

Viva Cristo Rey: 100 Years Later

From Knightline <knightline@kofc.org>

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On July 31, 1926, public worship was officially suspended in Mexico, giving rise to the Cristero War, an uprising of Catholics fighting for religious freedom amid violent persecution by the government. During the three-year conflict, tens of thousands of Catholics gave their lives rather than deny Christ the King, including more than 70 Knights of Columbus. One hundred years later, the witness of these courageous martyrs remains an inspiration to Knights around the world who seek to defend the faith with unwavering commitment.



Members of Knights of Columbus military councils and assemblies in Germany carry banners during the Marian candlelight procession in Lourdes, France, on May 24. (Photo by Tamino Petelinšek)

Journey of Healing

More than 180 wounded, ill or disabled United States service members and veterans participated in the annual Warriors to Lourdes pilgrimage to Lourdes, France, from May 19-25, accompanied by family members, chaplains and a delegation of Knights of Columbus led by Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly. “Warriors to Lourdes gives us an opportunity to heal our hearts,” the supreme knight said, “to have hope and to understand the resilience of the human person, which comes from God.”

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Mexico West State Chaplain Father Eduardo Salcedo censes the relics of all the canonized and beatified Mexican martyrs during Mass for the annual pilgrimage to the Sanctuary of the Martyrs of Christ the King in Guadalajara, Mexico, on July 5. (Photo by Carlos Elizondo)

Heralding Faith, Hope in Jalisco

Knights and their families from across Mexico were among hundreds who gathered at the Sanctuary of the Martyrs of Christ the King, just outside Guadalajara, Jalisco, on July 5 for the annual pilgrimage commemorating the martyrs of the Cristero War. “The Cristeros are our heroes,” said Mexico West State Deputy Gabriel Fonseca. “Their strength reminds us that, as Catholics living in the secular world, our faith must be defended.”

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One hundred years ago, Mexico's Catholics suffered one of the most violent religious persecutions in modern history. Churches were closed; the faith was outlawed. But the faithful rose up to defend Christ and his Church. Today, the veneration of these martyrs inspires Catholics around the world to remember that their faith is a gift that must be received and safeguarded with vigilance.

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Bronislav Futomskyi, past grand knight of St. Charbel Council 16417, prays in his home in Khmelnytskyi, Ukraine. (Photo by Andrii Horb)

Forged in the Blast

Following the 1986 disaster at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in Ukraine, Bronislav Futomskyi worked as a liquidator in the relief effort, unaware that he was being exposed to dangerous levels of radiation that would later lead to cancer. His yearslong battle with the disease ultimately led him back to his Catholic faith, and 40 years after the disaster, the past grand knight of St. Charbel Council 16417 in Khmelnytskyi continues to be a source of strength and service within his war-torn country.

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