



**KNIGHTS
OF COLUMBUS**
IN SERVICE TO ONE. IN SERVICE TO ALL.

**Saint Kateri
Council 12229**

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Newsletter Editor's Message

I found the article *Five Myths About Columbus* in the September issue of the *Columbia* magazine to be informative and rather timely. In the interest of space for this newsletter, my summarized version of that article appears here. I hope you find it as interesting as I did.

Claims about Columbus need to be tempered by a sober look at the historical record.

Myth 1: He was a violent man.

Far from being a violent man, he often got into difficulties because he would be indulgent – toward natives and Spaniards – and would often take extreme measures against both when things got out of hand. He was a great navigator but a poor governor.

Myth 2: He committed genocide.

There was no “genocide” during these early voyages. The Americas had been isolated from the rest of the world for millennia, which is why people here, though they had their own plagues, were especially vulnerable to diseases from outside (the Americas).

Myth 3: He instituted the slave trade.

His goal was to set up a trading post or, later, an agricultural colony on the island of Hispaniola, today's Dominican Republic and Haiti. Columbus did, however, take slaves as prisoners of war, or where he found violations of natural law, such as human sacrifice or cannibalism – the only reasons Spain permitted. Slavery was never the admiral's intention, except as a – not very effective – way to maintain order in unprecedented circumstances.

Myth 4: He had only worldly interests.

People often claim that Columbus was motivated by “God, gold and glory,” but assume God was just a cover for worldly interests. In fact, his religious devotion was sincere. We know from his writings that he felt that he had been given a role in spreading the Gospel to all nations...

Myth 5: He did not accomplish anything extraordinary.

One reason we especially honor Columbus is that he began the process toward the one interconnected world that we now inhabit. Columbus, by skill, imagination and sheer grit gave us *the world*.

Columbus is often dismissed today on other grounds – usually by people who have come to hate “Western civilization” and, frankly, traditional Christianity. They want to blame him for everything wrong on these shores since 1492. Following that logic, though, he deserves some credit – as well, for the many good things that also followed his discoveries.