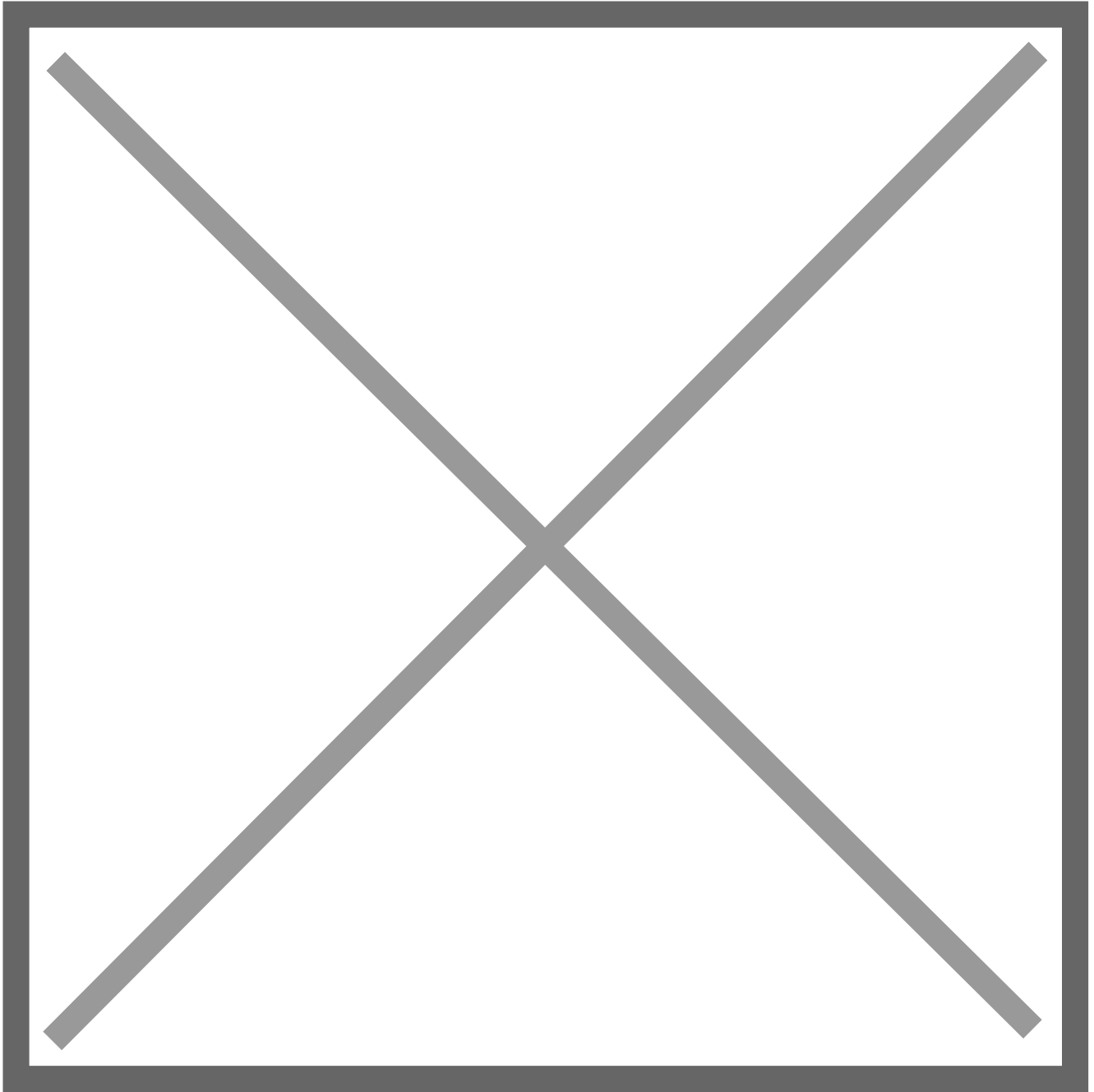


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Denver Archbishop James Golka delivers the homily during Mass Aug. 4, 2026, at the 144th Supreme Convention of the Knights of Columbus in Denver. (OSV News/Denver Catholic/André Escaleira Jr.)

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Denver — August 6, 2026

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In a moving display of the Catholic Church's unity, thousands of Knights of Columbus from around the world gathered in Denver for their 144th Supreme Convention Aug. 4-6.

With some members and their families traveling from as far as the Philippines, South Korea, Ukraine, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania and Spain to attend, the convention sought to focus on Pope Leo XIV's unifying episcopal motto: "In the One, we are one."

Coming together in the order's principles of charity, unity, fraternity and patriotism, the gathering represented the Knights' commitment to spreading the Gospel and building up Christ's Church, even to the ends of the earth.

The convention opened Aug. 4 with a special Mass celebrated by Denver Archbishop James Golka, along with dozens of bishops and hundreds of priests concelebrating and deacons assisting.

For the archbishop, the liturgy was personal: He is a fourth-degree Knight; his six brothers are Knights; and his late father, Robert, was a Knight, too. In fact, in 2021, the year Golka was named bishop of Colorado Springs, his family was named Family of the Year by the Knights of Columbus Nebraska State Council.

