

**Homily for the Knights of Columbus Hall of Fame Mass  
The Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time – Cycle B**

**October 13, 2018**

**Saint Ambrose Parish  
Godfrey, Illinois**

**†Most Reverend Thomas John Paprocki  
Bishop of Springfield in Illinois**

Reverend Fathers, deacons, esteemed members of the Knights of Columbus, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, it is good that we are here as we give thanks and praise to almighty God as we celebrate this Springfield Knights of Columbus Hall of Fame Mass.

For members of the sporting world, the ultimate honor for an athlete is to be inducted into the Hall of Fame, a distinction which recognizes a career marked by excellence and achievement. Being inducted into the Hall of Fame is an opportunity for the individual to celebrate, as well as to provide an opportunity for family, friends, and fans to join in that celebration as a sign of their gratitude for the contribution that player has made to the game.

Later this evening, the Knights of Columbus will be honoring some members from throughout the diocese by inducting them into their Hall of Fame for the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois. These men stand out as

examples of what it looks like to live this life of preparation for the coming of the Lord. Their love of Jesus Christ and His Church has moved them to share their time and energy to support the many good works of mercy undertaken by the Knights, works which are very much at the heart of the Gospel way of life. While their deeds have been noticed by others, they recognize that the glory belongs to God, and the true recognition for which they long is to be counted among the members of the Church's Hall of Fame in Heaven, the Communion of Saints.

Just as with the Hall of Fame in sports, the saints are men and women who during their lives excelled in their career as disciples of Jesus Christ. The saints are those who gave up everything to follow our Lord and to spread the good news of the Gospel. They are certainly those who conformed their lives to the message of our Lord in today's Gospel.

Just a few moments ago, we heard a familiar passage from the Gospel according to Saint Mark, in which he recounts the story of the young man who preferred worldly goods to Christ himself. We heard how Jesus and his disciples were about to embark on their journey to Jerusalem when a young man ran up and knelt before our Lord. *Good teacher*, he said, *what must I do to inherit eternal life?* Then we hear how our Lord replied that he should follow

the Commandments in order to inherit eternal life. The young man answered that he had indeed done that, that he had followed the Law ever since he was a child. Our Lord looked upon him, and loved him, and invited the young man to sell all of his earthly possessions and then come follow Him, after which the young man went away sad, for he was unwilling to give up everything that stood in the way of his relationship with God.

In reflecting on this story, Pope Saint John Paul the Great once said:

Jesus looked with great affection at this bold young man...and He beckoned him: Follow me. Walk in my path! Stand by my side! Remain in my love! <sup>1</sup>

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our Lord looks on us with the same love and we too have received this invitation. Even today, our Lord asks us to come and follow Him and, like the saints, to give up those things that stand in the way of our loving our Lord in return.

In light of this realization, we must ask ourselves whether we are willing to give ourselves totally to our Lord without holding anything back, or whether we, like the young man in today's Gospel, will walk away sad because we think the things of this world will make us happier than being with Christ. My hope is that all of us can whole-heartedly say that we are committed to following Christ as His disciple and are willing to give up

those things that stand in the way of accepting our Lord's call to come and follow Him.

This call, these words, *Come and follow me*, are the same words our Lord spoke to those who were closest to Him. These words are an invitation to us to enter ever more deeply into a relationship with Him, forsaking anything that stands in the way.

As we continue this Mass, we come to the altar which unites us through the Eucharistic sacrifice to the saints in the heavenly banquet. Therefore, let us ask their intercession that we might be given the grace to follow their example and respond to our Lord's invitation to come and follow Him, so that we may one day enter into the eternal Hall of Fame that is Heaven and eternal life.

May God give us this grace. Amen.

---

<sup>1</sup> Saint John Paul II, Homily on Boston Common, 1 October 1979.