



Knights of Columbus - Council #12456 San Antonio Parish, Port Charlotte, FL

A History

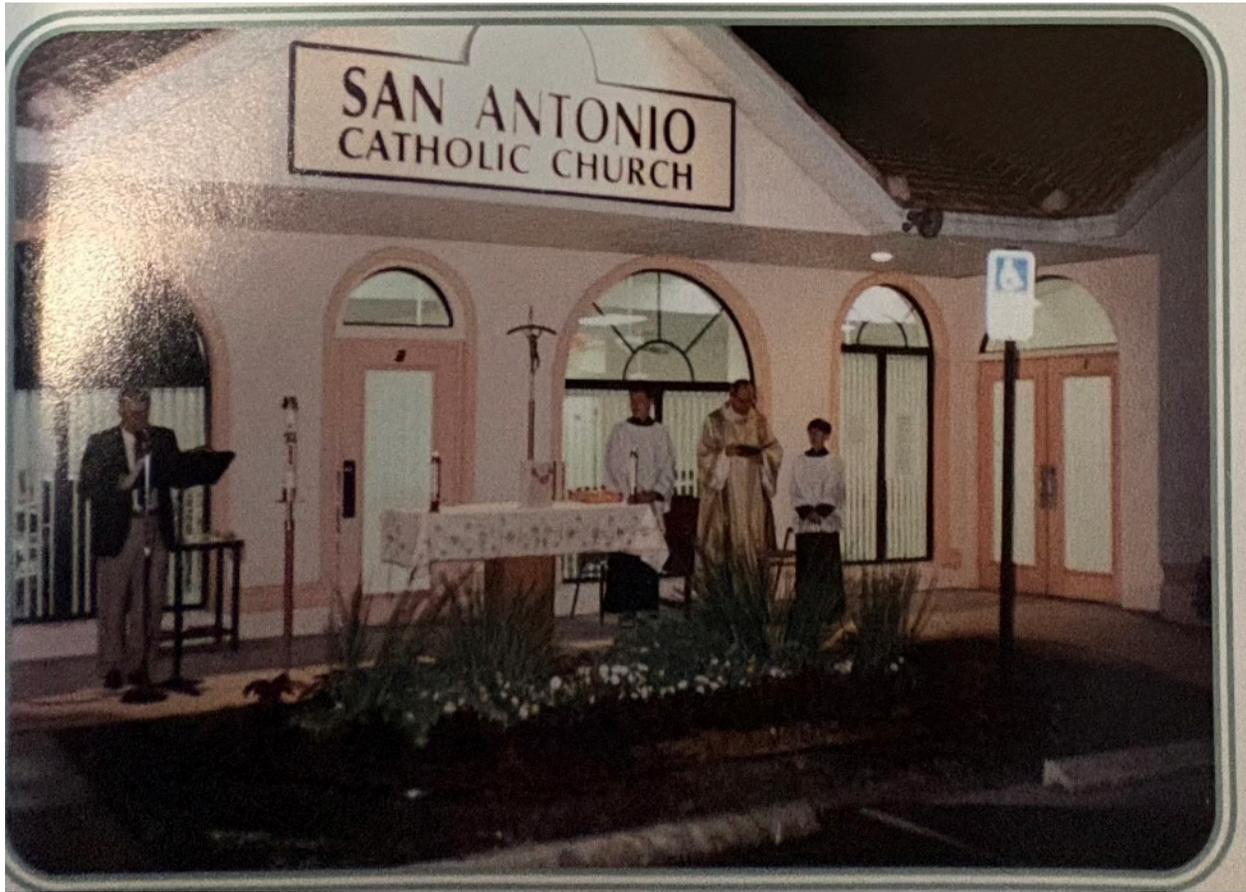


Most histories start with one man, our man was Blessed Father Michael J McGivney.

“Late-19th century Connecticut was marked by the growing fraternal benefit societies, anti-Catholic prejudice and dangerous factory working conditions that left many families fatherless. Recognizing a need in his community, Blessed Michael J. McGivney, the 29-year-old assistant pastor of St. Mary’s Church in New Haven, Conn., gathered a group of men at his parish on Oct. 2, 1881. He proposed establishing a lay organization to prevent Catholic men from entering secret societies antithetical to Church teaching, uniting Catholic men and helping families of deceased members.

To demonstrate their loyalty to their country as well as their faith, these men took Christopher Columbus — recognized as a Catholic and celebrated as the discoverer of America – as their patron. The Knights of Columbus elected officers in February 1882 and assumed corporate status on March 29.

In addition to the Order’s benefits, Catholic men were drawn to the Knights because of its emphasis on serving one’s Church, community, and family with virtue. Fraternity and patriotism were added to the Knights’ founding principles of charity and unity in 1885 and 1900, respectively.” from KOC national website.

