

# *The Chatter* Winter 2022

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## **Grand Knight's Message: A New Year Brings New Opportunities**

Worthy Brothers:

First, welcome to the return of the Chatter newsletter. Jim Tise has graciously agreed to take over from Larry Grayson, who did such a fine job with the newsletter over the years. Thanks, Larry, for all your work and dedication, and thanks, Jim, for moving us forward.



*GK Ivan Galic*

We will be publishing the Chatter on a quarterly basis (Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall) while we ramp up. You'll recognize some features from the old Chatter, plus some new features as they develop. Layout changes are in store, as well.

Now, as for 2021.

I have reflected on this quite a bit during the Christmas season. As Knights, we have the ability to create new opportunities that can meaningfully improve the livelihood of others.

During 2021, we made several meaningful charitable donations to support worthwhile causes. We ran food drives, collected Toys for Tots, purchased several dozen "Coats for Kids," supported the Special Olympics, ran a successful chess tournament, and conducted a Tootsie Roll drive to help individuals with disabilities.

None of us knows what the year 2022 holds in store, but rest assured, the Knights will be there to create new opportunities when we're called upon to serve!

We do have a memorial mass planned on Saturday, Jan 22 at 10 a.m. in Cantrell Hall (upstairs). Also, new member exemplifications are scheduled for March 8 and June 14.

Members will receive emails with additional information about these events in the days leading up to each event.

Finally, the past few years have been incredibly challenging, and with your support, the Council has weathered the storm! But we're not out of the woods yet. I urge you to remain vigilant to protect yourselves and your families. On behalf of the Rock Creek Council, I extend to you my warmest blessings for a happy and healthy new year, and I hope to see you around the Council!

Vivat Jesus!

Ivan Galic  
Grand Knight

## Interview with Santa Claus

With the onset of the pandemic, the usual Christmas traditions, such as standing in line to sit on Santa's lap, have usually been cancelled. Fortunately, due to the council's excellent connections with the North Pole, Saint Nick paid a personal visit to the Rock Creek Council just a few days before his big ride. Santa (aka Brother Ray Sanchez) managed to commandeer a Chevy Chase Fire Station utility vehicle to transport his sleigh at the end of that night's "Santa Run."



*Santa and Kevin Sloan are ready for a Santa Run.*

Originally organized by Tony Veith (if you've lived in the D.C. area for more than five years you must certainly know a Veith), the Chevy Chase Fire Station has hosted the run for decades with Tony playing Santa. For the good part of the week before Christmas, fire station volunteers drive through the streets of Chevy Chase followed by Santa in his sleigh.

Ray began donning the Santa suit on a regular basis about three years ago. Since then, he has followed the station's fire engine through the streets of Chevy Chase to the delight of children and parents alike.

"They're ecstatic," he said about the spectators who line up on the street or watch from their porches. "I was Santa Claus just after 9/11. After that it just seemed like people were more excited. I think it was a needed respite from everything that was going on. Now, with Covid, it seems to be the same thing."

The Santa Run has provided many a family with young children the first opportunity to see Kris Kringle up close.

"You can see it in their eyes," said Ray. "Some of them look completely overwhelmed, and I will say, so do some the parents. Even the men. They let their guard down for a little bit. They're excited for their kids."



*Ray Sanchez, aka Santa Claus*

Kevin Sloan agrees. Kevin, a retired D.C. firefighter and member of the Rosensteel Council (and frequent visitor to the Rock Creek Lounge), served as Santa's driver this year and had a first-hand view of the joy that he spread.

With all the deprivations of the pandemic, the Santa Run is "the right thing at the right time for these people," said Kevin "They needed it."

Ray and Kevin go way back, friends since second grade. They both went through firefighting training at the same time, but ended up working for different departments. Kevin has volunteered to drive Santa for three years now.

“The kids, they just light up, especially the young kids who have never seen Santa,” said Kevin. “The adults’ reaction sometimes is just as good as the kids’, sometimes even better. I’ve seen moms with tears in their eyes more than once. It’s really a cool experience. There’s lots of good energy.”



