



Knights of Columbus  
**F O U R T H**  
**D E G R E E**  
*Patriotic degree of the Order.*

# The Sir Knight News

**Bishop Reicher Assembly 1099**

[www.kofc1099.org](http://www.kofc1099.org)

Volume 22 Issue 1

July 2025

Contact the Editor: [gnelson8156@gmail.com](mailto:gnelson8156@gmail.com)

## Inside this issue:

- ◇ Birthdays.
- ◇ Saint of the Month [2](#)
  
- ◇ Saint of the Month Continued [3](#)
- ◇ Officers [4](#)
- ◇ Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus [5](#)
  
- Saint of the Month Continued [6-7](#)

## Faithful Navigator Report — SK Oscar Martinez

### SIR KNIGHTS

### WELCOME TO OUR NEW FISCAL YEAR

It is truly an honor to serve as your Faithful Navigator for a second term. I want to begin by expressing my sincere gratitude for the dedication and brotherhood that each of you brings to our Assembly. Your commitment, whether active or inactive, is the heartbeat of our organization, and together, we continue to serve in faith, hope, and charity.

As we reflect on our journey so far, I want to encourage open and positive communication among all Sir Knights. Your feedback -whether it's praise, suggestions, or concerns-is vital in helping us strengthen our Assembly and better fulfill our mission.

To our active Sir Knights, your engagement and leadership are invaluable, inspiring others to grow and serve with enthusiasm. And to our inactive Sir Knights, your presence, even from a distance, remains a powerful testament to your commitment. We welcome your thoughts and ideas; your wisdom and experience are treasures that can guide us forward.

Let us foster a spirit of brotherhood where everyone feels valued and heard. Your participation-whether through active service or shared insights-makes our Assembly stronger and more united in our purpose.

Thank you for all your continued dedication. I look forward to working together this year, listening to your feedback, and achieving great things as faithful servants of our Lord and our community.

GOD bless you all and your loved ones, and long live the 4<sup>th</sup> Degree!

Oscar Martinez, Faithful Navigator  
 Bishop Reicher Assembly #1099

Bishop Reicher  
 Assembly 1099



**TGIF**  
 Thank God I'm Free!

**Happy Birthday  
Sir Knights !!!**  
May you have many more

Eric	Contreras
Edward	Empero
Antonio	Garcia
Christian	Gonzalez
Kenneth	Moore
James	O'Brien
Pete	Rangel
Joe	Sanchez
Aaron	Smith
Msr. William	Wack
Brian	Wellinghoff

## Saint of the Month—SK Giacomo Leone

**Peter Claver SJ**

**Feastday: September 9**  
**Patron: Saint of Negro Missions**  
**Birth: 1580**  
**Death: 1654**

I have had a great deal of enjoyment reading about and editing the information about this saint.  
I hope you enjoy reading it.

G. Leone edited from *Catholic Online: Angels and Saints*.

**Peter Claver SJ** (Spanish: *Pedro Claver y Corberó* was a Spanish Jesuit priest and missionary born in Verdú, Spain, who, due to his life and work, became the patron saint of slaves, Colombia, and ministry to African Americans, and sailors.

During the 40 years of his ministry in the New Kingdom of Granada, it is estimated he personally baptized around 300,000 people and heard the confessions of over 5,000 people per year. He is also the patron saint for seafarers. He is considered a heroic example of what Christian praxis should be, exemplifying love and the exercise of human rights.

The Congress of Colombia declared September 9 as the National Day of Human Rights in his honor.

### Early life

Claver was born in 1580 into a devoutly Catholic and somewhat impoverished parents descended from an ancient and distinguished prosperous farming family in the Spanish village of Verdú, Urgell, located in the Province of Lleida, Spain about 54 miles (87 km) from Barcelona. He was born 70 years after King Ferdinand of Spain set the colonial slavery culture into motion by authorizing the purchase of 250 African slaves in Lisbon for his territories in New Spain.

Later, as a student at the University of Barcelona, Claver was noted for his intelligence and piety. After two years of study there, Claver wrote these words in the notebook he kept throughout his life: "I must dedicate myself to the service of God until death, on the understanding that I am like a slave."

### Formation and Work in the New World

After he had completed his studies, Claver entered the Society of Jesus in Tarragona at the age of 20. When he had completed the novitiate, he was sent to study philosophy at Palma, Mallorca. While there, he came to know the porter of the college, St. Alphonsus Rodriguez, a laybrother known for his holiness and gift of prophecy.<sup>1</sup> Rodriguez felt that he had been told by God that Claver was to spend his life in service in the colonies of New Spain, and he frequently urged the young student to accept that calling.

