



Catholic War Veterans of the USA
 Father Vincent Capodanno Memorial Post
To heal, love, listen, serve

Third Edition

est. 11/24/2015

February 2016



Father Vincent Robert Capodanno, M.M.

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OUR CHARTER

On the 24th of November, 2015 Father Vincent Robert Capodanno Memorial Post 1974 officially received its charter as an official post in the Catholic War Veterans of the United States of America. Finally, after several long months of hard work, talking to people, being present at every veteran gathering possible, we collected enough members to apply for and receive the official charter.

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 Immediately after the bishop's installation, Ann Roberts and I began planning a visit with him. The only thing we were waiting for before seeking an appointment was our charter. Shortly after receiving the charter, I called the Catholic Center and asked for an appointment for Ann and I to visit Bishop Johnston. The appointment was made for December 11th.

MEETING WITH BISHOP JAMES JOHNSTON

We went into the meeting with no expectations or wants. Our primary purpose of meeting with the bishop was to introduce ourselves and the Catholic War Veterans of the USA to him and see how we, i.e. post 1974, could be of service to him and our diocese.

What we came away with was more than we could have ever expected. As time goes on and the various ideas and wishes expressed in the meeting

RECENT EVENTS

John F. Kopp

On November 6, 2015, we were blessed with the installation of our new bishop for the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, Bishop James Johnston. I had the honor and privilege to be able to attend both the celebration of Vespers and the installation.

materialize, I will expand on what came about during the meeting. But, to write it down in this newsletter would take pages.

Our February meeting will be held on Saturday morning, Feb. 13, 2016 at Our Lady of Mercy Country Home, 8:30 – 9:30 AM

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Possibilities

One thing that may occur because of our meeting with Bishop Johnston has to do with the National Office.

As most of you know, the CWV national office is in Alexandria VA. At this past year’s convention they talked about moving. The proposal at the time was to move to Queens NY. Well, that fell through.

One of the Sisters with whom I work, had mentioned that the Diocese had space at the Catholic Center in downtown Kansas City. Toward the end of our visit with Bishop Johnston, I asked him about it. The Bishop took us on a tour of one of the spaces that is for rent. Very nice and spacious. The Bishop also gave me the business card of the Diocese Finance Officer. I passed along the information to the chairman of the moving committee and the two gentlemen have been in contact.

So, as of right now, there could be a possibility of the National Office moving to our city. It is a win win proposition for all involved. Low rent, centrally located, beautiful building. Something to pray for.

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Our First Meeting

On the evening of January 6, 2016, we held our first meeting. During the meeting our first officers were elected. This was the primary purpose of the meeting, plus discussing our visit with Bishop Johnston and suggestions for the future. Those elected are as follows:

Commander/Adjutant	John F. Kopp
First Vice Commander	Tammy Scott
Second Vice Commander	Vernon Hudspeth
Treasurer	Dirk Stapleton
Historian	Tammy Scott
Welfare/Service Officer	Ann Roberts
First Director	Calvin Bumgarner
Second Director	John-Paul Kopp
Third Director	John Partin II
Chaplain	Fr. Richard Colbert, C.P.P.S

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MEETING

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New Catholic War Veterans Post honors God, Country and Home

Posted by The Catholic Key on 3:44 pm in Catholic Key, News

**By Marty Denzer
Catholic Key Reporter**

LIBERTY — Just two months ago, on Nov. 24, 2015, 19 Catholic men and one woman, all U.S. citizens and veterans of military service, received authorization from Arminda C. Crawford, National Commander, and William Wright, Sr., Adjutant General, of the National Catholic War Veterans of the United States to organize and conduct a post of the Catholic War Veterans in Northwest Missouri. The Father Vincent R. Capodanno Memorial Post 1974, the only CWV Post in Missouri, will hold monthly meetings at Our Lady of Mercy Country Home in Liberty.

Post Commander John Kopp, a Marine's son, served on a U.S. Navy destroyer during the Vietnam War. His term of service spanned 1964-68 and he served in Vietnam in 1965-66. He was a member of the American Legion for years, while working for the U.S. Post Office, and about 10 months ago became active as an at-large CWV member.

