



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II TO THE SUPREME DIRECTORS OF THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

Saturday, 17 October 1988

Dear Friends,

It is a great pleasure for me to meet with you, the Supreme Directors of the Knights of Columbus, on the occasion of your visit to Rome. My special greeting goes to the Supreme Knight, Mr. Virgil Dechant, to the Supreme Officers, and to all the wives who are present.

The Knights of Columbus provide a splendid example of lay participation in the Church's mission. Throughout your history you have been known for your staunch support of the Catholic faith and for your financial aid and volunteer work on behalf of charitable and benevolent causes. By promoting the spiritual and material well-being of others, you honour Christ in your neighbour. By bearing witness to the faith through upright personal conduct and through public action, you transform society from within, so that it may be renewed in Christ and grow into the family of God.

I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to you for the many ways in which the Knights of Columbus have assisted the Popes in fulfilling the responsibilities of their office as Successors of Saint Peter and Pastors of the Universal Church. Recent examples include your generous response to the financial needs of the Holy See through the Vicarius Christi Foundation, which has just been doubled in size, and the funding provided for restoration work at Saint Peter's Basilica. You are also making it possible for more people to hear the Pope and to pray with him through the use of modern telecommunications. You have helped launch the North American Campus of the John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and the Family.

I am deeply grateful to you for all these worthy projects and for many others as well. However, my expression of gratitude would be incomplete if I failed to say something about the spirit which clearly inspires your activities. It is a spirit of love for, and fidelity to, the Catholic Church: fidelity to

what she believes and teaches, to the message of love, freedom and human dignity that she seeks to offer to the modern world. It is for this love and fidelity above all that I wish to commend you and thank you today. The greatest joy and consolation that you bring to the heart of the Pope are the result of all that you are doing to protect the Christian family and the right to life from conception until death, to promote evangelization, Catholic education, parish life and vocations to the priesthood and religious life. Your efforts testify to your firm faith and trust in God and to your wise understanding of the human toil that is required to “wage the good warfare” as Saint Paul says, “holding faith and a good conscience”.

I am confident that God will continue to bless all that you do and make it fruitful in the life of the Church and of society. May Mary, Mother of the Church, intercede for you, so that all the Knights of Columbus and your families will experience the joy and peace that comes from Christian living. With affection in the Lord Jesus Christ I cordially impart to you my Apostolic Blessing.

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