**Continued on Page 3**

## Saint of the Month —Continued



Claver volunteered for the Spanish colonies and was sent to the New Kingdom of Granada, where he arrived in the port city of Cartagena in 1610. Required to spend six years studying theology before being ordained a priest, he lived in Jesuit houses at Tunja and Bogotá. During those preparatory years, he was deeply disturbed by the harsh treatment and living conditions of the black slaves who were brought from Africa.

By this time, the slave trade had been established in the Americas for about a century. Local Native Americans were considered physically ill-suited to work in the gold and silver mines. Mine owners met their labor requirements by importing blacks from Angola and Congo, whom they purchased in West Africa for four crowns a head or bartered for goods and sold in America for an average two hundred crowns apiece. Others were captured at random, especially able-bodied males and females deemed suitable for labor.

Cartagena was a slave-trading hub and 10,000 slaves poured into the port yearly, crossing the Atlantic from West Africa under conditions so foul that an estimated one-third died in transit. Although the slave trade was condemned by Pope Paul III and Urban VIII had issued a papal decree prohibiting slavery, (later called "supreme villainy" by Pope Pius IX), it was a lucrative business and continued to flourish.

Claver's predecessor in his eventual lifelong mission, Alonso de Sandoval, was his mentor and inspiration. Sandoval devoted himself to serving the slaves for 40 years before Claver arrived to continue his work. Sandoval attempted to learn about their customs and languages; he was so successful that, when he returned to Seville, he wrote a book in 1627 about the nature, customs, rites and beliefs of the Africans. Sandoval found Claver an apt pupil. When he was solemnly professed in 1622, Claver signed his final profession document in Latin as: *Petrus Claver, aethiopum semper servus* (Peter Claver, servant of the Ethiopians [i.e. Africans] forever).



Whereas Sandoval had visited the slaves where they worked, Claver preferred to head for the wharf as soon as a slave ship entered the port. Boarding the ship, he entered the filthy and diseased holds to treat and minister to their badly treated, terrified human cargo, who had survived a voyage of several months under miserable conditions. It was difficult to move around on the ships, because those trafficking in slaves filled them to capacity. The slaves were often told they were being taken to a land where they would be eaten. Claver wore a cloak, which he would lend to anyone in need. A legend arose that whoever wore the cloak received lifetime health and was cured of all disease. After the slaves were herded from the ship and penned in nearby yards to be scrutinized by crowds of buyers, Claver joined them with medicine, food, bread, and lemons. With the help of interpreters and pictures, which he carried with him, he gave basic instructions.

Once baptized, Claver saw the slaves as fellow Christians, and encouraged others to treat them as such. During the season when slavers were not accustomed to arrive, he traveled the country, visiting plantation after plantation, to give spiritual consolation to the slaves. During his 40 years of ministry it is estimated that he personally catechized and baptized 300,000 slaves. He would then follow up on them to ensure that as Christians they received their Christian and civil rights. His mission extended beyond caring for the slaves, however. He preached in the city square, to sailors and traders and conducted country missions, returning every spring to visit those he had baptized, ensuring that they were treated humanely. During these missions, whenever possible he avoided the hospitality of planters and overseers; instead, he would lodge in the same quarters as the slaves.

[Continued on Page 6](#)

**Knights of Columbus Bishop Reicher  
Assembly 1099**

**Patriotic Degree of the Order**

**Officers**

**Faithful Friar**

Fr. John Sebastian Gutierrez, CSC

**Faithful Navigator**

SK Oscar Martinez  
[omartinez@txcdc.com](mailto:omartinez@txcdc.com)

**Faithful Captain**

SK Arnold Auzenne  
[vinklareksrus@yahoo.com](mailto:vinklareksrus@yahoo.com)

**Faithful Pilot**

**Eugene Rodriguez**

**Faithful Comptroller**

SK Greg Nelson  
[gnelson8156@outlook.com](mailto:gnelson8156@outlook.com)

**Faithful Purser**

SK Tad Druart

**Faithful Scribe**

Giacomo Leone  
[GIACLEONE575@GMAIL.COM](mailto:GIACLEONE575@GMAIL.COM)

**Faithful Admiral**

SK John Massey

**Trustee One Year**

SK Roger Ibarra Jr.

**Trustee Two Year**

SK Billy Roberts

**Trustee Three Year**

SK Michael Moreno

**Faithful Inner Sentinel**

SK Jim Luhrman

**Faithful Outer Sentinel**

SK Jose Roddriguez

**Color Corp Commanders**

SK Darrel Vinklarek  
[darrelv82@gmail.com](mailto:darrelv82@gmail.com)  
SK José Rodriquez

The 4th Degree Patriotic Order of the Knights of Columbus is open to Third Degree Knights. Contact your Council Financial Secretary if you are interested or email the Faithful Navigator or Captain.

