

Columbian Squires
Ontario Provincial Board
“For those who must lead”



Écuyers Colombiens
de l'Ontario
“Pour ceux qui doivent diriger”

Chief Squire's Address at Knights of Columbus Convention
Doubletree Hotel, May 18, 2008

Together. What does this word mean?

Together is an important word. It is embedded in the Provincial Board's theme for this fraternal year: “Transforming Together – In Service to Christ”. It is how we work as a province.

The word is echoed in many aspects of life. Our early Church fathers had to bond together in order for the faith to survive persecution and to grow. Unity is the cornerstone of both patriotism and the family unit. It is also the spirit of our State Deputy' slogan: “Together Each Achieves More”.

But how does this concept apply in our day-to-day lives? We as a Provincial Board have come to learn this over the past year. We have seen great successes; such as a well-attended Camp weekend, two new Circles and reaching our membership goal of one thousand Squires. We have also been through difficulties including disappointing response from our fundraisers and a drop in potential new Circles.

These experiences, both positive and negative, bond us together. We are a Circle; and although a Circle can have many sectors, it is never divided.

Working together calls us to bring in our best. We integrate, focusing on each others' strengths. One of our Circles in Oshawa understands this perfectly. (Video is played.)

This interview, conducted by Salt and Light Television four years ago, is still relevant today.

The Squires and Counsellors of this Circle in Oshawa come from different paths in life. They all have different gifts, and they work together to be successful. The Circle focuses on what people can do for the program, rather than what they can't. One Squire in the video is Craig Zealand. This Squire has found a community in his Circle which accepted him despite having a physical disability. Another Squire, Justin Whyte, has a similar disability and was also welcomed with open arms.

As with more than eighty per cent of Squires, the two became Knights after reaching the age of eighteen. On Sunday March Second of this year their first degree took place, and to quote the Circle's Chief Counsellor: “My greatest reward since starting our Circle was having the opportunity to work with these two young men. Usually, the Counsellor does the teaching, tutoring and mentoring; but in this case I feel that I have learned more from Craig and Justin than I have taught them.”

This Circle has truly put working together into action. Now I'd like to invite Justin and Craig to stand among you.

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These two young men represent the Knights and Squires working together. Squires learn from Knights, and in turn Councils receive more members who are already prepared to be productive. In working together, the Columbian Squires becomes your answer for the future.

There are hundreds of Knights present here today. Many of them have sons between the ages of ten and seventeen. Throughout the province there are thousands of these sons; each eligible to join our organization and take the pledge to pattern their lives on that of the Youth Christ.

On October Second, Eighteen-Eighty-One, a small group of men met in a church basement in New Haven, Connecticut. A 29-year-old parish priest had gathered them to form a new, unknown fraternal society. With time, the vision of Father Michael J. McGivney has grown to transcend age, language and distance. And yet, more than One-Hundred-and-Twenty-Five years later, the Knights of Columbus have stayed true to their roots of working together.

We work together in fraternity. As mentioned before, the Provincial Board's theme for this fraternal year is “Transforming Together – In Service to Christ”.

Through acts of service, spirituality and friendship we develop into effective young men. We try to “Be Worthy” by doing our best and grow in these tasks. We work for God... and in turn we are transformed.

But this transformation is not done for ourselves, nor is it accomplished by ourselves. We are called to go against our self-centered society. We break the mold by working in solidarity with others. This requires patience, humility and compromise; but it is always worth working together.

Travailler ensemble vaut tout les obstacles. (Working together is worth any obstacles)

Coincidentally today is Trinity Sunday. When we celebrate the doctrine of the three Persons of God, let the Holy Spirit inspire us all to work as a team. For the only way for us to do good – is to do it together.