

# Visit by soccer team highlights Knights' work with Haitian amputees

DENVER - Providing prosthetic devices for amputees in Haiti and building new schools for AIDS orphans in Africa were two of the Knights of Columbus initiatives highlighted at the fraternal organization's 129th Supreme Convention in Denver Aug. 2-4.

At an Aug. 1 news conference, Supreme Knight Carl Anderson spoke about Healing Haiti's Children, a partnership with Project Medishare, whereby Haitians who have had limbs amputated as the result of injuries sustained in the January 2010 earthquake were given prosthetic limbs free of charge.

Anderson was accompanied by four members of Team Zaryen, the Haitian national amputee soccer team, as well as Dr. Robert Gailey, director of rehabilitation services for Project Medishare.

"More than 100 children and 250 adults in Haiti have received prosthetic limbs donated by the Knights," Gailey said.

The Haitian soccer team will be touring the East Coast in October and will make a stop at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, to thank the military for their rescue efforts immediately following the earthquake.

"You are a blessing for us," Fortilus Cedieu, the team's coach, told Anderson.

Anderson said that the Knights' work in Haiti has led to a new initiative to help AIDS orphans in Africa. Through a partnership with the Apostles of Jesus, plans are under way to build schools in Kenya and Uganda, Anderson said.

"When you're an orphan, especially due to this disease, you're an outcast living on the extreme fringe of the village," Anderson said.

Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, currently administrator of the Denver Archdiocese, welcomed the Knights at the news conference. Denver's archbishop since April 1997, he was named July 19 to head the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, where he will be installed Sept. 8.

"I expect that this convention will be the source of many, many graces for the local church. The Knights have been my right hand when I was bishop of Rapid City, South Dakota, when I came here to the Archdiocese of Denver, and as I head to Philadelphia, I expect them to be very close partners in the work of the church in the years ahead," Archbishop Chaput said.

More than 2,500 delegates and their families attended the convention, which opened Aug. 2 with a Mass concelebrated by some 100 priests and more than 70 archbishops and bishops, including 11 cardinals.

Archbishop Chaput was the principal celebrant and delivered the homily, in which he outlined the requirements for true reform in the church.

The first, he said, is found in Psalm 51, which was read at Mass: "For I acknowledge my offense, and my sin is always before me."

"Renewal begins not in vilifying others, but in examining ourselves honestly, repenting of our own sins and changing ourselves," he said. This applies to clergy as well as laypeople, he noted.

The second requirement for reform, Archbishop Chaput continued, is found in that day's Gospel reading, in which Peter walks to Jesus on the water when his faith is strong, but begins to sink when fear overtakes him.

The faith needed for reform is "not faith as theology, or faith as a collection of doctrines and practices, although these are important, but rather faith as a single-minded confidence in God," he said. "Faith as the humility - and in some sense the passion and the recklessness - to give ourselves entirely to God."

He added, "That kind of faith changes people. That kind of faith shifts the world on its axis because nothing can stand against it."

Later in the day, during his annual report, Anderson announced the Knights will purchase the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center in Washington, and over the next year will build a shrine to Blessed John Paul and put up related exhibits on the property.

“True to Pope John Paul II’s vision, and using the story of his life as an inspiration, this shrine will be an opportunity to evangelize and spread the good news of the Gospel through a new evangelization,” Anderson said.

He also announced that the Knights are forming a Disaster Response Program, through which members of the organization who are retired emergency personnel will act as second responders providing food, clothing and shelter to victims of disasters.

A fourth initiative Anderson highlighted was the establishment of a Father McGivney Military Chaplain Scholarship to support priestly vocations for the military. It will be exclusively for seminarians who will, once ordained, serve both their home diocese and the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services as a uniformed chaplain.

Anderson reported that the Knights of Columbus donated \$154 million to charity in 2010.

During the general business session Aug. 3, delegates heard a talk by Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles, who reminded the delegates that most Americans are living in the country because of immigration.

“If we traced the genealogies of everyone in this room today, it would lead beyond our borders,” Archbishop Gomez said. “We all have some immigrant blood.”

He added that while he doesn’t like to see immigrants breaking the law, “human rights come from God, not the government. If your homeland can’t provide basic needs like food and shelter, you must be free to seek these things in another country.”