

Worthy Sir Knights of Pope John XXIII Assembly 1536 and Pope John Ladies,

On August 1, 1970, a group Sir Knights, led by SK Joseph Tondreau, received the charter for our assembly, Pope John XXIII. What a feeling it must have been for that group to have achieved that milestone!

As your current Faithful Navigator, I am humbled to be the most recent in a long line of Sir Knights that have taken on the mantle of assembly leadership. I am also heartened that we have members that have been with the assembly for many years and are still active. In particular, SK Dan Crowley is a charter member of the assembly and is serving as one of our trustees. Indeed, he has been active for 50 years! Additionally, SK Frank Pawelak, Master Emeritus and Past Faithful Navigator, led the assembly from 1994 through 1996, and continues to regularly attend meetings and participate in activities. What great role models these two Sir Knights are for the new Sir Knights that join our assembly!

We are also blessed with having an outstanding Faithful Friar, Fr. Richard Leliaert. Although retired, Fr. Richard continues to be our spiritual guidance and regularly attends our meetings. I hear from so many other assemblies about the difficulties they have in this regard, and I am grateful that Fr. Richard continues to give of his time for us.

I also appreciate all the support I receive from the members of the assembly, especially the Past Faithful Navigators that regularly attend and readily provide feedback and advice when I need it. This includes Denny McCann, Chris Scanlan, George Roumaya, Dennis Lipski, OJ Lenze II, Ken Pietryga, Jim Inch and, of course, Frank Pawelak.

Our current leadership team also provides great perspective on how to move us forward. I appreciate all their hard work, as I have for the last few years. The current leadership team consists of John Russell, Joe Bradley, Greg Rapelje, Ed Hurst Jr., Lou Brotchner, Glenn Rapelje, Patrick Lowry, Joshua Earles, Bob Rugenski, Chris Scanlan, Michael Doyle, Dan Crowley and Ed Shaheen. I can always look forward to a great discussion on anything we consider.

The assembly would not be as strong as it is without the support of all the individual Sir Knights, as well as the Pope John Ladies, that make up the body of the assembly. I have never been disappointed when looking for volunteers for any of our activities, including serving donuts to veterans, collecting coats for veterans, serving steaks lunches to veterans, marching in parades, or any of the other myriad of activities in which the assembly is involved. I appreciate the time, talent and treasure each has been able to provide when asked.

Finally, I wanted to thank my bride of almost 36 years, Kathy, for being supportive of me as I make this journey with the assembly. I have been a Knight of Columbus for only 5 years, deciding to join when retirement appeared on the horizon and St. John Neumann in Canton was forming a new council. The step to join the Fourth Degree was small, as I have many relatives that served our country in various conflicts around the world. Even so, I was not anticipating becoming Faithful Navigator so quickly. (I don't think Kathy was, either.) God calls in mysterious ways, and apparently he felt this is where I was needed. Kathy has been very supportive of my actions and I appreciate her coming along for the ride and for taking on the role she has been given.

So, Happy Anniversary to all the Sir Knights and Ladies that are involved in the assembly, and here is looking forward to another outstanding 50 years!

Gene

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