

*File
Speeches*

*Communion Breakfast
5/7/44. - Proctor
College Alumni*

At the risk of using a trite expression - I am anxious, at the outset - to express to you my genuine pleasure at being here with you gentlemen of Finnegan Council. This is not my first opportunity to attend your Council's Communion Breakfast. It is my sincere hope that I may be permitted to be with you on many more of these grand occasions.

*Finnegan
Council*

Certainly it is a genuine pleasure to attend any Communion Breakfast. It is an especial pleasure to meet after Holy Communion with members of the great order which has been so aptly termed "The strong right arm of the Church in America"

As members of the Knights of Columbus we are pledged to so live that we shall prove ourselves worthy of our great gift of the Faith and that we shall bring credit on our order - that we will live the sort of lives that will earn for us - the greatest of all titles - that of a Catholic Gentleman.

,It is no wonder then that their surges within us a great wave of pride as we go to the Alter of our Creator to receive Him and to ask of Him the grace and strength we need so desperately in the anxious days through which we are passing.

If we lived today in a world at peace - it would be a fairly simple matter to talk of the Prince of Peace and the place He occupies in our daily life - It would be enobling to dedicate ourselves to following in His footsteps in the cause of the Universal Brotherhood of Man. But with the skies of the world darkened by the clouds of war - with men's minds concentrated on the all-important task of conquering the enemies not only of our own beloved land, but as well of truth and justice in all the world - in such conditions there seems to be less inclination to speak of a kindlier nature.

When last I met with you on such an occasion as this - our country had but recently gone to war. America had just called on her sons to throw back the invader who had despoiled her soil.

Since last we met we have seen our Nation cast aside her garments of peace and tranquility and put on the armor of war, in order to crush the enemies of the Republic who would destroy everything for which America stands.

We have witnessed a peace-loving people - aroused to righteous anger - lay away their peacetime pursuits - we have seen every family throughout the land offer its sons and daughters to the winning of this titanic struggle. Yes, in our time we have seen a Nation at peace, become in a few short months, first the Arsenal of Democracy - and finally the most powerful and most determined military power in the history of all civilization - vowing never again to look on the face of peace until all its enemies had been destroyed - until its honor had been avenged.

Our Nation's purpose in waging this struggle, which pray God we may soon know is at an end, has not been the winning of new lands or the building of a great empire. Nor has it been merely the winning back of one foot of conquered territory. No - our purpose has been - and is - to maintain the supremacy of right over wrong - of freedom and liberty over the rule of might - of Government by the people - for the people - rather than the rule of Godless dictatorship.

We ~~are~~ fight today for the self-same principles which motivated our forebears as they assisted in the creation of this baby republic. We have pledged - in the fight to maintain these principles - every last ounce of energy and determination of which the Nation is capable.

Every resource of the land has been thrown into the struggle for the preservation of the dignity of the individual man - for his right to worship his God according to the dictates of his conscience - for his right to a voice in a government of his own choosing - for his right to pursue his ultimate end - unfettered by the chains of pagan philosophies - unhindered by the creed that the State is God - and that all things exist merely for the Supreme State.

Since such is our purpose - how clearly must we see a great opportunity to demonstrate the worth of the order of which we are proud members. As Knights of Columbus we acknowledge our duty to serve our country - and we acknowledge at the same time the state's duty to serve its people. In putting this truth into actual operation in the days immediately ahead of us, as I see it, there is afforded every one of us, the privilege of participation in government - as well as a challenge which calls for every man's best effort.

We men are Knights - we are inheritors of the great traditions of the followers of Peter the Hermit - of Pope Gregory and Innocent the Third - inheritors of great and noble men who forsook home and family to take up arms against those who sought the total elimination of the sacred shrines of Christianity.

We glory in the accomplishments of those Crusaders who overcame obstacles which in their day were well nigh insurmountable.

They followed the Cross - "God wishes it" was their rallying cry.

