



# Knights of Columbus – Mississippi Jurisdiction Award Entry Form – Best Council of the Year

## Instructions:

Complete the following areas and submit it to the State Programs Chairman before March 31 of each state year. Additional paper may be used if space is not sufficient. You may also attach photographs, newspaper clippings, and letters of accommodation or other special items for consideration of your council.

Council Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Council Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Council Size: \_\_\_\_\_

Explain why your council should be selected as this year's Best Council of the Year:

Submitted By: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

(Attach additional pages as needed)

# **Knights of Columbus – Mississippi Jurisdiction**

## **Award Entry Form – Best Council of the Year**

Southaven Hernando DeSoto Council 7120 enjoys a unique situation in its service area, with its membership coming from four parishes in Northwest Mississippi served by the Priests of the Sacred Heart operating in the U.S. from Hales Corners, WI.

Council leadership adopted a position of expansion early in the year, but not just expansion of its membership. While increased membership resulted from the plan adopted, the primary goal was to create greater awareness of the Council's programs at each of the parishes and to take these programs to the wider audience.

The Council's home base is Christ the King Parish in Southaven, where it was chartered in 1978. The Council enjoys an excellent relationship with the four-priest team which serves the parishes and took steps during the past year to expand its services to Hernando Holy Spirit, Senatobia St. Gregory the Great and Robinsonville Good Shepherd. A fifth Parish, Olive Branch Queen of Peace, is home to Fr. Leo John Dehon Council 14051. Sacred Heart School in Southaven and the Sacred Heart Southern Missions in Walls, MS, are other Catholic agencies with which Council 7120 cooperates on various projects. For example: The Council prepared a spaghetti dinner for Sacred Heart School parents who attended a program on bullying; an Honor Guard participated in a 911 observance at the school; and the Council's upcoming golf tournament will benefit Sacred Heart Southern Missions.

The focus on expanding its reach throughout the region allowed the Council to build on a tradition of excellence in areas of membership, charitable works and commitment to the Church and family that began with the founding of the Council 34 years ago.

### ***Round Tables Established at Holy Spirit and St. Gregory the Great***

With approval of the team leader, the Council launched the effort to expand its presence with the establishment of a Parish Round Table at Holy Spirit. Earlier in the year, Sir Knights of the Gregory Bezy Assembly 2195 at Christ the King provided an Honor Guard to help Holy Spirit parishioners commemorate their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. That event was a catalyst for the progress the Council envisioned for its expanded service reach.

Later in the year, a second Parish Round Table was established at Senatobia St. Gregory the Great.

### ***Gratifying Support for Coats for Kids***

In November, the Council approved an initial \$500 startup contribution to the Coats for Kids campaign, which began as a way to participate in the Supreme Coats for Kids program. This project quickly became an opportunity for Knights to participate across the four parishes. Coming together in service to children in need across Northwest Mississippi, the Knights of Columbus members were recognized by our pastors as examples of service to others during the Advent season of preparation for the coming of Christ.

Council members then participated in collection activities at Masses at the four parishes over Thanksgiving weekend. The generosity of our members and the church parishioners was gratifying for the Council. More than \$2,550 in additional funds were raised for the project. The next step was to determine where to donate the coats, and the Sacred Heart Southern Missions organization was chosen, as it provides for hundreds of needy families across the northern part of the state. Sacred Heart Southern

Missions provided gender, age and coat sizes in batches of 25 to 30 at a time. The Council decided to purchase coats through local vendors, as that allowed us to match exact sizes to the children in need rather than buying batches of coats and having some not match the need. Local purchasing also promoted the community awareness of the Knights of Columbus as an active part of the community, with all vendors involved expressing amazement that we were doing this for these children. This goodwill resulted in discounts on most of the coat purchases, making for the most efficient use of the money raised to get the most coats.

In total, the Council was able to supply brand new winter coats for 130 children through this project. All money raised went toward the actual coat purchases. Sacred Heart Southern Missions expressed tremendous gratitude toward the Council because the project provided for a need it would not have otherwise met. SHSM is eager to work with the Council in the coming years to build on what was accomplished in a relatively short period for such a beneficial project. Local media also covered our efforts in a very positive manner, and our pastors continue to compliment the Knights for setting the example of service to others.

### ***Parish Breakfast Supports Seminarian Education***

The Parish Family Breakfast has been a vital project of Council 7120 for about 15 years and is a primary fund raiser for Church-related activities. All proceeds from the breakfast go for support of two Seminarists through participation in Supreme's RSVP program and provide \$1,000 contributions to the Bishop R.O. Gerow Memorial Fund for Seminarian Education and for the Priests of the Sacred Heart School of Theology in Chicago and a \$500 contribution to the Jurisdiction's Pro-Life Fund. This year, the Council also is providing a stipend to a member of the Council accepted into the Permanent Diaconate program of the Diocese of Jackson.

The breakfast is a monthly event on the Parish calendar. Knights begin preparing the breakfasts about 7 a.m., serving until 9 a.m. and resuming following the conclusion of the 10 a.m. Mass. A full menu of breakfast items is served. The Parish supports the breakfast wholeheartedly, particularly so when there is a clear message about what its support means to the development of priests to serve the Parish. Two priests of the current team of four serving five Parishes in Northwest Mississippi benefitted from the Council's participation in the RSVP program. Both attended the Priests of the Sacred Heart School of Theology and served their Diaconate year at Christ the King, et al, prior to their ordination. Several other priests serving in the Diocese of Jackson also were supported by this program.

### ***Record Participation in Lenten Retreat***

For the fourth consecutive year, the Council organized a Lenten retreat at Subiaco Academy and Abbey in Northwest Arkansas. This year's turnout of 13 Knights represented the largest of the four groups that have attended the weekend retreat.

### ***Membership Goal Exceeded***

Greater visibility and participation in the parishes other than the home parish greatly contributed to the successful recruiting year. The Council exceeded its goal of seven new members by adding ten new Knights during the year and reached its goal of three new insurance members.

The Council conducted four First Degree Exemplifications during the year, and 14 Brothers received their 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Degrees during the year.

### ***Other Notable Achievements***

***Community*** - Participation in the annual People with Intellectual Disabilities produced another contribution to DeSoto Industries, an agency of the Mississippi Department of Mental Health that provides workforce placement for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

***Council*** - A membership recruitment drive at the four parishes and a Fraternal Benefits meeting contributed to a successful recruiting year; recognized a Knight of the Month; established a Council Facebook page.

***Church*** – Purchased the new Roman Missals for the parish; provided a fish fry on three Fridays of Lent and led Stations following the meal; sponsored a Keep Christ in Christmas program.

***Family*** - Sponsored a quarterly Family Corporate Communion; recognized a Family of the Month and submitted a Family of the Year entry at the State Convention; assisted and adopted needy families with support including both financial and volunteer hours on a monthly basis.

***Youth*** – Participated in Supreme's poster, essay, soccer and free throw contests; supported young women's retreat, first Reconciliation participants, Parish Confirmation retreat and Scouts.

***Pro-Life*** – Donated \$500 to the Mississippi Pro-Life organization; participated in Supreme's 'Day of Prayer for the Unborn Child,' participated in 'Life Chain;' erected crosses on the parish grounds for October's Respect Life observance.