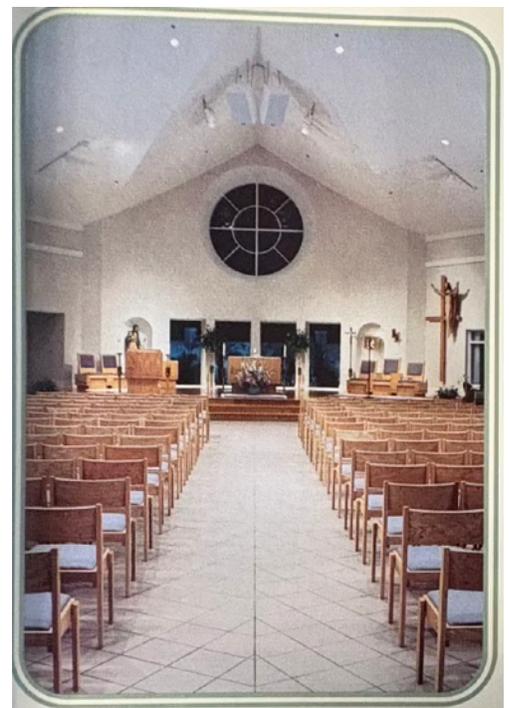


Now fast forward to 1992 - San Antonio Catholic Church began as a mission on Sept 8th, 1992. The mission from St Charles Borromeo parish grew to 300 families and held mass and daily operations for a while at storefronts in the shopping center on Sandhill Ave. The new church occupied 3 storefronts next to what is now Deep Creek Convenience Center opposite Beef O' Brady's.



For awhile Mass was celebrated in the banquet room of Victoria Estates now known as Kings Gate.

“On April 20, 1993 San Antonio became a parish. The Diocese of Venice named our parish in memory of the first Spanish Catholic Mission built on the shores of the Peace River in 1567. On the Feast of St Anthony of Padua, June 13, 1994 ground was broken on Rampart Ave., Port Charlotte, FL to build our provisional church. Our present facility opened on the Feast of St Anthony in 1995 . . . 800 years after St Anthony’s death.” - from Parish Overview



October 15, 1995



Dedication Mass



Parishioners Participate In Church Dedication





The Knights held meetings at first from the rear of San Antonio Church. A divider (gray door) was pulled out from the wall which allowed for meeting rooms to be created. PGK Sir Bill Keller (94) took great pleasure as a sliding door opener because he was one of a few that was able to open the curtains without the curtain coming off the railing.

Social activities took place there as well. The first “Knight at the Races” was held in the San Antonio Church proper with the chairs stacked up and pushed to the side according to past Financial Secretary and Membership Director, Sir Bill Keller who also made the first horses. He said many of the Knights had multiple offices as there was so few of them at first. For many years he was a money counter for the new church, for example. PGK Bill Keller was a Grand Knight in Maryland before being one of the Council’s early members.



Former Grand Knight Andy Moran (83) shows off the old kitchen that the Council used with pink cabinets. He arrived before the new Ministry Center was built with its new kitchen (on the right) but both with no stoves.

“The kitchen in the ministry building would need to come up to current fire code standards which would cost well into the tens of thousands of dollars ... and so we’ve installed a “reheating unit” for our pot-luck dinners. Or we’ve had some events catered.” -[Sir Andy Moran](#)

The Good Shepherd Ministry Center was started on 1 May 2005 and finished for the June 13, 2007 dedication by Bishop Frank J. Dewane. Now the Knights meet in Rooms 1&2 in the Ministry Center and use the bigger kitchen shown located just down the hall.



Anthony Tanuzzi Columbian Squires



The Council sponsored a “Cadet KOC Corp” for the young 10 - 18. They were known as the Columbian Squires. The picture is dated (2008). Sir Anthony Tannuzzi was a PGK of the Council.

“The Columbian Squires is an international youth fraternity run by the Knights of Columbus for Catholic boys between the ages of 10 and 18.

[1]The Squires were established under the direction of Brother Barnabas McDonald, F.S.C., together with Supreme Director Daniel A. Tobin on August 4, 1925. At that time there was a national interest in youth in the United States, as reflected by the development of the Boy Scouts of America and the Big Brother movement.

As of 2016, the formation of new Squire Circles in the United States and Canada was discouraged, since the Catholic Church has a desire to move youth activities from exclusive clubs into the local parish youth groups.” . . .

[Wikipedia](#)



As such The San Antonio Council later stopped sponsoring the Squires.





Council #12456 was/is a very active Council earning many awards.





