

50th Anniversary Bishop Thomas F. Hendricken Assembly, Fourth Degree, Knights of Columbus, Alpine Country Club, June 23, 1962

On this golden anniversary of the Bishop Hendricken Assembly, I am both honored and happy to be able to join with everyone here tonight in paying tribute to the past accomplishments of this ~~great~~ <sup>Outstanding</sup> Assembly. And I share the belief that an even greater future lies ahead. As one who is very proud to be numbered in the distinguished company of the members of the Fourth Degree of the Knights of Columbus, I know that I express the sincere feelings of the thousands of our fellow Knights here in Rhode Island when I say that we have every confidence that Bishop Hendricken Assembly will continue to provide an outstanding example of Columbianism to us all.

~~The Knights of Columbus, as you know, marked its 80th anniversary this year. Founded in the parish rectory of St. Mary's Church in New Haven, it received its first charter in the State of Connecticut on March 29, 1882. At first its activities were confined to Connecticut, but in April of 1885 Rhode Island's Narragansett Council became the first council to carry the work of the Knights of Columbus beyond the borders of the State where it had begun. Consequently, Rhode Island played a pioneering role~~

~~in the growth of our organization, which today numbers 1,150,000 Catholic men in nearly 5,000 councils in all of the 50 States, the Provinces of Canada, in Newfoundland, Mexico, Cuba, Panama, Puerto Rico, and the Philippine Islands.~~

The early founders, ~~men like those~~ who formed the first Bishop Hendricken Assembly a half-century ago, were certainly men of great faith and loyalty to their Church and their nation. But they were also men of vision, men who looked to the future and dared to plan for the needs of the modern times in which we are now living and enjoying the benefits of their work. They understood the material needs which would arise, and the history of the charitable works associated with the name of the Knights of Columbus is outstanding.

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~~addition to their program of mutual aid and assistance, the early founders also sought to promote the social and intellectual improvement, not only of their own members, but of the entire community. Father Michael J. McGivney, the humble parish priest who became the first founder and is renowned in the history of our order,~~ was a man who saw far in

*They followed the example of*

*of our order*

*Fr. McGivney*

*ics*

advance of his time the Church's need for strong Catholic laymen who could play an important role as apostles of good will and enlightenment. From the beginning, the Knights of Columbus were dedicated to bringing about a better understanding of the Catholic religion, both for their fellow-Catholics and for those who are of different faiths.

I think that we may take justifiable pride in having had some share in the decline of religious bigotry in America. Many outstanding members of the Knights of Columbus have proven beyond all doubt their love and loyalty as Americans by giving their lives in our country's battles. Many others have gained the respect and affection of their fellow-citizens of other faiths by their conduct in civic, business, and professional life. Yet in addition to trying to teach the lessons of good example, our organization has actively supported a nationwide program of education in Catholicism through newspaper advertising and correspondence courses. This program has done a vast amount of good in spreading understanding through knowledge. Where there is

real knowledge, there can be no bigotry. And the Knights of Columbus have certainly done their part to spread the truth about our faith as widely as possible.

It is well for us to realize something of the full value of this work, not only as it affects the well-being of Catholics but as it benefits our whole country today. As Knights, we reach out to all of our fellow Americans in a variety of ways. Among the purposes stated in the original charter ~~was that of~~ <sup>was that of</sup> conducting educational, charitable, social welfare, war relief and welfare, and public relief work. Through such means we help to bind our entire nation into a deeper unity based upon mutual respect and understanding for all groups. Men of good will build good will in others. And in these critical days when Communism seeks to divide free men from one another by stirring up hatred, it is most important that all of us here in America should stand united for the common good of all.

The challenge of our times is, of course, not limited to the defense of freedom. We wish not only to defend what we have

but also to achieve further progress in the direction of a better life for all. As once Columbus stood upon the edge of the known world and dared to press forward to the unknown horizon of the Atlantic, so we must have the daring and the vision necessary for a new age of exploration. Research in every field is constantly opening up new perspectives, and youngsters today dream of flights through space with the reasonable assurance that such flights will actually be accomplished by them within the not-so-distant future.

Our society today calls for greater expansion, greater productivity. We simply cannot afford to be under-achievers. We must come to our full potentiality in every area of our economic life. The great man for whom this Assembly was named set an example which has been followed by every one of his distinguished successors in the Diocese of Providence. In the years between 1872 and 1886, Bishop Hendricken, as the first Bishop of Providence, built and established many parishes and parochial schools. He had a deep confidence in the Divine Will, and he built for a growing

and expanding future for the Church in this State. The example of Bishop Hendricken and the pioneering spirit he represents should cause all of us who celebrate this fiftieth anniversary to dedicate ourselves once more to the concept of a growing Church in a growing America.

Of course, we all realize that everything depends upon our being able to live in a peaceful world. The present Holy Father, Pope John XXIII, has made " Peace " and " Unity " the keynotes of his own reign as the modern successor to St. Peter. And he has called upon the Catholic laity to work for the increase of peace and understanding among all men.

In spite of all the strife which still marks the international scene, we may be encouraged to know that there are many forces at work to bring about a truly more peaceful world. Recently I had the honor of once again serving with the United States Delegation at a meeting of the World Health Assembly. On four different occasions I have served in this capacity and I have been increasingly impressed by the way in which the efforts

of leading medical research men in many nations are serving to draw the world closer together in understanding.

International medical research plays a vital role in mankind's endeavor to conquer hunger, disability, suffering, and premature death. It is not a weapon in the cold war. It stands outside of the international political arena and brings together dedicated people on a scientist to scientist basis. Their common goal is the welfare of humanity. Their enemies are such things as malaria, cancer, tuberculosis, and all the ills that plague us -- regardless of our political ideas.

The United States has done much to intensify international medical and health research. Under the International Health Research Act, which I introduced in the House of Representatives in 1960, a very clear distinction was made between existing foreign aid programs and the program of grants for the support of medical research abroad. This program helps to support foreign medical research when such studies will advance the health of the United States as well as that of the country in which the research happens to be conduc-

ted. It is neither an aid nor a welfare program but it does help to bring together and encourage scientists of other countries in cooperation with those of our own, *thus building understanding and peace.*

I tell you of this because I know that as members of the Knights of Columbus you are yourselves working for that world order and world peace which is so close to the heart of the Pope and of good men of all religious beliefs. Those who share a high common purpose in all parts of the world are, like the men of international medical research, helping to broaden the areas of international understanding. ~~by working together on common projects~~ And I am convinced that such constructive efforts cannot be in vain. *#* All of us who are privileged to share membership in the Knights of Columbus are part of an organization which is dedicated to the cause of making ~~the world a~~ better place through the spread of the teachings of Christ. Each one of us works in his own way to achieve that end. Tonight as we look back over fifty years of the Bishop Hendricken Assembly we can see that what has been accomplished goes far beyond the highest expectations of those who founded it. *As we look to* ~~let each one here~~



the future, we are justified in expecting an even more abundant  
 era of progress in Columbianism. Building on the great heritage  
 of the past, all of us who are Knights can join together in making  
 our order a living symbol of the primary importance of religious  
 and moral truth. Insofar as we succeed in doing that, we ~~will~~  
~~will~~ will be doing our part in meeting the greatest  
 need of our generation. ~~and~~  
~~and~~