Post Welfare/Service Officer Ann Marie Roberts was both daughter and granddaughter of Navy men, so enlisting in the WAVES —Women Accepted for Voluntary Service —was a bit of a given. She wanted to be patriotic and had loved wearing her Girl Scout uniform. She volunteered and was stationed in Pensacola, Fla., ordering supplies of airplane parts for the base. She served for “two years, 10 months and 17 days”, then after discharge, “took advantage of the GI Bill” to pay for college. She graduated from Spring Hill College in 1999 with a degree in special education.

She now lives in Tarkio, Mo., tutoring, teaching Parish School of Religion classes at St. Paul the Apostle Parish and “involved in CWV, doing whatever is needed to be done.”

At the post's first meeting, Jan. 6, officers were elected: Commander/Adjutant —John F. Kopp, Kansas City; First Vice Commander — Tammy Scott, Maryville; Second Vice Commander —

Vernon Hudspeth, Kansas City; Treasurer —Dirk Stapleton, Kansas City; Historian—Tammy Scott, Maryville; Welfare/Service Officer — Ann Roberts, Tarkio; First Director—Calvin Bumgarner, Shawnee, Kan.; Second Director —John-Paul Kopp, Kansas City; Third Director— John Partin II, St. Louis, and Chaplain —Precious Blood Father Richard Colbert, Liberty.

Bishop James V. Johnston, Jr., a Catholic War Veterans member since 2015 said he is “pleased to learn that a local group of Catholic War Veterans in our diocese has received notice that they are now recognized as a post. Many are not aware of this organization of Catholic faithful within the Church. Given the many Catholic veterans who have served our country in the armed services over the years, I hope more will become familiar with the Catholic War Veterans and how they might benefit from this organization.”

There are thousands of members of CWV of the United States of America, with around 225 posts across the country. The organization itself is 80 years old.

During World War I, the Knights of Columbus, a lay Catholic organization, was commissioned by the U.S. government to serve Catholics in the Armed Forces in the camps and behind the battlefields. Following the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, officially ending the war, veterans came home and wanted or needed the support and camaraderie of fellow veterans. The Veterans of Foreign Wars had been around since 1899 and the American Legion was just getting established, but there was no organization specifically for the many Catholic veterans.

Fascism, socialism, Communism and other political and ideological “isms” swept through Europe in the 1930s and threatened the freedoms enjoyed by American citizens.

Pope Pius XI wrote several protests against the Nazi regime, and his attitude to Mussolini's Italy reversed in 1938, after Nazi racial policies were adopted in Italy. Alarmed by the rise of totalitarianism, he challenged the new creeds in several encyclicals.

Father Edward J. Higgins had served during World War I as a commissioned Lieutenant Chaplain with the 152nd Depot Brigade and General Hospital #13, stationed at Camp Upton on Long Island. Now pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish in Astoria, Long Island, New York, he read the pope's words with concern.

Realizing that Catholic veterans could not, as a group, voice their opinions or fears on any matters of social or political importance, he saw the need for an organized group of Catholic Veterans. He gathered veterans in his parish, and they gathered other Catholic veterans. Father Higgins, with the assistance of John M. Dealy, founded the Catholic War Veterans of the United States, incorporated under the laws of the State of New York on May 19, 1935.

Father Higgins received the pope's blessing on the Catholic War Veterans organization several weeks later during a private audience with Pius XI in Rome. Immaculate Conception Church is now the National Shrine of the Catholic War Veterans.

Catholic War Veterans received its Congressional charter from the Reagan administration Aug. 17, 1984. The National Post is located in Alexandria, Va.

The organization grew from the start. Today members of the veteran's organization live in all 50 states, although not all 50 states have posts. Seventeen states have well established posts, especially on the East Coast. Recently, posts were authorized in Missouri, Washington and Tennessee. Kansas and Oregon are in the process of applying for authorization to form posts.

The CWV post in Liberty was a dream until recently. John Kopp and Ann Marie Roberts attended the Catholic War Veterans National Convention last summer. "Both of us were full of questions and curiosity," he said. "We came away from the convention with the desire to have the first CWV post in Missouri by Christmas 2015. Everywhere we would go we would wear our uniform, baseball cap, or polo shirt with the CWV logo. If we were at Mass, no matter where, someone would ask what the logo was about. So we would explain. Eventually, one by one, people would join."

The National Post is the Alexandria, CWV headquarters. Members living in a state where no post has been formed are part of the National Post, and considered at-large members.

