

CATHOLICS STANDING for SOCIAL JUSTICE



Pictured above: Bro. Kevin Hill and other founders of Atchison United, a community group organized to address institutional racism.

Expanding and Standing Stronger for SOCIAL JUSTICE

Kevin Hill (*center*) is an attorney from Atchison City, Kansas who recently joined the Knights of Peter Claver and is committed to Social Justice causes and the Catholic Church.

Interview with Bro. Kevin Hill

What led you to join KPC? I first became familiar with members of the Knights of Peter Claver during my frequent visits to St. Peter Claver Church over the past 10 years in New Orleans. In fact, the words of Deacon Lawrence Houston inspired 3 high school seminary classmates and I to start a ministry for developmentally disabled Catholics in Kansas City. ([Check out this Kansas City Catholic newspaper article, The Leaven, on the ministry.](#))

The Noble Order's mission statement and social justice initiatives are more in line with my belief system and what many progressive Catholics stand for and what has frankly been lacking lately with other Catholic organizations.

Our Catholic Faith has a proud history of priests, nuns, and lay people joining the March to Montgomery and other civil

rights protests dating back decades in order to take proactive steps towards tackling the sin of racism. However, the sin of racism is still prevalent, even in the Catholic Church, and we have a lot of work to do to educate people and combat the sin of racism in our Church and the world at large.

What are your expectations? I expect our Church to be more proactive in addressing the sin of racism. I attended the National Catholic Youth Conference in recent years as a youth leader and was fortunate enough to attend sessions on racism. A priest from D.C. asked those in attendance how many of them had heard a homily on racism. The vast majority of those in attendance did NOT raise their hands. It was eye opening that in the 21st century, the majority of Catholics in attendance had never heard a homily on racism, when it is such a critical issue in our Church and World.



Pictured above: Bro. Dec. Lawrence Houston and Bro. Kevin Hill at St. Peter Claver Catholic Church in New Orleans, LA.

What areas are you most interested in serving in / addressing? I am honored to be involved in community activism with Atchison United to address institutional racism in our community.

We have sponsored voting registration drives, community education,

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“CATHOLICS STANDING
for SOCIAL JUSTICE”

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community marches for racial justice, and had the recent success of renaming a racially divisive street name as set forth in [this linked article](#).

I hope to be able to assist in a similar role with the Knights and hope to someday have a local council in the Atchison-Leavenworth area that can become active in our community.

Not many people are familiar with the Knights of Peter Claver and Ladies Auxiliary in our area and I hope to be involved in changing that by introducing people to what a great organization it is for those interested in advancing the Church's role with social justice issues.

What are your thoughts on the Church and social justice / racism? As mentioned above, there is a lot of work to be done. Our local parish priest recently gave a wonderful homily on racism and was involved in a video with members of the local ministerial alliance where they concluded by all stating that "Black Lives Matter".

Sadly, some factions, which reportedly included some parishioners, gave him some serious blowback for his homily and video. I am aware of a priest from another part of the State who attempted to give a homily on racism after the murder of George Floyd where he actually made a comment that left several who heard it rightfully outraged and dumbfounded that if African Americans don't want police brutality "then don't do something wrong, it's that simple".

While the Bishops 2018 Pastoral Letter was a start, it was a long time coming and was sadly watered down from the original draft by some in the Conference. Racism needs to be brought to the forefront of our Church and addressed head on as opposed to the backseat it seems to be taking now.

There is a LOT of education that needs to be happening with priests, educators

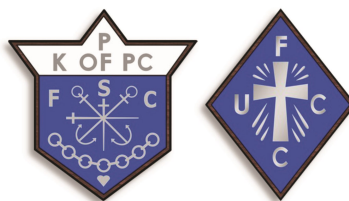


Pictured left: Members of Atchison United celebrate the street name change of Division St. to Unity St.

and lay people about the role that institutional racism, white privilege, and white fragility play in our society and the fact that most Catholics appear to need a re-fresher on those portions of the Catechism that condemn racism in all forms. ♦

Interview by Percy Marchand, Associate Director, Knights of Peter Claver and Ladies Auxiliary.

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