**St. Mary’s Seminary & University Alumnus Father Michael J. McGivney**

**to be Beatified by Pope Francis**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Venerable Father Michael J. McGivney – an alumnus of St. Mary’s Seminary class of 1877 who in 1888 founded the Knights of Columbus – will be formally elevated to “Blessed” following Pope Francis’ decree this week recognizing a miracle attributed to the intercession of Father McGivney. The Beatification Mass, soon to be announced, will take place in Father McGivney’s home state of Connecticut. Beatification is the final step before sainthood.

“The deeply charitable spirit and zealous commitment to pastoral ministry shown by Father McGivney is what has always been at the core of formation at St. Mary’s Seminary and University,” said President-Rector Father Phillip Brown, PSS. “Though serving in the nineteenth century, Father McGivney demonstrated the same essential qualities needed for effective priestly ministry in the 21st century as well: faithfulness, Christ-like humility, zeal for the well-being, and especially the spiritual welfare of his parishioners and others, in particular those who are most vulnerable, and dedicated service. We take great pride in Fr. McGivney’s acknowledgement that his years of formation at St. Mary’s in the Sulpician tradition served as a defining influence on his vocation and life-long commitment to serve others as a parish priest. Providing the people of God with the kind of pastors they deserve, pastors like Fr. Michael McGivney, is the defining mission of St. Mary’s.”

As the first of 13 children born to Irish immigrants Patrick and Mary McGivney in Waterbury, Connecticut on August 12, 1852, Michael McGivney survived six of his siblings who died in infancy or early childhood. He was raised in a devout Catholic community where at age 13 he discerned a calling to the priesthood. Entering minor seminary at the age of 16, he studied the classics and philosophy in Canada and later enrolled at St. Mary’s Seminary and University on September 14, 1873 to prepare for Holy Orders. During his four years at St. Mary’s, Fr. McGivney excelled in academics while acquiring a keen desire to commit his life to parish ministry. It was during his formation in the Sulpician tradition at St. Mary’s that Fr. McGivney first discovered that he had the heart of a pastor.

Following ordination in 1877 by James Cardinal Gibbons at Baltimore’s Basilica of the Assumption, Father McGivney served a largely Irish-American immigrant community in New Haven, Connecticut at St. Mary’s parish. Undeterred by the anti-Catholic sentiment of the day, Fr. McGivney founded the Knights of Columbus in his parish basement as a way to support families who had lost husbands and fathers and faced destitution, a threat Fr. McGivney and his family knew only too well when his own father died in 1873. The fledgling membership group of Catholic men eventually grew to an international membership organization of nearly 2 million today, a major force in the areas of evangelization, charitable works, racial integration, pro-life initiatives and the defense of religious freedom. Father McGivney died of pneumonia at the age of 38 on August 14, 1890 in the midst of a global pandemic that claimed over 1 million worldwide.

The case for Father McGivney’s sainthood was officially opened in 1997 in the Archdiocese of Hartford, Connecticut. Pope Benedict XVI declared Father McGivney a “Venerable Servant of God” in recognition of his life of heroic virtue in 2008. It has now been advanced by the Vatican’s recognition of a first miracle. It is especially poignant that the miracle attributed to Fr. McGivney’s intercession involved the healing in utero and subsequent healthy birth of a child. A second verified miracle is required by the Vatican’s Congregation for the Causes of Saints prior to a recommendation for sainthood and canonization by the Pope. St. Mary’s Seminary & University joins our Chancellor Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore, Supreme Chaplain of the [Knights of Columbus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knights_of_Columbus) since 2005, in praying for the recognition of a second miracle and Fr. McGivney’s eventual canonization.

**About St. Mary’s Seminary & University**

Founded in 1791 by priests of the Society of Saint Sulpice at the invitation of Bishop John Carroll, St. Mary’s Seminary & University is the oldest Catholic Seminary in the United States and is often referred to as America’s “cradle of pastors.” The Sulpician tradition is dedicated foremost of all to preparing men to be parish priests. This formation process concentrates on providing seminarians with the kind of spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral knowledge and sensibility that will allow their relationship with God to flower in ways that lead to outstanding service to their congregations and the larger communities in which they live and to which they minister.