 **Father McGivney**

 **Moves Closer to**

 **Sainthood**

 In 2008, Pope Benedict XVI declared Father McGivney a Venerable Servant of God, which means that he displayed “[heroic virtue](http://www.fathermcgivney.org/mcg/en/path_to_sainthood/index.html)” in his life.

 The Vatican on May 27th announced that Pope Francis approved the promulgation of a decree recognizing a miracle attributed to the intercession of Venerable Father Michael J. McGivney, a Connecticut priest who served his flock when he died of pneumonia in 1890 at the early age of 38, at the end of the so-called Russian flu pandemic.

 The Pope’s action means that Father McGivney can be declared “Blessed,” the second-to-last step before a figure is canonized as a saint in the Roman Catholic Church. An additional miracle attributed to Father McGivney’s intercession will be required for his canonization.

 The miracle recognized as coming through Father McGivney’s intercession involved an unborn child in the United States who in 2015 was healed in utero of a life-threatening condition after prayers by his family to Father McGivney.

 Michael Joseph McGivney was born in Waterbury, CT, on August 12, 1852, the first child of Irish immigrants Patrick and Mary (Lynch) McGivney. Father McGivney was ordained in Baltimore in 1877 and served a largely Irish-American immigrant community.

 The young priest designed a way to strengthen the Catholic faith of men and their families while providing financial protection when they suffered the death of the breadwinner. He well knew that keeping families together assisted both temporal and spiritual needs.

 Decades ahead of his time, Father McGivney had a keen sense of the layman’s unique vocation, needs and potential contributions, and he drew his people into the life and activities of the parish. Father McGivney proposed that the new group be named for Christopher Columbus. Universally esteemed at the time as the heroic discoverer of the New World, Columbus would highlight the deep roots of Catholics in America -- and the long history of Catholic evangelization in this hemisphere. In 1882, this respect for the laity led Father McGivney to found the Knights of Columbus, a fraternal organization for Catholic men,one of the largest Catholic organizations in the world with two million members in North and Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, and Europe.

 Father McGivney was a central figure in the growth of Catholicism in America, and he remains a model today. His example of charity, evangelization and empowerment of the laity continues to bear fruit and guide Knights of Columbus around the world.

 A date will soon be set for the beatification Mass, which will take place in Connecticut.

**Prayer for the Canonization of the Venerable Servant of God Michael McGivney**

God, our Father, protector of the poor and defender of the widow and orphan, you called your priest, Father Michael J. McGivney, to be an apostle of Christian family life and to lead the young to the generous service of their neighbor. Through the example of his life and virtue may we follow your Son, Jesus Christ, more closely, fulfilling his commandment of charity and building up his Body which is the Church. Let the inspiration of your servant prompt us to greater confidence in your love so that we may continue his work of caring for the needy and the outcast. We humbly ask that you glorify your venerable servant Father Michael J. McGivney on earth according to the design of your holy will. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.