June 1873. Michael McGivney later resumed his studies at St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore, MD; he was ordained a priest on December 22, 1877, by Archbishop James Gibbons at the Baltimore Cathedral of the Assumption.

At a time of anti-Catholic sentiment, he

worked tirelessly to offer practical solutions to immigrant Catholics. The organization developed as a fraternal society. (You may recall that the latter half of the nineteenth century saw the rise of the "No Nothings,"—officially the American Party—committed to American isolationism and exceptionalism, with an anti-immigration and anti-Catholic platform. In one form or another, the deep vein of American bigotry has persisted as an undercurrent in our society. Among the most famous adherents were the aviation pioneer, Charles Lindbergh, and the radio personality, Fr. Charles Coughlin, who eventually was silenced by the Vatican.

From his own experience, Fr. McGivney recognized the devastating effect on immigrant families of the father and wage earner's untimely death. Many Catholics were still struggling to assimilate into the American economy. On March 29, 1882, while an assistant pastor of St. Mary's Church in New Haven, CT, McGivney founded the Knights of Columbus, with a small group of parishioners as a mutual aid society to provide financial assistance, in the event of the men's deaths, to their widows and orphans. Although the on-line biographies do not allude to the No-Nothings, it may well be that Fr. McGivney chose the name of his organization to counter their influence. Christopher Columbus, until quite recently, was recognized as a symbol of the immigrant, venturing bravely to settle in a land of hoped-for opportunity.



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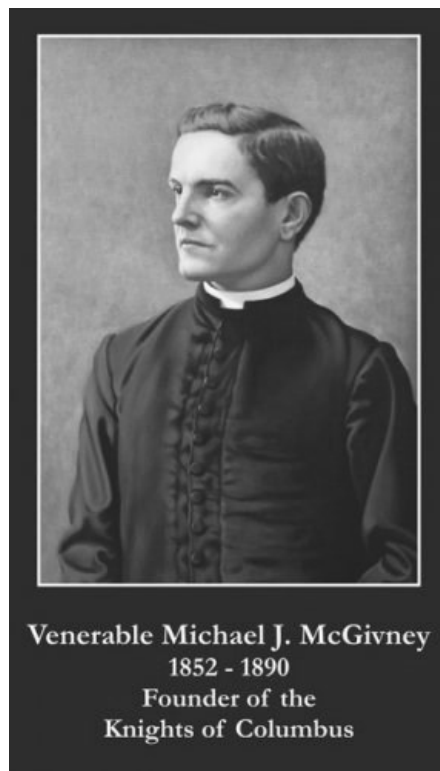
Fr. McGivney spent seven years at St. Mary's, then became pastor of St. Thomas Church in 1884. He died there from pneumonia on August 14, 1890, just two days after his 38th birthday on the eve of the Assumption in 1890.

The Knights of Columbus was among the first groups to recruit blood donors, with formal efforts dating to 1937 during the Great Depression. As of 2013, the order has more than 1.8 million member families and 15,000 councils. During the 2012 fraternal year, the order donated \$167 million and 70 million man-hours to charity.

In 1996, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Hartford opened the cause for canonization, an investigation into McGivney's life with a view toward formal recognition by the Catholic Church of his sainthood. Gabriel O'Donnell is the postulator of McGivney's cause. He is also the director of the Fr. McGivney Guild which now has 150,000 members supporting his cause. The diocesan investigation was closed in 2000 and the case was passed to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in Vatican City. On March 15, 2008, Pope Benedict XVI approved a decree recognizing McGivney's heroic virtue, thus declaring him as "Venerable."

As of August 6, 2013, a miracle attributed to McGivney's intercession was under investigation at the Vatican. On May 27, 2020, the miracle attributed to the intercession of McGivney was approved by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints and authorized by Pope Francis. The beatification Mass followed five months after the announcement by Pope Francis, recognizing a miracle attributed to the intercession of Fr. McGivney. The miracle involved the healing of Michael "Mikey" Schachle from fetal hydrops, which causes a fatal accumulation of fluids throughout the body of an unborn child.

On October 31, 2020, the beatification Mass of Michael McGivney was celebrated at the Cathedral of Saint Joseph in Hartford, CT, with Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin presiding on the Pope's behalf. The Schachle family, including Mikey, attended the beatification Mass and presented Cardinal Tobin with one of Blessed McGivney's relics. Members of the Knights of Columbus founder's remaining relatives also participated in the celebration.



Prayer for Canonization of Blessed Michael McGivney

God, our Father, protector of the poor and defender of the widow and orphan, you called your priest, Blessed Michael McGivney, to be an apostle of Christian family life and to lead the young to the generous service of their neighbor. Through the example of his life and virtue, may we follow your Son, Jesus Christ, more closely, fulfilling his commandment of charity and building up his Body which is the Church. Let the inspiration of your servant prompt us to greater confidence in your love so that we may continue his work of caring for the needy and the outcast. We humbly ask that you glorify Blessed Michael McGivney on earth according to the design of your holy will. Through his intercession, grant the favor I now present (*here make your request*). Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**