



# KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS®

Brother Knights:

We are all aware of the troubling events that are occurring today, including attacks on statues of historical figures such as Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglass and our Order's namesake, Christopher Columbus. Statues of saints have also been vandalized, including those honoring St. Junípero Serra, St. Louis and even the Blessed Virgin Mary, and houses of worship and other religious symbols have been attacked. These are not merely attacks on statues and history. They are increasing attacks on Catholics and people of faith.

In the late 19th century, the Knights of Columbus took its name at a time of intense anti-Catholicism. Our founding members wanted to show that Catholics played an essential role in the exploration and development of America since its earliest days, and that a Catholic could be both a good citizen and a good Catholic.

However, anti-Catholicism persisted. In the 1920s, the Ku Klux Klan tried to stop Columbus Day celebrations and opposed Columbus statues simply because Columbus was a Catholic. We opposed the KKK then and have continued to stand up against bigotry directed at Catholics and others.

We stood up against the persecution of Catholics in Mexico in the 1920s, spoke out for the Jews of Germany in the 1930s and worked for religious freedom behind the Iron Curtain during the Cold War. Today, we are rebuilding Christian communities in the Middle East that were targeted for genocide. Each of us can be proud of our history of standing up for the most vulnerable among us.

While our faith calls us to be respectful of different perspectives, acts of vandalism are crimes against all who cherish democracy and mutual respect. The Knights of Columbus remains firm in its condemnation of all forms of racism and violence, including political violence. With churches, statues, and religious symbols subject to vandalism and attack, we call upon elected officials and leaders at every level to defend the religious freedom of all.

*Vivat Jesus!*

Carl A. Anderson  
*Supreme Knight*