

**MAINE STATE COUNCIL
2009 – 2010 STATE CONVENTION**

RON COTE AWARD



ANDY VALLEY COUNCIL #8742 AUBURN

Our council was approached to help with the Perpetual Adoration. A group of lay people were hoping to have Fr. Antoine from EWTN come and speak about starting Perpetual Adoration in our area. They were going to take this project on, but needed the help of the Knights of Columbus to bring the Vatican International Exhibit of the Eucharistic Miracles of the World to play a role in enhancing their project. A date was set which also coincided with the Youth Journey since at this retreat, the Blessed Sacrament is in perpetual adoration. A brother knight came forward to take charge of this project. Several meetings were held with this group. He suggested the need for a committee to be formed using members of our Council. After he spoke to the members at our regular council meeting, the Holy Spirit started his charm and a committee was formed. This project proved if anything that could go wrong, would. The devil was always there to plant doubts and place stumbling obstacles in the way. Our first need was to have our Bishop's OK with this project. Going through the channels to get our Bishop was a learning experience. We got the Bishop's go ahead, but we were told that we had to make sure this exhibit would cost no monies to any parish in which it would be shown, as the burden to parishes in these tough economic times could not be passed on. So, we started a fund raising campaign. After speaking to the organization that brought this exhibit to the US, they had strict guidelines which had to be met. After careful consideration, our committee voted to go with it. The total cost of the project was \$5000 but it turned out to be over \$6,800. So, a writing campaign began. We first contacted the Maine State Council asking them to be a major donor. After several meetings and talks, it was agreed that this project would have the approval of the Maine State Council. Now we had the Bishop and the State Council behind us. A letter was written by our Grand Knight and this letter, along with the Bishop's letter was sent to every council in the State, District Deputies and all State Officers, asking for funds. Major donors were \$500 and up and donors were \$100 and up. Each donor would be placed on a donor's poster that would be placed at the entrance to the exhibit. Each panel cost \$25 and there 141 of them, plus shipping. We needed a place to hold the exhibit. After monies started coming in, it was mentioned that we should that we should speak to Msgr. Caron of Saints Peter & Paul Basilica in Lewiston. A meeting was held. The project manager has all the materials need to show what this exhibition would be about. Permission was granted, especially since this would tie in with Father Antoine and the Journey weekend. Our plan was to have this exhibit for the weekend, but we were asked to have the exhibit start on Friday and there for two full weekends.

This proved to be a problem as it would have to be manned during the hours that Church was open. These shifts were Saturday from 3 – 8 pm, Sunday 7 am to noon and weekdays from 7 am to 5:30 p.m. We found people to work and since we were doing God's work, it all happened. Posters had to be made and passed out to the two cluster churches. Invitations were mailed inviting the area priests and donors to attend the meeting. Even this program that we had to use from the association proved that the devil was not in favor of this project. What should have taken one hour of work, ended up being 5 hours. Everything was going wrong. We had people from Kinko's helping out, so we knew that there was a master behind our failures and tribulations. Using the guidelines, we had to have two hours of music playing in the background. There is no place that has two hours of instrumental sacred music. Therefore, an Ipod was used to record music. Our church choir director recorded the music. Again the devil was behind this, it took eight hours to record two hours of music.

Our project chairman was taken ill with a high fever and was out of work for 6 weeks with an infection, under antibiotics for most of the time, landing in a hospital over the Labor Day weekend for infusion of antibiotics and then recovering at home. This time he used to write letters, plan meetings, and to have this project come to fruition. We had a deadline and everything had to be in readiness. He attended meetings while we was sick and would not give in to the devil. We needed to have easels made for the displays. The project required 25 six-foot tables so the panels could be at eye level. Brother Knights provided the labor and the job was done. The day after the easel were done, the Brother knight who had worked at his home the majority of the time to get the job done, had an accident. Again the devil's work. He was riding with his wife and instead of using the brake handle, he used the throttle and the ATV went flying. He was trying to protect his wife. She fell and broke her collar bone and he went flying and landed on a boulder, breaking 6 ribs and then the ATV landed on and he broke a back rib. He had to be airlifted to the hospital and was in intensive care. He is still not 100%. But, he managed to be at the opening of the exhibit and took shifts to help out. Later on that week on the front page of our daily newspaper, an atheist came to speak at our local college. His topic was the sacred host. He asked people to send him hosts in the mail. He received 25 hosts and then he pierced each with a hot nail. That made the front news.

Why now when this project was soon to be coming. Finally, the grand opening took place. Many brother knights, along with State Officers, were at the opening. Since this is the "Year of the Priest" a special thank you was expressed by the curator's address. Since without a priest, there would be no such thing as the Real Presence. Thanking our priest for taking up the call to the priesthood is a blessing to us all. Many inspirational blessings were witnessed during those special days of the exhibit. One Sunday afternoon, we were asked to extend hours since the Youth Journey retreat was finishing at 1 p.m., we did and a young man entered the exhibit with his two children, a 2 and 5 year old. He asked the curator if he were a priest. The curator said that he was not a priest but that he was a member of the Knights of Columbus. The young man had a bad week and wanted to speak to a priest. He said that he was Catholic, but not practiced his faith. He wanted to come back and have his children baptized. He was asked what parish he belonged to. He said that he should call a priest in his area but he now lived in the southern part of the State. He was told that he should call a priest in his area to make an appointment to talk with him. It just happened that a priest came in the view the exhibit, the Holy Spirit at work.

The priest started a conversation with the young man. Meanwhile, a brother knight and his wife were working the exhibit, saw what was going on and took charge of entertaining the children while their father talked with the priest. They went to a secluded area and after a 45 minutes talk they came back. The young man's face was beaming and he thanked us for taking care of his children. A brother and sister took their time viewing the exhibit. They advised us that people should be on their knees when viewing these panels. During the week, many tears of joy were seen. One young lady left and said, "I needed this". A lot of witnessing was done during this exhibit. What a feeling of success that we had a small part in bringing faith to the hearts of these people. It was an uplifting experience which, at times, made our eyes water. God is so good, if only we would take the time to listen and rejoice in His power.

Then, came the time for the exhibit to be taken down. Brother Knights and their wives came in and all was done in one hour's time. Clean-up and all! It proved to us that as a council, we took on an enormous job, which at times, we thought we could never accomplish, but we came through it making us each a better person for it. We never made the front page of our newspaper, not even a small word in the back. Our goal is to bring this exhibit to every cluster in the State from York to Fort Kent. With God's help, the Holy Spirit will guide us on this journey of evangelization of our State and for His people.