*Kevin Sloan with his daughter, Abigail, and mother, Mary Grace.*

Kevin has even recruited “elves” from his family. His son, Matt, who is now a firefighter in Virginia, participated on a Santa Run when he volunteered with the Kensington Volunteer Fire Department. Fifteen-year-old Abigail joined in on this year’s ride for the first time. A little leery initially, Abigail quickly joined in on the holiday spirit. “She says, ‘I’ll do this again any day,’” said Dad.

Like daughter, like father, it seems. Ray remembers Kevin’s reaction when he first participated in the Santa Run. “Kevin did it for one night,” said Ray. “He got addicted. There’s an emotional aspect to it. They love it.”

Ray remembers the good times before Covid kept Santa away from personal contact with the kids. “Sometimes I would get off the sleigh and give them a hug,” he recalled. “You can feel it.

They really believe I’m Santa Claus. And I guess I do too for that short period of time. So I do my best to give them my best Santa Claus.”

## **Check Mate!**

The Rock Creek Council hosted another successful chess tournament on December 5. There were approximately 50 participants ranging from kindergarten through 8th grade (see photo below). The tournament usually draws 80 to 90 kids, but seating was reduced this year to ensure proper spacing due to Covid. The schools with the most participants were Woods Academy, Silver Creek Middle School, and Holy Redeemer.

“All the kids and parents were happy to be back to over-the-board play after our past two tournaments, which were by necessity virtual,” said PGK Mike Houlihan, who oversaw the event. “We had lots of K and 1st graders — a good sign for the future!”

Mike thanked all volunteers who helped out, including Andrew Dolan Lieb, Bob Metzler, Mike Naas, and Mike Horan. “The tournament is a welcome and anticipated community event, and it is good visibility for our Council,” Mike added.



## **Seniors' Club Report**

by PGK Bob Waters, President

It is great to be able to contact our seniors again through the Chatter. We were only able to hold one function over the last two years and that was a pizza party. Many thanks to Helen Brennan for putting that together, with 30 members attending.

Through the Chatter we will be able to contact members regarding future functions depending upon scheduling and health restrictions.

Many thanks to Jim Tise for doing this with the Chatter and God bless all our members and keep them healthy and safe.

### **Calendar**

February 18, Noon - 2 p.m.: Priests and Deacons Luncheon in the Ball Room. Topic: How to End Abortion in America.

March 4, 6-9 p.m. Lenten Fish Dinner (Tentative)

March 8, 7 p.m. New member exemplification. Dinner to follow.

March 11, 6-9 p.m. Lenten Fish Dinner

March 18, 6-9 p.m. Lenten Fish Dinner

March 25, 6-9 p.m. Lenten Fish Dinner

April 1, 6-9 p.m. Lenten Fish Dinner

April 3, Spring Chess Tournament: Registration: 11:30 am to 12:00 pm  
Games: 12:15 pm to 2:45 pm

## **Council Holds Memorial Service**

On January 22, the Rock Creek Council held a memorial mass for brothers who departed this life in 2021 and 2022. They included James Naccarato, PGK Victor Khayat, William Frank, William Gates, John Dugan, Daniel Wolff, William Parker, Jose Vargas, PGK Edwin Roberto Ibanez II, Milton Davis, PGK Richard Kolf, PGK Vince Bunag, John Hartke, Stephen Gardella, William Hughes, and Lawrence Stark. Also remembered were Tad Reed, Betty Lou Milihram, Jennie Peternell, Emelia Aragon, and Jean Horan.



*The Council remembered 21 fellow Knights and friends of the Council at the January 22 service.*

## Tips for Everyday Holiness

As the daylight increases through January, I set my sight on the New Year and what I would like to accomplish. Setting goals seems like a better idea than making the traditional New Year's resolutions. Those resolutions seem to go by the wayside quickly; maybe because they always seem the same year after year.

One goal I have set for this year is to check in with every single member. Many of you filled out the annual survey you received at the end of last year. Thanks to those that did! It allows me to update contact information and provide service for specific needs. If you did not yet complete it, I encourage you to complete and return it. It can be done online or by return mail.



