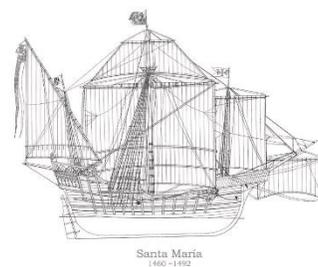


Our local chapter of the Knights of Columbus will be presenting several articles providing information about our founder Michael J. McGivney, our patron, Christopher Columbus along with other informational articles about the Knights of Columbus.

## WHY COLUMBUS DAY?

Deacon Tim Barnes

Columbus Day has long been observed on October 12. This is the day that Columbus landed in the new world. Even though it has long been observed by many people in many places, it is only in recent years that it became a federal holiday. The history of Columbus Day being officially observed began in 1934 during the term of President Franklin Roosevelt when congress passed a statute stating,



*"The President is requested to issue each year a proclamation (1) designating October 12 as Columbus Day; (2) calling on United States Government officials to display the flag of the United States on all Government buildings on Columbus Day; and (3) inviting the people of the United States to observe Columbus Day, in schools and churches, or other suitable places, with appropriate ceremonies that express the public sentiment befitting the anniversary of the discovery of America."* [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Columbus\\_Day](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Columbus_Day)

So in 1934 Columbus Day began being officially observed, but it still was not a federal holiday. It was not until 1967 that it became a federal holiday and it was in 1971 that Columbus Day was set to be observed as the second Monday of October.

In more recent times Columbus Day has become fraught with controversy because of negative aspects of the treatment of native Americans. It is certainly true that Columbus was far from a perfect man. Father Michael McGivney who established the Knights of Columbus set Christopher Columbus as the patron of the Knights of Columbus. It is important that while Columbus is the patron of the Knights, he is not a patron saint.

Columbus is remembered for the historic voyage he made and should be honored for his virtue of courage. Columbus sought to do something that had never been done- reach the east by sailing west. It was not a voyage without risk. Facing the unknown is often scary. Courage, sometimes called fortitude, is one of the cardinal virtues. Courage is the virtue of acting despite pain or adversity. In addition to courage, Columbus exhibited the spirit of exploration. This is a way by which we express our curiosity. In 1992 the United States Mint issued a commemorative silver dollar that recognized the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the voyage of Columbus. On the reverse of the coin displays a split image showing an image of the space shuttle on one side and ship of Columbus (the Santa Maria) on the other side. This spirit of discovery and exploration is the spirit that drives progress and innovation. While we recognize that Columbus was a flawed man, on Columbus Day we should celebrate and recognize the spirit of discovery which motivated him and strive for the virtue of courage which allowed him to overcome his fear and complete his journey.

