

PENNY-A-KNIGHT-A-DAY

The Wisconsin State Council's Penny-a-Knight-a-Day [P.K.D.] program can trace its roots to 1970, during the term of then State Deputy Edward Quillin of La Crosse. The P.K.D. program was designed to demonstrate Wisconsin Knights of Columbus' support for Catholic education and our bishops' mission to provide Catholic families in their respective diocese access to quality education opportunities.

The P.K.D. program began and continues today to be focused on soliciting voluntary contributions to promote its efforts. Recognizing that Knights of Columbus members' families have significant financial obligations, the program's founders wanted to make participation both affordable and symbolic. In 1970, a penny – one cent was an amount any member could set aside daily without burden to his family. Annualized, the daily contributions totaled \$3.65, which was about the cost of one carton of cigarettes in 1970. Symbolically, the Knights of Columbus who smoked were asked to forego a carton of cigarettes over the course of a year, less than one cigarette per day. The penance seemed inconsequential for the good that could be done to support a value to which all Catholics can ascribe.

The program's other charm is that its proceeds have always benefited the diocese from which they are generated. The Wisconsin State Council's administrative office faithfully tracks contributions by subordinate councils, segregating them by diocese. Each year, the amount collected in each diocese is presented to the bishop by the state deputy at the diocesan meeting. Because the subordinate councils in each diocese are represented at the diocesan meetings, this is an opportunity for members to affirm with their presence as well as their financial resources the Order's support for our bishops and their teachings authority.

In today's term, the penny represents far less value in its purchasing power. Whereas in 1970 the penny could buy some small amount of candy or chewing gum, or could be used to "plug" a parking meter for 12 minutes or so, today it's a nuisance for most Americans. The P.K.D. program, however, recognized the synergistic effect of combining its potential with other members' pennies. Assuming a membership of 40,000 in the Wisconsin Jurisdiction, \$146,000 could be generated if all members contributed.

Participation in the P.K.D. program must be strictly voluntary. While members cannot be required to contribute, the \$3.65 can be included on members' dues bills it must be clear that it strictly optional, not an assessment.

Member information is very important for a successful P.K.D. effort. Brief items about the P.K.D. program should be included in the council's newsletter several times over the course of the year. Here are some suggested topics for short newsletter articles: Let members know that councils that achieve 100% participation receive special recognition at the State Council's annual convention. Keep Council members posted on how much has been collected to date and encourage them to make their contributions by a specific date. Urge honorary and honorary life members to participate, noting that P.K.D. donations are not part of dues. Frequently, the bishops will announce how they plan to use the money when the P.K.D. check is present at the diocesan meetings. Tell your council members how much was collected in your diocese and where the money will go. Encourage members who have the means to contribute more than \$3.65. Their extra "pennies" can help other members who do not participate.

The P.K.D. program need not be restricted to council members. Here are some suggestions for broadening the program's focus: Announcements in parish bulletins can generate contributions from other community members. If your parish has a school, consider putting a fishbowl or other container in a secure place and invite students to drop in their pennies. Hold a fund-raiser bake sale, car wash, pancake breakfast, etc. to raise money for the fund.

Send Council or individual checks to:

Wisconsin State Council Knights of Columbus
Attn: PKD
4297 West Beltline Highway
Madison, WI 53711-3859

In memo line: PKD Council #XXXX