



## Knights of Columbus

The **Knights of Columbus** is the world's largest Roman Catholic fraternal service organization. Founded in the United States in 1882, it is named in honor of Christopher Columbus.

Many early members were recent immigrants who often lived in unsanitary conditions and performed hazardous jobs for poor pay. Since its founding, a primary mission of the Knights of Columbus has been to protect families against the financial ruin caused by the death of the breadwinner. While this method originally was intended to provide a core group of people who would support a widow and her children after the death of their husband and father, it has expanded into much more.

In 1954, lobbying by the Order helped convince the U.S. Congress to add the phrase "under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance. President Dwight Eisenhower wrote to Supreme Knight Luke E. Hart thanking the Knights for their "part in the movement to have the words 'under God' added to our Pledge of Allegiance." Similar lobbying convinced many state legislatures to adopt October 12 as Columbus Day and led to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's confirmation of Columbus Day as a federal holiday in 1937.

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