



# Knights of St Columba eColumba December 2021

## How the Knights have helped Prison Chaplains to help those in prison.



Think of the inside of a prison - we can only see a dispiriting, harsh, noisy, overcrowded, fearful establishment.

This advent, the Society of St Vincent de Paul in England linked with the Knights of St Columba to distribute the traditional and very successful Christmas poster in considerable numbers to many prisons in England. The posters were sent to the prisons through the Catholic Chaplains, many of whom are Lay Chaplains.

The brightly coloured Christmas poster was so well received because it brightened up grim prison walls.

Some posters were given out at Mass to prisoners to put on the walls of their cells. Other posters were put up on the walls of the prison wings (Sometimes called halls, or houses).

One prison Chaplain – in this case an Anglican Priest – sends every prisoner who is interested a monthly faith pack and in December, this faith pack included the KSC poster.

Chaplains work together ecumenically. Thus the wonderful Christmas message on the Knight's poster is just as attractive to those from the other Churches as well.

One Lay Chaplain working in a prison in south east England emailed: -

“All posters have been given out and all have been well received...men loved the bright colours and the message... as one of the men said “what’s not to like about peace and love”

Many of the men remembered seeing the poster (or one similar) in their Church (or taken home from Church) when they were with family over Christmas and this was a lovely memory for lots of them.”

A Catholic Priest who is the managing Chaplain at a large Prison in the north of England emailed : -

“We have started distributing them to the Catholic prisoners with their Christmas resources packs. They have been received very well and under the circumstances they will certainly remind them of the Christmas festival, as well as brightening up their accommodation. “

In total about 1400 posters were circulated to 27 prisons.

The Society of St Vincent de Paul would like to look at this idea with the Knights in the Autumn of 2022. One suggestion is to offer the posters at a smaller size but in bigger numbers so they could fit more easily onto the walls of a prisoner's cell.

The SVP Prisons Group now has established some links with prison Chaplains and hopefully these are foundations to greater Vincentian work in the field of prisoners and prison families in future years.

So from the Prison Group within the SVP in England, a big thanks to all in the community of the Knights of St Columba. In particular the SVP thanks the Membership in Province 21, Burnley and Tom Hatton from Council 577, Standish, near Wigan.

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For further information about the SVP and local prisons in your area, Tel: 0207 703 3030 (during COVID, this number will go to voicemail, though regularly monitored) or [info@svp.org.uk](mailto:info@svp.org.uk) or 07504 130749

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## THANK YOU!

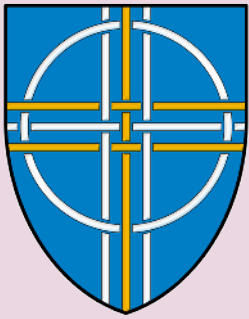
The Knights of St Columba wish to thank Fr Brendan and the Knights of St Columbanus for their wonderful Advent Talks that we were able to join on Zoom.

The response we have received from Brothers has been nothing short of amazing and they have been so thankful for having the chance to join in these talks.

We wish all the Knights of St Columbanus and their families a Holy and Merry Christmas and a Peaceful and Prosperous New Year



**Fraternally Harry Welsh Supreme Knight**



# INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF CATHOLIC KNIGHTS

*Apostles of the Third Millennium*

**Christmas Messages 2021**

Dear Brother Knights, It very strange in these days of the pandemic to note how many voices around the world are talking about cancelling Christmas as we continue to face up to the effects of the new variants of the coronavirus. I don't believe that you can cancel Christmas even though I fully understand what they mean. Maybe we will not have the office parties and large gatherings of friends in restaurants which usually accompany our celebration of the feast but most people throughout the world don't have those kinds of festivities in the first place. Our churches will remain open during Christmas and welcome people of all faiths to join in our Christmas Masses and carols. It is worth remembering that it is in the celebration of the Mass that we celebrate the incarnation of Jesus every day of the year not just on 25 December. Yes, Christmas may be muted but hardly cancelled.

For Christians the joy of Christmas is found in the Eucharist and the crib. We give thanks to God for the gift of his Son who cries out from the manger to remind us of the continuing plight of the homeless, refugees and those escaping terror. When we gather as far as restrictions allow us, we remember what it is to be a family no matter how few we are or how distant we are from each other. The Holy Family was only three people yet proved to be the source of a great love which has overflowed into our lives two millennia later. May your families have the child Jesus at its centre, it too will be a source of love – a true source of strength for the year ahead.

May the child Jesus bestow his blessings upon you and your families this festive season, and bring you peace in 2022.

**Archbishop Malcolm McMahon OP**

## **A Christmas message from the International President of IACK**

I am very honoured to once again share the President's Christmas Message to the Brothers, Ladies and Families of the International Alliance of Catholic Knights. For a second year we approach the great feast of the Nativity of the Lord under the shadow of Coronavirus. Indeed at the moment the Omicron variant has raised the fear level in my country of Scotland and as I write this message my own order has had to cancel an initiation mass and ceremony due tonight.

We also approach the great feast with so much uncertainty in our world as more and more countries face famine and unrest; as millions of unborn babies are aborted every year; as more countries try to introduce euthanasia and as the plight of refugees and asylum seekers seems to go unheard.

But we must remember that fear worry despair, uncertainty and rejection also play a role in the Christmas story. The despair of St Joseph as he finds out Mary is pregnant. The worry of having to travel to Bethlehem whilst she is pregnant. The rejection that there is no room at the inn. The fear of Herod's slaughter of the innocents. The uncertainty of being a refugee in Egypt.

But in the end their trust in God, and his love sustained and protected them, and Jesus Christ was born in that stable in Bethlehem.

Therefore, as Knights we must also put our trust in the Lord. We must remember the great message to love our neighbours as ourselves and it is wonderful to see many of our Orders organising events to help those who need our help. It is also fantastic to see the support for human life from conception to a natural death being promoted throughout the countries we have a presence.

So therefore as we gather with our families before the Holy Eucharist and in our homes this year to celebrate the wonder of our Lord being among us, we recommit ourselves in the year ahead to follow the great principles of Charity Love and Fraternity which run through the heart of all our Orders.

Sandra and I wish you a most Holy and Blessed Christmas and a wonderful new year.

**Fraternally Charlie McCluskey KSG**