

The Knights of Columbus organization has for many years been an important part of the life of thriving Catholic parishes. The Knights of Columbus members of Sts. Peter and Paul are a particularly active, service-oriented group, comprised of the Fr. Patrick Ryan Council 610 and the Fr. Patrick Ryan Assembly 1084 of the Fourth Degree. The Knights offer their members many benefits: including fraternity, the opportunity to do charitable works, and even financial benefits, in the form of life insurance, financial planning, and end-of-life planning. Some of our Basilica clergy, including myself, are members. A large number of our ushers are members as well. But because many are not aware of all that the Knights contribute to our community behind the scenes, I would like to share some of that with you here. This past year the Knights of Columbus have contributed at the Basilica and in our broader community in numerous ways, including:

- This year they instituted the parish-wide fish fry for our Friday Lenten dinners, which increased participation at our Friday Lenten program and provided a much needed fellowship opportunity within our English- and Spanish-speaking community
- Held the biannual Fourth Degree Exemplification at the 5:30 Mass on March 16, 2019
- Sponsored the Forty Cans food drive during Lent
- Participated in the Eucharistic processions on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Corpus Christi
- Recruited several members to join our usher/greeter ministry
- Volunteered for our move to and from our temporary sanctuary in Varallo Parish Hall during our floor re-finishing project
- Held a wheelchair fundraiser and delivered wheelchairs to disabled people
- Built a wheelchair ramp for one of our parishioners
- Cleared land for a widowed parishioner, whose son had died
- Set up an emergency squad to help families in stress
- Offered a family Rosary and luncheon every fifth Sunday of the month (rotated among our area parishes)
- Provided a monthly meal to our college students at the UTC Newman Center
- Sponsored two seminarians
- Funded the Chalice fund, to give each new priest a chalice
- Donated wreaths to be laid on ten veterans' graves for the Wreaths Across America program
- Donated to several charities including Habitat for Humanity
- Funded scholarships for two Notre Dame High School students
- Provided startup funding for the Basilica's new American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA troops
- Sponsored a Boy Scout to build a covered walkway at St. Augustine Catholic Church
- Regularly visited patients at an HIV hospice
- Maintained and rented campsites at Camp Columbus
- Hosted Fourth of July Fireworks and Labor Day picnic at Camp Columbus
- Gave breakfast snacks monthly at the Veterans Administration outpatient facility
- Retired worn out American flags on Flag Day, and exchanged worn flags for new flags

I look forward to continued presence of the Knights of Columbus at the Basilica. I would love to see many more men of our parish join and become involved. It is a ministry that requires a certain amount of commitment, but it also bears great fruit in our families, our parish, and our community. If you are interested in finding out more about this organization, you need look no further than our vestibule! We have joining forms available. You can also introduce yourself to one of our ushers or other men who are wearing a Knights of Columbus badge!

*Rev. J. David Carter*

