

PHILANTHROPIST or BEGGAR???

[By Jim Wade State Charities Director](#)

The mere fact that you are taking the time to read this means that you are already committed to the principles of our founder Fr Michael J. McGivney. However even those of us who are committed can benefit from a little introspection.

As we are all painfully aware, our current economy is significantly underperforming. This is causing widespread pain and real suffering both emotional and in some cases physical. Levels of stress are high as the recession is prolonged and the needs become greater. It has been reported that Christmas Giving, historically a time to help the less fortunate, was down significantly in most Charitable agencies.

However one organization stands out as the exception. Yes, Texas Knights are living up to the true meaning of the first Principle of our Order. We are currently stepping up to the plate across Texas by helping those less fortunate in so many ways. Our councils are assisting individual families in need, we are supporting local food banks, clothing drives, St Vincent de Paul society, the Wheel Chair Mission, Habitat for Humanity and our local Bishops' projects as well as many more. But the need for many continues to grow.

The first principle of our order demands that we live with Charity as our guiding light in everything we do. It does not say that we should only have Charity when times are good. Each of us must search our souls to determine if we are doing all we can as an individual, and collectively as a council. Those of us who CAN must do MORE. It is always easy to find excuses not to give and justify doing less than our full potential but we simply must guard against this impulse. Each and every one of us has a certain comfort level of how much support we are willing to give.

Each Knight in Texas can say they have participated in at least one fundraiser during the past year. A Taco Breakfast, a 50/50 split the pot, a fund raising dinner, a drawing for a new vehicle; you name it as

Knights we are writing our checks to participate. In each case, however, we are also expecting to receive something in return for our check. We want the Breakfast, we are hoping to win the pot, we are enjoying the evening out with our family and friends and yes we have visions of driving that new vehicle. Make no mistake about it this type of giving is absolutely necessary and important for the success in helping those in need.

However there is a greater even more meaningful type of giving, and that is a selfless type of giving. This comes when we transform ourselves from a philanthropist to a beggar. Yes my brothers when we become a beggar for others, with no expectation of any personal benefit or gain, this is true Charity of the heart. Our Divine Savior Jesus Christ gave us this example when He shed his mantle as God and became man so he could beg the Father for our Salvation through his death on the cross. When we stand on the street corner begging for donations for the Deaf or when we knock on a merchant's door asking for their support for a project, these acts are of selfless charity. When we stand on the sidewalk in front of an abortion clinic begging God to change the heart of a troubled and confused pregnant woman, we become beggars, begging for the life of that infant.

When asked, new 1st Degree Knights say they joined the Knights to give back to the Church and community and to help others. If as a council we are not tapping into that resource and engaging all of our members in opportunities to serve, we are in fact denying them the ability to realize their goal of why they joined the Knights in the first place.

As we begin the second half of our Fraternal year and the start of a new decade, please look into your heart and the heart of your council. Ask yourself: Am I doing all I can do? Am I a just philanthropist or a beggar as well? Is my council doing all it can do or are we just coasting? Are we providing all of our members the opportunity to fully achieve their goals? Are we just doing what is comfortable or are we stretching

outside of our comfort level. Remember Christ was willing to stretch; yes he stretched his out his arms on the cross and became a beggar for us.