



# A Priest for the Family

*August is a special time to remember the life and legacy of the Order's founder and to pray for his intercession*

by Brian Caulfield

**F**ather Michael J. McGivney, the founder of the Knights of Columbus, was born Aug. 12, 1852, and died Aug. 14, 1890, two days after his 38th birthday. The week in which these dates fall each year is Knights of Columbus Family Week, a time when councils are encouraged to schedule family events. But you can call upon Father McGivney's intercession whenever family issues arise and invoke him by his titles: Apostle to the Young and Protector of Christian Family Life.

Father McGivney, whose cause for canonization remains open at the Vatican, was declared venerable in 2008. Knights and their families are urged to pray daily for his intercession in matters large and small, and to report any favors received. The Father Michael J. McGivney Guild investigates reports of possible miracles — extraordinary physical healings experienced after invoking Father McGivney's aid. Inquiry into a reported miracle is a long and painstaking process, but we pray that one of these events will be accepted by the Vatican and open the way to his beatification. A second miracle would then be needed for canonization.

In the meantime, all Knights should be encouraged by the great number of answered prayers reported by those who ask for Father McGivney's intercession. These favors indicate that the Order's founder is still at work in the lives of his Knights and their families, and among the Catholic faithful. In fact, they suggest that Father McGivney, from his place in eternity, is concerned about many of the same problems that he dealt with as a priest on earth. Most reported favors fall in four areas:

**Employment and finances.** Just as his parishioners looked to Father McGivney for guidance at a time when the words "No Irish need apply" were often included in job postings, so today many pray to him when they are laid off or seeking a better job. For example, a grateful woman recently reported, "My husband persevered in prayer for Father McGivney to intercede for him to find a new job, and his prayers were answered."

**Substance abuse.** In Father McGivney's day, alcohol abuse afflicted the immigrant population, and he founded a parish "total abstinence" society. Many now ask for help with drug or alcohol abuse, including a relieved mother who called the guild to say that her adult son had entered a rehabilitation program after she prayed to Father McGivney.

**Family reconciliation.** Divisions sometimes occurred within immigrant families struggling to make ends meet, and they are not uncommon today with the increase of divorce. A mother recently wrote that her two grown sons were on bad terms, but after she prayed for a week, their "relationship was good again. I know in my heart Father McGivney answered my prayer!"

**Return to the faith.** Father McGivney founded the Order to keep men from joining anti-Catholic secret societies that promised financial benefits. Today, many Catholics call upon him to help their fallen-away children. "I prayed to Father McGivney daily for 14 days that a family member would return to our Catholic faith," one person reported. "After 30 years away, they have returned and now sit beside me every Sunday at Mass."

A mother wrote happily, "I prayed a novena regularly for six months to Venerable Father McGivney, imploring his help for my son and daughter-in-law to return to the Church. This month, they enrolled in their parish and are attending Mass. My prayers were answered!"

As we celebrate the Order's founder and Knights of Columbus Family Week, let us continue to pray for Father McGivney's canonization and invoke his intercession as we face life's many challenges. Venerable Michael McGivney, pray for us!♦

BRIAN CAULFIELD is vice postulator of the cause for canonization of Venerable Father Michael J. McGivney and editor of Fathers for Good, an initiative of the Knights of Columbus.