"The Knights of Columbus exists to help our men grow in their faith, and they sure did for my dad," Golka said in his homily.

Recounting his own journey of faith and vocation, the archbishop highlighted God's providence in each of our lives and in the Knights of Columbus's work.

Facing a \$252 car repair while in seminary, a young Jim Golka didn't know where to turn except to God. After a quick, simple prayer, he checked his seminary mailbox to find a letter from the Knights of Columbus in Ogallala, Nebraska — a council he'd never visited. They had hosted a pancake breakfast and decided to split the proceeds between him and another seminarian. Golka's share? \$253.

"If you listen to God's will for you and say yes, God will absolutely take care of you, amen? And he'll even give you an extra dollar for a cup of coffee," he said with a chuckle. "And God wants the Knights of Columbus to help him care for his children. God wants the Knights of Columbus to help carry out God's purposes. God wants the Knights of Columbus to live for God and God's purposes, not ours. And when we do that, we care for the people of God."

Archbishop Gabriele Caccia, the papal nuncio to the United States, opened an afternoon session with words of reflection on the Knights of Columbus' mission in this apostolic age.

He also introduced a special video message from Pope Leo XIV, who urged the Knights to be living witnesses of unity and charity in a world often marked by division. Reflecting on the convention theme, he said Christian unity must be actively nurtured through humble dialogue and bridge-building in families, parishes and communities.

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Leo also praised the order's longstanding charitable work, highlighting its support for unborn children, expectant mothers, persecuted Christians, trafficking victims and others in need. The pope thanked the Knights for their service and imparted his apostolic blessing to members and their families.

Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly of the Knights of Columbus then took to the dais to deliver his annual report, a comprehensive summary of the worldwide activity of the Knights of Columbus over the past year.

Amid a lengthy litany of the Knights' good works was a profound commitment to charity, service and love of neighbor — with over 48 million hours of volunteer service and more than \$200 million given to charity worldwide, a new record for the organization. That charity was made possible, in part, due to a near record-high number of new Knights, with 105,000 men being welcomed into the order worldwide — many of them men under 35.

The number of new Knights, Kelly said, is rivaled only by the post-World War II boom of new membership.

"Just as Christ came to serve, we devote our lives to serving others, especially the vulnerable," Kelly said. "All of our charity reflects the love of God. It's a charity that evangelizes."

That charity took many forms: wheelchairs and warm coats to those in need; emergency response to the horrific shooting during a school Mass at Annunciation Church in Minneapolis and the natural disasters in Venezuela and Hawaii; support for persecuted and war-torn communities in the Holy Land, Ukraine, Benin and Nigeria; religious liberty advocacy; aid for wounded warriors; and partnerships with the Special Olympics and pro-life clinics.

"We are not just another charitable organization. We are not a social club," Kelly emphasized. "We are a global brotherhood of Catholic leaders — and we are united in Jesus Christ. He is the source of our strength. And as we reflect on the past year, we give all the glory to God."

That charity, both Golka and Kelly emphasized, flows from communion with God — Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Apart from him, all charitable works come to nothing.

"We could be busy about many, many good activities, but if they have not been planted by God, they're going to fail," the archbishop said in his homily. "We can have good intentions, but if it's not God's plan, it's going to fail, so what must we do before we do anything? Listen to God, beg God for clarity on what is his plan."

Emphasizing that God already has a plan for the Knights of Columbus, for individuals, families and marriages, Golka exhorted those gathered to become experts in listening to God.

"My brothers and sisters, whenever I look at Jesus to find out his plan, he is never anxious. He is never afraid. He's excited to show us who he is," the archbishop said. "So let us open our ears and our hearts and our eyes so we can know better his plan for you, for our life, for the Knights of Columbus, for the entire world, so that God can get his world back through our humble service."

To bolster Knights' faith and help them better hear the voice of God, the Knights of Columbus launched Cor, a small-group program meant "to give young men exactly what they are looking for — a community centered in Jesus Christ."

In addition, Kelly announced a new video retreat in partnership with ACTS XXIX and a new video series in partnership with Denver-based Christ in the City, with reflection and practical tips to serve the homeless.

In these ways, Kelly said, the Knights of Columbus "are rising to meet this moment," in which interest in the Catholic Church has grown sharply, with some parishes and dioceses seeing record-high numbers of converts.

"These converts are searching for compelling answers. They are fleeing the isolation and incoherence that define our time," Kelly explained. "They need real friendship and real connection — and they are finding it in the Catholic Church."

Kelly concluded his report by lifting up Kendrick Castillo as a perfect exemplar of this youthful zeal for faith and service. Castillo, 18, jumped in front of a gunman at the Highlands Ranch STEM School in suburban Denver, giving his life to save the lives of his classmates when he was fatally shot May 7, 2019.

Known for his service to the community through the Knights of Columbus, Castillo had always desired to join the order, but had only just become old enough at the time of his death. So, in 2019, the Knights of Columbus posthumously welcomed him. The Diocese of Colorado Springs continues to review his life for a potential cause of canonization.

"We will always look up to your son, our brother Knight, Kendrick Castillo!" Kelly promised, turning to John and Maria Castillo, Kendrick's parents, who were present in the audience.