Kopp continued, "There were already several members in Missouri that belonged to the National Post ... the 'at large post.' As we began getting new members, we communicated with present (at large) CWV members about our intentions to form a post here in the KC area. Several told us that they would transfer into the post. So, in less than six months from when we started, we had more

than enough members signed up to request our charter." The charter for the Father Vincent Capodanno Memorial Post number 1974 was granted Nov. 24.

Who was Father Capodanno and why was he chosen as the new post's namesake?

Born in 1929, Vincent R. Capodanno was the 10th child of Italian immigrants. He was attending Fordham University when he recognized the call to the priesthood. He was familiar with the Maryknolls' missionary work, and in 1949 applied to and was accepted to formation as a missionary priest. He was ordained in 1958 after nine years of training in theology, academics and basic survival tactics, then sent to Taiwan. In the early 1960s Maryknoll superiors transferred him to Hong Kong.

The war in Vietnam was at its height; the U.S. was waging total war against communist North Vietnam. Father Capodanno felt called to serve in the military, and sought permission to join the Navy Chaplain Corps in Vietnam. Permission granted, he attended Officer Candidate School, completing the course in 1966. Lieutenant Capodanno then reported to the 7th Marines in Vietnam, serving first as battalion chaplain. He was later transferred to a medical unit, found the work energizing and requested an extension with the Marines. During his second tour of duty in 1967, now with the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines, the battalion was ambushed and heavy fighting ensued. Ignoring his own wounds, Father Capodanno ran to help a wounded corpsman pinned down by an enemy machine gunner and was hit by gun fire 27 times.

He was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor in 1969, the Navy Bronze Star and several other medals including the Purple Heart. A number of chapels in this country and in Southeast Asia are named in his honor; the USS Capodanno, (commissioned 1973-93, later sold to Turkey) was the first ship in the U.S. Fleet to receive the Papal Blessing while docked in Naples, and many other memorials including artwork, statuary, and scholarships, honor Father Capodanno. And now the CWV post in Liberty.

In 2006, then-Archbishop (now Cardinal) Edwin O'Brien of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, decreed Father Capodanno a "Servant of God," the initiating step toward beatification and canonization.

Commander Kopp said there were several reasons for selecting Fr. Capodanno after whom the post is

named. "First of all, he was a Navy Chaplain who, while shielding and attending to a wounded Marine corpsman, gave his life," he said.

"Secondly, he is what I would call a 'modern day martyr,' being killed in the Viet Nam war, making it more relevant to younger veterans, hopefully. When Ann (Roberts) and I saw his name on that plaque (a plaque on the Catholic Chaplains Monument at Arlington National Cemetery bears his name) on Memorial Day during the World War I Memorial weekend celebration in Washington, D.C., bells and whistles sort of went off in our heads. And, the more we read about Father's life, the more inspired we became and we realized he fit the bill to a tee. After all, the Catholic War Veterans' patron saint is St. Sebastian, who was a soldier himself."

Commander Kopp continued, "Father Capodanno had the habit of thinking out of the box. What I mean is the military tries to keep the chaplains out of harm's way. They really did not wish for Father Capodanno to go to the front line. But, he did. He realized that his duty was not just to serve those in the rear, but also to minister to those whose lives were in serious danger. We want that kind of post, one that thinks out of the box."

Many posts in the CWV are aligned with a parish and their main service is to the parish, he said. "We are not aligned with a parish, thus giving us more freedom to branch out to the entire diocese, and beyond. Our membership is not restricted to just staunch Catholics, but also to those who may have been alienated for whatever reason, but still recognize that they are Catholic. Hopefully we will become a bridge to bring some back to church, and heal some of the wounds — to heal, to love, to listen, to serve."

Service Officer Roberts added, "We hope to serve, to reach out to military vets and their families — listening to others is so important — and bring Christ to them!"

Catholic armed forces veterans are invited to find out more about Catholic War Veterans and Auxiliary of the United States of America, Inc. at www.cwv.org or email admin@cwv.org.

For more information about the Father Vincent R. Capodanno Memorial Catholic War Veterans Post no. 1974, contact Commander John F. Kopp, jfkopp@att.net or Service Officer Ann Marie Roberts, ann.roberts1@hotmail.com.