



## SPOTLIGHT

### Keeping Christ in Christmas

Sales of religious cards seen as evangelization

by William Murray

Knights in 34 states and the provinces of Nova Scotia and Ontario have sold more than 10 million religious Christmas cards through the "Keep Christ in Christmas" program over the past 12 years, according to Robert E. Canfield, who launched the program in Roanoke, Va., in 1989. Canfield is a member of Roanoke Council 562.

More importantly, they have raised more than \$1.9 million for charity through the sales.

"We're getting back to the main reason we celebrate Christmas," said Everett J. Roberts, a member of St. John Bosco Council 11762 in Lakewood, Wash., who heads up that state's "Keep Christ in Christmas" card program. Last year, Washington Knights donated some 14,000 blank cards for use by inmates.

Some Washington councils have raised \$1,000 or more through the program, Roberts said. Even with a 50 percent profit margin on the cards for local councils, the \$9-\$11 boxes of cards still cost about half the price of a box of 20 cards in a store.

Carl Anderson Sr., the father of Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson, is one of the best card sellers in Sacred Heart Council 8136 in Bellevue. His council has sold about 250 boxes a year during the past five years. "You have to get out and greet the people" after Mass, Anderson said.

Each year Council 8136 begins selling cards before Thanksgiving. Inserting a brochure with an order form in the parish bulletin also increases sales, Anderson said.

"It's been a wonderful program to bring the incarnation of Christ's presence in the world," said Society of African Missions Father Edward L. Richardson, Virginia state chaplain. He praised the beautiful artwork, poetry and writing found in the cards. Sales of the cards in Virginia have benefited the vocations efforts of the Arlington and Richmond dioceses, and those of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, said Father Richardson, a former military chaplain.

Over the past several years cards have been offered in French, Italian, Polish, Spanish and Ukrainian, as well as cards with African-American and Native American Madonna and Child depictions.

"It's a really great evangelization program," said Denny Coleman, a member of Holy Name of Jesus Council 7667 in Niceville, Fla. "It gets the true meaning of Christmas out to Knights and their families and friends. It takes the edge off the commercialism." With some of the earnings from the sale of Christmas cards, Florida Knights leased 52 billboards in 2000 and 40 last year to further the "Keep Christ in Christmas" message, Coleman said.

Knights in Panama City, Pensacola and Tampa have even persuaded sign company owners to donate billboard space to them, Coleman said.

For more information, please call Robert and Virginia Canfield at 800-722-5032, write Christ is Christmas at PO Box 20716, Roanoke, VA 24018 or send an e-mail message to [vcancic@aol.com](mailto:vcancic@aol.com).

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