*Steve Upton, PGK*

Another focus I have for goals this year is to follow the tips for everyday holiness from St. Teresa of Calcutta. I recently printed them out and posted them on my refrigerator, so I see them each day. Here they are:

**1. Speak as little about yourself as possible.**

Tip: Ask others about their day and take time to listen!

**2. Keep busy with your own affairs and not those of others.**

**3. Avoid curiosity.**

Tip: She's talking about being nosey—the bad kind of curiosity!

**4. Accept small irritations with good humor.**

**5. Do not dwell on the faults of others.**

Remember: When you do this, you forget the GOOD in people and that they're a child of God, too!

**6. Accept censures even if unmerited.**

Tip: By this, she means taking DISAPPROVAL in a humble way.

**7. Be courteous and delicate even when provoked by someone.**

Tip: Know when to walk away or "stop responding." This can be hard and require extra prayers.

**8. Choose always the more difficult task.**

St. Teresa of Calcutta was known for her simplicity. These are simple tips, but often hard to do. Please let me know how I may be of service to you and your family!

Again, best wishes for a happy and healthy New Year!

Vivat Jesus!

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## Priest's Corner

*The following is reprinted from the Our Lady of Lourdes church bulletin. Thanks to Fr. James Morrison, who wrote this piece, for granting us permission to run it in the Chatter.*

Where has the time gone! Christmas flew by and we find ourselves again in Ordinary Time. Ordinary Time is anything but ordinary, it is a return to the basics, a new call to conversion, to leave everything behind and to follow Jesus.

A few weeks ago, we celebrated with a piñata party at the parish, a common tradition: Little kids hitting at a hanging orb, hoping for little candies to fall out, but this routine has a rich Christian tradition, one which I had never heard before.



*Fr. James gives some batting instruction to a student at Our Lady of Lourdes School.*

The traditional piñata is made with seven spikes, not a random number, but a number intended to represent the seven deadly sins: pride, lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, wrath and envy. The piñata is mesmerizing, almost hypnotic, with its streamers and colored paper — a lot like sin in our life. To further emphasize the effect of sin, the optimistic combatant is blindfolded and spun around in a circle multiple times before attempting to bat the dancing ball.

To be honest, it did not go so well at first. The kids swung at the air or did not have the strength to break the hard shell. (Sound like your experience fighting sin?) After the kids took their swing, I stepped up bear-fisted to see if I couldn't give it a good crack. I gave it a few good dents but not to the effect that we were all hoping for. Finally, a young girl who had played Mary in the

Christmas celebration earlier that morning, took the bat. Fittingly, Mary was not blindfolded, she was not dizzy, but stared at sin head on. In full blue veil and halo, she cracked the piñata clean open and a shower of treats rained down on the kids — the grasp of sin broke open to release a flow of grace. You can imagine the joy and laughter.

Ordinary Time is the perfect time to pick up the bat again. Here are three quick tips to get this season off to a good start.

*What is the sin that most oppresses you? Name it. Identify it. Attack it!*

Perhaps you have fought it long and hard and you still have not been able to break it. Christ's victory has broken the final authority of sin in your life. That means there is a path to freedom.

*Get a priest in your corner.* Regular confession is vital in the fight for freedom. Another time-honored tradition is spiritual direction. Many of the greatest saints have had guides in their spiritual life to help identify the voice of the Holy Spirit. If this is not something that you have ever tried before, perhaps this is the year to do it!

*Tap in Mary!* Our Mother is powerful in the battle against sin. Do you have a relationship with her? Praying the rosary or reflecting on relevant passages of scripture are great ways to build a relationship with her.

I pray that we all may enjoy renewed life, profound joy, and freedom as we turn to Jesus again this new year. With God, all things are possible. Know of my prayers for you!

In Christ,

Fr James

*As GK Ivan mentioned in his email, the new Chatter is a work in progress. We welcome all comments and ideas. Feel free to speak with Jim Tise if you see him in the lounge, or text him at 202 507-1287.*

*The next issue of The Chatter will be posted in mid-April.*



This young lady takes a healthy whack at the piñata.