News



Utah Knights of Columbus 4th Degree District Marshall Richard Vigor, center, is flanked by members of the West Valley City Police Department following the Knights' collection drive for stuffed animals for traumatized children. (Courtesy of Andy Airriess)



by Dan Morris-Young

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Long active in St. Joseph Parish, a multiethnic community in Fullerton, Maryland, Jim O'Leary shares about the intersection of spirituality and space as he retires after more than four decades of a career that orbited around space and science.

Another Catholic long involved in the U.S. space program, including tenure as NASA's flight director, Gene Kranz advocates establishing scientific habitats on the moon similar to those in the Arctic and Antarctica. "The challenge of a long-term facility and learning to use the resources of the moon is needed for scientific and economic objectives, not political reasons. It needs to be a world project," says Kranz, a member of Shrine of the True Cross Church in Dickinson, Texas, as reported by the Texas Catholic Herald.

Speaking of faith and space: While it was not the Catholic Eucharist, astronaut Buzz Aldrin, now 89, took Communion (Presbyterian) while aboard the Eagle lunar lander. It was hush-hush at the time.

Following the loss of a son almost 18 years ago due to premature labor at 20 weeks, Jeannette and Bill Dorner founded Beloved Little Ones ministry at Our Lady Queen of Heaven Parish in Tacoma, Washington. "You assume this situation is unique. You don't realize how many people experience this loss," Bill Dorner told Northwest Catholic magazine. Beloved Little Ones has donated some 6,500 items to area hospitals for families who have lost a baby.

"Just know when you see a fire truck, police car or ambulance, chances are there are stuffed animals in it, animals donated by our generous parishioners," wrote Andy Airriess in a fundraising appeal to Catholics of Utah's Salt Lake Valley "and beyond." He was describing a Knights of Columbus drive that led to collection of more than 3,000 stuffed animals — unicorns and bears and dogs and frogs and more — to be shared by first responders with children impacted by domestic violence, auto accidents, home fires, family deaths and other traumatic events. Airriess is former state deputy of the Knights' Utah Council.

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Speaking of the Knights: St. Timothy Knights of Columbus Council 10802 based at Church of St. Timothy in Escondido, California, recently donated more than $6,000 to Lamb of God Maternity Home, a Christian facility in Escondido serving expectant mothers.

The pastor of Resurrection Parish in Santa Rosa, California, was arrested for theft after police found more than $18,000 in cash in his trunk following a June 19 car accident. An investigation revealed that Fr. Oscar Diaz, 56, also had more than $95,000 in collection bags in his parish office and home. Santa Rosa Bishop Robert Vasa wrote an open letter about the situation. Fr. Aaron DePeyster has been named temporary parochial administrator.

[Dan Morris-Young is NCR West Coast correspondent.]

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