

September 2007

I am pleased to announce the launch of a new Marian Hour of Prayer program. The program was inaugurated on August 8, at the 125th Supreme Convention in Nashville. The icon, an image of Mary under the title of Our Lady of Charity, is the patroness of Cuba.

The Marian Hour of Prayer program will begin in every jurisdiction throughout the order on the feast of the nativity of the Virgin Mary, September 8th. There will be 2 portraits traveling through our state of Indiana. Both portraits will begin their journey at the parish of our State Chaplain, Fr. Ron Rieder, and State Deputy, Norman Stoffel. One portrait will then travel the northern part of the state and the other will go to the southern portion.

As Knights of Columbus, our devotion to Our Lady should be ample reason for us to promote this program with all sincerity and determination. I am sure you all agree with me. But there is one more thing of great importance. As in the past when each holy hour is conducted an entry is made in a logbook attesting to the participation in the program. At the completion of the program one year from now, the logbook will be signed by our State Deputy and sent to Rome to be presented to Our Holy Father, Pope Benedict. The prayer intention of this entire yearlong program is for the pope. What greater reason could we need to make this program a priority in every council!

Prayer service program booklets will accompany each icon as it travels from district to district in Indiana. The theme of the prayer service is charity, the first principle of the order of the Knights of Columbus and draws upon Pope Benedict's first encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* (God is Love.)

I cannot over emphasize that every council needs to be a part of this prayer program for our Mother Mary and for Pope Benedict. And we must complete the program in one year. Each district will have the icon for a full 21 days. That is not a lot of time but it is enough if you are determined and I know you will be. With this letter you will find a schedule by district indicating when one of the icons will be in your district. Each grand knight should work with his chaplain and district deputy to arrange for a date to conduct the prayer program.

I pray that every council in Indiana take this opportunity to lead our communities, families and young people in prayer to our Mother as a source of charity and hope.

*Your name, O Virgin of Charity,
evokes thoughts of the God who is
Love,
recalls the new commandment given
by Jesus,
invokes the Holy Spirit:
love poured into our hearts,
fire of charity sent on Pentecost over
the Church,
gift of the total freedom of the sons
and daughters of God.
Blessed are you among women
and blessed is the fruit of your
womb, Jesus!*

*(Excerpt from homily of Pope John Paul II at the crowning of the statue of Our
Lady of Charity, Santiago, Cuba, Jan. 24, 1998)*

May God Bless you in all your efforts

Vivat Jesus,
Mike Blankman
State Church Director