



AMERICAN

WHEELCHAIR



MISSION

**You can help make a
difference in someone's life.**

Wheelchair Sunday

"Easier than a pancake breakfast!"

**We are changing lives, and
answering prayers!**



“I would challenge all Knights, in every Parish throughout America, to promote a Wheelchair Sunday in your Parish.”

Fr. Gerard O'Brien - Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Pasadena, CA

“The Parishioners saw immediately the news and the difference they could make through their generosity.” “It is a very powerful way of reaching people’s hearts.” “Better than any sermon I have ever preached!”

Fr. Dennis Mongrain - St. Denis , Diamond Bar, CA

“This is a great witness of our faith, and is something we should be doing more of.”

Rev. Gustavo Castillo - Sr. Francis of Rome, Azusa, CA

“When we get involved in something like this, against the backdrop of the Scripture, it’s not just doing a job as much as it takes on a whole new dimension, by bringing the Lord into the situation and touching peoples’ lives.”

Monsignor James Loughnane - St. Denis, Diamond Bar, CA

“We are grateful for the opportunity to give the gift of mobility to those who need it most, and who otherwise would be condemned to lives of isolation and hopelessness.”

Carl A. Anderson, Supreme Knight

“Wheelchair donations are among the most well-known charitable programs of the Knights of Columbus.”

Knightline Magazine - June, 2010

History



In 2007 a very effective “Wheelchair Sunday” program was developed where Knights of Columbus Councils, with the support of their Parish Pastors, make presentations to their fellow parishioners during Mass,

or in the Church hall after Mass, where the mobility needs of the poorest of God’s poor are demonstrated, and the work of the Knights of Columbus and the American Wheelchair Mission is explained. Parishioners are given an opportunity to contribute to the mission during a second collection, or after Mass at tables outside the Church, or in the Church hall. These Parish drives have also proven to be one of the best membership building tools for the Knights of Columbus in recent years.

Participating Councils throughout our Order are having Parish drives where tens of thousands of dollars are being donated during the weekend, and several thousand dollars more are mailed in after the “Wheelchair Sunday” concludes.

After dozens of Parish drives, we have found that there is no negative impact whatsoever on the regular weekly collection as a result of the donations made to the American Wheelchair Mission during a “Wheelchair Sunday.”

For every \$150 received by the American Wheelchair Mission, we can deliver a brand new wheelchair that would sell for over \$500 in a medical supply store. \$16,500 raised, sponsors the delivery of an ocean freight container of 110 wheelchairs; \$42,000 delivers a container of 280 wheelchairs. Other mobility devices, such as canes, crutches, and walkers, may also be supplied in areas of great need. Containers of wheelchairs can be delivered to destinations worldwide or right here at home to Veterans, retired Priests or Religious, and other local needs.

We have been told by many Knights councils that once the “Wheelchair Sunday” parish drive is approved by the Pastor, the actual event is “easier to do than a pancake breakfast!”



Meeting With Your Pastor

Msgr. Nestor Rebong, on right,
blessing a Haitian wheelchair recipient

We have found our Clergy to be incredibly supportive of our Mission, and we are most grateful for their assistance, their hospitality, and their generosity. As you know, anything we want to do at the Parish level requires approval from the Pastor, Parish Life Director, or Parish Council. Therefore, first and foremost, approval for conducting a “Wheelchair Sunday” event at your church requires the authorization from the highest level of Parish hierarchy. For the simplification of this writing, we will assume the Pastor is the decision maker in your Church.

As you consider conducting a “Wheelchair Sunday” drive at your church, please do not make any assumptions about the response from your Pastor. We have had experience with Councils who had first indicated that their Pastor ‘would never approve an event like that,’ only to find out that their Pastor was very embracing of the idea, and more than happy to open his heart to our program. Therefore, we suggest you bring the idea to your Pastor, show him the “Wheelchair Sunday” video, and you might experience a side of your Pastor you didn’t know existed!

The first step in this process is to ask your Pastor for a brief meeting to discuss holding a “Wheelchair Sunday” at the Church. The business part of this meeting should take no more than 30 minutes.

The first order of business should be showing the enclosed video “Wheelchair Sunday Parish Drive.” This video clearly defines the American Wheelchair Mission, our relationship with the Knights of Columbus, and the “Wheelchair Sunday” program in detail. After showing the video, discuss presentation options, and some important points:

- 1) During Mass, at the Homily - with a 2nd collection. (This is the most effective way of exposing the Wheelchair Mission and helping those in need)
- 2) During Mass, at the Homily - with collection after mass.
- 3) After Mass, in the Church Hall. (This is least effective and not encouraged)

(Continued)

- 4) The length of the presentation, including a video, is about 12 minutes.
- 5) The presentation is always done with total respect to the liturgy.
- 6) Collections for the Wheelchair Mission have never had a negative impact on the regular Church collection, or any other special collections (e.g. capital campaigns, building funds, etc.)
- 7) The Church should incur no expense.

Assuming you obtain approval from the Pastor to hold the “Wheelchair Sunday,” the final step should be to ask him for about three possible dates that are convenient for the Church.

Following the meeting, contact the Director of Public Education at the American Wheelchair Mission to confirm if one or more of the dates are available according to their schedule. Once a date is confirmed, notify the Pastor of the chosen date. Then, it would be appropriate to send the Pastor a letter, or an e-mail, thanking him for the meeting, and confirming that the “Wheelchair Sunday” presentation will be made during mass. Please also include the collection details, and the dates in your note.