**Pay Dues or Make Donations Online  
Now Available**

**<https://kofc1099.org/dues/>**

**From the Editor**

Contact the Editor: Greg Nelson [gnelson8156@gmail.com](mailto:gnelson8156@gmail.com)

Webmaster for the Assembly Brandon Kraft [bk@kraft.im](mailto:bk@kraft.im)

**Meetings for Bishop Reicher Assembly 1099**

**Meeting Schedule:**

**The Second Monday of the Month at 7:30 pm**

St. Catherine of Siena

4800 Convict Hill Road

Austin, TX 78749

Parish Activity Center

2nd Floor Room 213

## The Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

The Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was celebrated on Friday, June 27 at St. Catherine of Siena, with Mass at 12 p.m., the Chaplet of Divine Mercy and adoration at 3 p.m., and an evening Mass at 7 p.m. that was immediately followed by adoration and benediction. As part of the feast day, the Knights of Columbus displayed an icon depicting the most famous image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, painted in 1767 by Pompeo Botini. The reproduction is one of 300 icons traveling around the world as part of the Knights of Columbus Pilgrim Icon Program, which began in 1979.



## Saint of the Month —Continued

Claver's work on behalf of the enslaved did not prevent him from ministering to the souls of well-to-do members of society, traders and visitors to Cartagena (including Muslims and English Protestants) and condemned criminals, many of whom he spiritually prepared for death; he was also a frequent visitor at the city's hospitals. Through years of unremitting toil and the force of his own unique personality, the slaves' condition slowly improved. In time he became a moral force, the Apostle of Cartagena.

### Illness and Death

In the last years of his life Peter was too ill to leave his room. He lingered for four years, largely forgotten and neglected, physically abused and starved by an ex-slave who had been hired by the Superior of the house to care for him. He never complained about his treatment, accepting it as a just punishment for his sins. He died on 8 September 1654.

When the news of his death spread throughout Cartagena, many came to his room to pay their last respects. Such was his reputation for holiness that the room was stripped bare of anything that might serve as a relic.

The city magistrates, who had previously considered him a nuisance for his persistent advocacy on behalf of the slaves, ordered a public funeral, and he was buried with pomp and ceremony. The scope of Claver's ministry, which was prodigious even before considering the astronomical number of people he baptized, was realized only after his death.

### Legacy

Claver was canonized in 1888 by Pope Leo XIII, along with the Jesuit porter, Alphonsus Rodriguez. In 1896, Pope Leo also declared Claver the patron of missionary work among all African peoples. His body is preserved and venerated in the church of the Jesuit residence, now renamed in his honor as Iglesia de San Pedro Claver.

**"No life, except the life of Christ, has moved me so deeply as that of Peter Claver."**

Pope Leo XIII, on the occasion of the canonization of Peter Claver

Many organizations, missions, parishes, religious congregations, schools and hospitals bear the name of St. Peter Claver and also claim to continue the Mission of Claver as the following:

The Knights of Peter Claver, Inc., is the largest African-American Catholic fraternal organization in the United States. In 2006, a unit was established in San Andres, Colombia. The Order was founded in Mobile, Alabama, and is presently headquartered in New Orleans.

Claver's mission continues today in the work of the Apostleship of the Sea (AoS) and his inspiration remains among port chaplains and those who visit ships in the name of the church, through the AoS.

The Missionary Sisters of St. Peter Claver are a religious congregation of women dedicated to serving the spiritual and social needs of the poor around the world, particularly in Africa. They were founded in Austria by the Blessed Mary Theresa Ledóchowska in 1894.

Among the many parishes dedicated to St. Peter Claver are those in Lexington, Kentucky, West Hartford, Connecticut, Macon, Georgia, New Orleans, Louisiana, Simi Valley, California, St. Paul, Minnesota, Sheboygan, Wisconsin, Montclair, New Jersey, Baltimore, Maryland, Huntington, West Virginia, and Nairobi, Kenya.

Among the many schools dedicated to St. Peter Claver are those in Decatur, Georgia, and Pimville, South Africa. The oldest African American school in the Diocese of St. Petersburg, and the oldest African American school still functioning in the State of Florida, is St. Peter Claver Catholic School.

The Congress of the Republic of Colombia declared September 9 as the Human Rights National Day in his honor.

**Continued on Page 7**

## Saint of the Month —Continued

### Controversy

His canonization has caused angst among some due to his own slaveholding and treatment of slaves (including corporal punishment), and it is alleged that these matters may have initially stalled his canonization. Dr. Katie Grimes has gone so far as to call Claver a "White Supremacist" and has accused the Catholic Church of "White supremacy" for championing him. However, that said, Grimes stated in her criticism that Claver allowed uncommon freedom for the slaves he purchased (using them in his ministry rather than for hard labor), and resorted to physical punishment solely to prevent what he saw as immoral behavior.

