



GOING TO THE PERIPHERIES

7/7/2017

**SUPREME KNIGHT ANDERSON ADDRESSES
CONVOCATION OF CATHOLIC LEADERS.**



Photos

In his keynote address to the Convocation of Catholic Leaders, Supreme Knight Carl Anderson urged those gathered to remember the call of Pope Francis to us all to become missionaries of evangelization and a fraternity of Catholics who help each other find our way in Jesus Christ.

The Convocation of Catholic Leaders: The Joy of the Gospel in America, held July 1-4 in Orlando, Florida, was inspired by Pope Francis' *Evangelii Gaudium*. This meeting of leaders from Catholic

organizations and dioceses around the country was convened by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to help examine and discuss challenges for the Church, particularly the Church in America. It is an ongoing initiative of the Bishops' Working Group on the Life and Dignity of the Human Person.

“Earlier this year I had the opportunity to spend one week in South Korea. During that time I had the privilege of meeting one of our great American missionaries — a priest and a Knight of Columbus who has traveled into North Korea more than 50 times, most recently to treat desperately ill North Koreans who have no other hope of medical assistance,” Supreme Knight Anderson said in his keynote address. “I asked him why he spends so much of his life traveling and living under such dangerous and harsh conditions. His answer was simple: ‘Where there is great suffering, Jesus is there and where Jesus is we must be also.’”

“Jesus is already at the peripheries,” Supreme Knight Anderson stated. “The question for us is whether he will be there alone or whether his disciples will accompany him.”

The Knights of Columbus is committed to going beyond our own comfort zone and beyond our own nation to reach those peripheries, he said. As examples, he cited the Order’s help for AIDS orphans in Uganda; homeless refugees in Ukraine; persecuted Christians in Egypt; Christian survivors of genocide in Iraq; child refugees from North Korea; typhoon survivors in the Philippines; and the physically disabled in Vietnam, Cuba, and Haiti.

“As Catholics, we profess a universal church,” he said. “As missionary disciples, we must make our universal church increasingly present at the peripheries as the process of globalization accelerates. Yet the most difficult challenge may not be in reaching out to the world. The most difficult challenge may be in reaching out to our own neighbor. Going to this periphery requires us to not only go beyond our comfort zone to do more — it requires us to go beyond our comfort to be more.”

Through their actions, Catholics will present an authentic witness to others, a witness they will want to emulate, he said.

Pope Francis has called us to be an evangelizing community full of joy, Supreme Knight Anderson said. The Holy Father wants all Catholics to offer a witness of fraternal communion and to let everyone admire how you care for each other.

“This great task is for each of us,” he said.

Pope Francis says in *Amoris Laetitia* that “the Church is a family of families” (87). The supreme knight suggested that if that is so, then the parish too is called to be a true icon of God’s love; and the parish also has the mission to guard, reveal and communicate love.

“Today, missionary disciples should also see the family and the parish as peripheries into which they must go,” Supreme Knight Anderson stated. “If we go deep enough into the peripheries we will find the boundaries between us beginning to disappear. We will realize that as the poet said, ‘No man is an island, entire of itself.’ Each is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.”

The sense of missionary discipleship that Pope Francis is calling Catholics to — a discipleship of fraternal communion and fraternal love — is a radical repudiation of the extreme individualism that some today champion, the supreme knight continued. It cannot be realized without our renewed commitment to community, he added.

“It has been said that it is a beautiful, if difficult, task to spend one’s life living and helping others to live the mystery of Christian existence as a life devoted to charity and love, to promote unity, not as a strategy for success, but as the relation of love with God and other men and women, and to see fraternity as a communion of persons who accompany each other and help each other to follow Christ more closely,” he said.

“Catholics in America have never feared to go to the peripheries. It is who we are and who we will continue to be in the future,” Supreme Knight Anderson said. “Pope Francis calls us to ‘embark upon a new chapter of evangelization’ (*Evangelii Gaudium* 1). Let us arise and be on our way!”

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Supreme Knight Anderson was also a participant in the breakout session “Missionary Disciples in Solidarity with the Suffering Church” on the same day. Supreme Chaplain Archbishop William Lori of Baltimore was the main celebrant for the Fortnight for Freedom Mass on July 3 during the convocation.

In his homily, Supreme Chaplain Archbishop Lori asked Catholics to thank God for the gift of freedom and to pray that they "use this gift well and wisely." He added that this is a gift that is easily allowed to lie inactive or become overlooked.

He also urged the attendees to be advocates for those whose freedoms have been denied, to work for legislation to protect these liberties while also being witnesses to the precepts of the faith and "fulfilling our mission to love."

Earlier in the convocation, Deputy Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly participated in a breakout session on the "Church's Relationship with the State." The session examined the church-state relationship in the United States, the role of the Church in public life, and the opportunities and challenges related to the Church's role in bringing the Gospel to bear on public life.

During the discussion, Deputy Supreme Knight Kelly talked about his background and, in particular, his work for the U.S. Department of State's Office of International Religious Freedom. In addition, he observed that the United States' experience of religious freedom had a strong influence on the Second Vatican Council and how the Church would eventually articulate its vision of religious freedom.

The paradox of our present moment is that Pope Francis is asking us more and more to go to the peripheries and be missionary disciples, and at the same time this is harder to do because of greater restrictions on religious freedom.

The deputy supreme knight was also a participant in the breakout session, "*Amoris Laetitia*: Families as Principal Agents of the New Evangelization."

Florida Knights were among the hundreds of volunteers assisting with the event, and the Knights of Columbus was the premier sponsor of the convocation.