Once Approved

Upon obtaining approval from your Pastor, the following steps should be taken:

- 1) Solicit volunteers from the Council and your local Assembly to assist with:
 - a) Setting up tables.
 - b) Putting collection envelopes in the pews before each Mass.
 - c) Second collections at all Masses, if authorized.
 - d) Collecting donations after Mass.
 - e) Answering membership questions/ providing membership materials.
 - f) Color Corps for visibility and membership appeal.
- 2) Invite your local Knights of Columbus dignitaries to attend, including General Agent, Field Agent, Chapter Officers, District Deputy, and Grand Knights from other local Councils.
- 3) For each of the six weeks before the “Wheelchair Sunday,” announcements should be placed in the Church bulletin. (See last page)
- 4) A minimum of two weeks before the event, announcements should be made from the Pulpit.
- 5) Maintain communications with your Pastor so that he is kept well informed, and is reminded of everything to which he has agreed.

CONSIDERATIONS:

- a) Audio/Visual needs and church layout for the presentation.
 - 1) Does the church have a drop down screen?
 - 2) Is there a projection unit available?
 - 3) Is there a wireless, hand-held microphone available?
 - 4) Contact the American Wheelchair Mission to discuss this very important consideration. A drawing, or rough sketch of the church would be helpful.
- b) The American Wheelchair Mission will provide collection envelopes, donation forms, brochures, and other promotional materials.
- c) The Council should provide flags, tables, banners, Knights of Columbus literature, etc.
- d) The Parish school (if there is one) should be encouraged to participate. Ask the Principal if the students can get involved by coloring posters (these can be displayed in the Church during the “Wheelchair Sunday” event), fundraising in the school, or other activities that will bring awareness of the Mission to the students.

Event Weekend

Just before the “Wheelchair Sunday” weekend, contact the Pastor and ask if all of the celebrants for the weekend have been informed of the program, and that the appropriate provisions have been made for the time during the Homily.

On the weekend of the drive:

- 1) If representatives from the American Wheelchair Mission are attending, they will be at the church at least three hours before Saturday’s first Mass.
 - a) They would like to meet the Pastor.
 - b) Set up the audio/visual equipment.
 - c) Set up a display table, and place posters and banners where possible.
- 2) Volunteers should be at the church early to help put envelopes in the pews.
- 3) Folding tables should be placed at each of the Church exits.
- 4) Ushers at each Mass should be instructed if there is a second collection, and that all donations are to be given to the American Wheelchair Mission representatives at the end of each Mass.
- 5) Membership materials should be available on tables at the exits, and there should be a table for Wheelchair Mission materials at the main exit.

AFTER THE EVENT:

The American Wheelchair Mission will inform the Grand Knight of the total donations received and a notice in the Church bulletin should be placed thanking the Pastor, and the Church for their generosity and hospitality. The amount of the donations should be reported.

Bulletin Announcements

(6 weeks before Wheelchair Sunday):

Please mark your calendars for (dates - Saturday and Sunday). The Knights of Columbus invite you to a very special event, "WHEELCHAIR SUNDAY."

(5 weeks before Wheelchair Sunday):

It is estimated that worldwide, over 100 million people lack mobility due to birth defects, war, disease, accident, natural disaster or advanced age, and are in need of wheelchairs but cannot afford one. Please join the Knights of Columbus on "Wheelchair Sunday," (dates: Saturday and Sunday) to learn how you can help answer the prayers of the poorest of the poor.

(4 weeks before Wheelchair Sunday):

Since 2003, the Knights of Columbus have helped to provide over 30,000 brand new wheelchairs all over the world, to children, teens, and adults in need of mobility, but who could not afford a wheelchair. Please join the Knights of Columbus, Fr. (Pastor's Name), **and Chris Lewis (son of MDA National Chairman, Jerry Lewis)**, to learn how \$150 can sponsor and deliver a free wheelchair to someone in need. "Wheelchair Sunday" (dates: Saturday and Sunday).

(3 weeks before Wheelchair Sunday):

Chris Lewis, President of the American Wheelchair Mission, and the Knights of Columbus, will be here at all Masses on "Wheelchair Sunday," (dates: Saturday and Sunday), to explain how you can answer the prayers of the poorest of the poor, and help them gain mobility, hope, and freedom. Join them and Fr. (Pastor's name), for this very inspirational and moving presentation.

(2 weeks before Wheelchair Sunday):

Next Sunday is "Wheelchair Sunday." Please join the Knights of Columbus, **and Chris Lewis (son of MDA National Chairman, Jerry Lewis)**, for a brief presentation on how you can answer prayers, and help someone in need receive a free wheelchair. Each \$150 gift will sponsor and deliver a brand new wheelchair that would retail for over \$500. Your tax-deductible donation will help the Knights change lives in an immediate, and tangible way. Please help Fr. (Pastor's name) in his efforts to reach the goal of \$42,000 for one full sea container of 280 wheelchairs.

(Wheelchair Sunday):

Today is "Wheelchair Sunday!" Please open your hearts and join the Knights of Columbus, for a brief presentation on how you can help answer the prayers of a child, teen or adult, in desperate need of a wheelchair. Your help gives them hope.

**** If Chris Lewis will not be in attendance, please omit the text in RED.**

For questions, assistance or any other information,
please contact:

American Wheelchair Mission



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To watch videos of Knights of Columbus wheelchair
distributions around the world, please visit:

www.amwheelchair.org