(PGK Anthony Tannuzzi, PKG Gene Murphy, PKG Anthony Maglione)

“When Tony Tannuzzi became Grand Knight in 2003 the Council had little social life - Tony changed all of that. We had our first picnic the Beach Complex, Turkey dinner at Thanksgiving, First Dinner Dance held at Kings Gate. Most were chaired by PGK Murphy

At the Church hall we had our first Pasta Dinner served 80 people - PGK Sir Gene Murphy had the first Past GrandKnight Dinner honoring PGK Sir Tony Maglione - PKG Sir Tony Tannuzzi - PGK Sir Matt Felber. (Note: Sir Matt Felber was a PGK at another Council in Pennsylvania). Sir Matt Felber started the first Christmas Party.

We had our first Christmas dinner at the Cap n Cowboy - for that year then moved to the Charlotte Yacht Club with over 200 people - Knights wore their Tux's and jackets- Women got all dressed up. Did this for a few years until costs got too high and then moved to Kings Gate.

All these programs still exist and are part of the Council.

Over the years we did St Patrick's Day dinner - Polish night dinner, etc. For a number of years we rang bells for the Salvation Army at Christmas time. There is an award in our showcase. The show case was made by Sir Matt Felber.

We gave annual awards to altar boys.”

**Words from Past Grand Knight and early member of
KOC Council 12456 - Sir Gene Murphy**



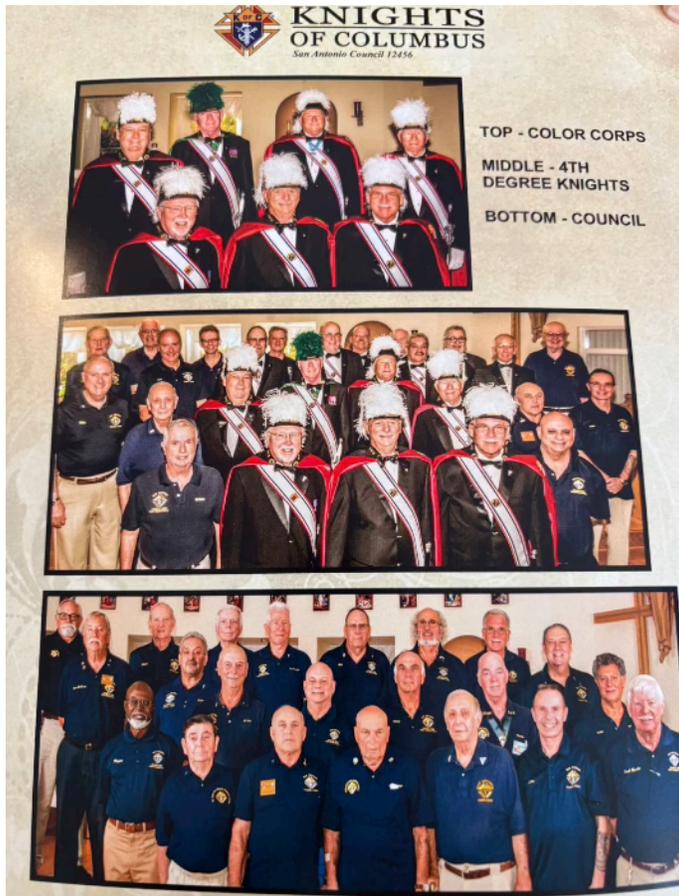


Tony Maglione, Bob Pajanacuske, Gene Murphy

“Council #12456 witnessed the formation of the San Antonio Columbiettes”

- PGK Sir Al Cotes





(2017)



(2008)





Effective June 10, 2017 the Supreme Council of the Knights decided to modernize the look after 79 years of the old regalia, which included a ceremonial cape and chapeau, a tuxedo, white gloves and a sword. The supreme council decided to change the uniform in an effort to attract younger men to the order. This was announced at the KOC Convention in St Louis on August 1, 2017.



The 4th Degree Honor Guard at Honor Flight April 16, 2024 - Punta Gorda Airport

The leadership of San Antonio Knights of Columbus have magnificently performed their duties which have allowed the member Knights to best represent what Fr. McGivney envisioned in his organization that stressed Charity, Unity, Fraternity, and Patriotism.



Since its founding San Antonio Council #12456 activities have grown in number and size as evidence from recent pictures of the “2025 Knights at the Races” and the “2025 Annual Picnic” demonstrate. Please also go to the Council’s website for pictures of other activities - koccouncil12456.com.

2025 “Knights at the Races”



2025 San Antonio Annual Picnic



2018 Christmas Dinner at the Charlotte Yacht Club



Fr. McGivney's humble beginnings have now grown to 2,000,000 + world wide Catholic men of which San Antonio Council #12456 is a valued member. All have stressed the values of Charity, Unity, Fraternity, and Patriotism. Council #12456 has grown to 230 members as of 2026.

Respectfully submitted,

Howard Bushnell (80)

Knights of Columbus, Council #12456

Vivat Jesus