That cry led hundreds of thousands of men across the lands of Europe - thru the Mediterranean - to the gates of the Holy Land - where they won back for Christianity the soil upon which our Savior had trod.

With such an inspiration - with such an example of devotion and sacrifice - how can we afford to be merely passive Catholics. Knowing as we do - the history of the constant struggle, throughout all the ages, of men who fought for our most priceless possession - our Faith - how can we neglect to take up the cudgels in our day - to take our places in the ranks - among the defenders of the Faith - to foster and maintain for our Faith - its rightful place in the life of our Country and of the World.

There will come a day when the fighting sons of Columbia will have laid down their arms - and their thoughts will have turned to shady lanes - to small-town streets -- to down-town places and little white houses with picket fences --- to home and lived ones - to smiles and kisses - to all those things which peace and prosperity have always meant to Americans. There will come a day when there will be but one thought in every household - and that will be directed to the hour when the men of the family will return from the blood and muck of battle fields.

On that happy day - those men who have fought and bled for victory - whose buddies have offered up the eternal sacrifice in the name of truth and justice - will look to their country to see what good has come from the great sacrifices they have borne. As they return to take up their places in the community - they will expect to find assurance that their efforts have not been in vain.

They do not intend to return to a Nation that has grown feeble and tired. They intend to return to a Nation that has grown stronger and greater - because they fought for that. They do not want to return to a people saturated with foreign isms and pagan ideologies - they intend to return to an America which more than ever seeks ~~as~~ as its main object the promotion of the welfare of all of its citizens - it was for this they took up arms.

Here then is the challenge to us as Knights of Columbus. Here is our privilege - to make ready for that ~~summing~~ day of accounting - to determine there shall be, in the world which will have its rebirth on some sunny tomorrow - a permanent place, an honorable place, a peaceful place at home - and throughout the world - for the individual man who lives for his Creator - who keeps God's commandments - an individual dignified by a state which exists - not under man - but under God and the Law.

We have been called on for activity of this sort - many times, I know. There has been a constant appeal for Catholic Action - that is true. True it is also, that the Knights have a right to justifiable pride for the part they have played in the development of the economic and political life of our country.

I do believe, however, that here is a greater opportunity than has ever been presented to us. We are challenged to take advantage of it. It is one that reaches down into the private life of every one ~~member~~ of us.

All phases of the economic - the social and the political life of our times demands our attention - each offers us opportunities for action. We can determine, by positive action, to aid in the building of a better America - the building of a better world.

If - when that struggle is finished - men again turn to power politics - of men, once again in our time place their reliance in self-seeking agreements which foster jealousy - rivalry - hatred and the occasions for self-styled sav iors such as we have witnessed - then we shall be forced to admit our opportunity has been wasted.

If - however - men determine there shall be a place for Christ in the

future ordering of society - if the fundamental principles of truth and reason are permitted to play their proper role - if, in short, man is to be accorded the position intended for him by his Creator - then we shall be proud our job has been well done - we shall know our work has been worthwhile - we shall have made a real contribution to the age in which we live.

How - you say - can we do this. By being vigorous in our every day lives. By living breathing and doing as Knights of Columbus. There is no portion of our country's life that is so unimportant that we can afford to neglect it. The fields of endeavor in which we work. The social life in which we move - our friends - our associates - the leaders on public life - all need the impact of the thinking that the Knights of Columbus can give them.

Don't fear to speak - don't fear to do. It is far better to wear out than to rust out.

We have a mission to perform - we have another crusade to win. God wishes it. Let that be our rallying cry. Let us bring Christ back into everyday life. Let us win for truth and justice - and for the brave men who fight for truth and justice - a real place in the world of the future. A world in which men can work and live - fearing God and no man - where a father can greet his son coming home from play - without a lump in his throat - where a mother can smile at her baby boy - without feeling the biting pain of fear that this mite - is to be but another installment in payment for neglect and inattention to the duty which is ours.