



# The Holy See

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**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II  
TO THE OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
OF THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS**

*Monday, 18 October 1993*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear Friends,*

It is always a joy to greet the *Officers and Board of Directors of the Knights of Columbus* on the occasion of your visits to Rome. I thank Supreme Knight Dechant for his kind words on your behalf and for his presentation of the proceeds of the *Vicarius Christi* Fund.

For over a century, the Knights of Columbus have been distinguished by outstanding fidelity to the Successor of Peter and a deep commitment to the Church's universal mission. This lively sense of communion with the See of Rome is rooted in the ideals of practical faith and solidarity which inspired the foundation of your fraternal Order. Those high ideals have found expression in countless works of service to the needy throughout the world, not least in this beloved City. In expressing my appreciation of the way in which you assist the Pope in the exercise of his apostolic solicitude for all the Churches (Cf. 2Cor. 11: 28), I assure you that, in the words of Saint Paul, "I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers" (Philem. 1: 4).

Ten years ago, on the occasion of my Pastoral Visit to Latin America, I called for a new evangelization of that Continent, an evangelization that would be "new in its ardour, methods and expression" (John Paul II, *Address to the Assembly of CELAM in Port-au-Prince*, III, 9 March 1983). At the centre of this great enterprise is the Church's ministry to the family. Today as ever, "the family absolutely needs to hear ever anew and to understand ever more deeply the authentic words that reveal its identity, its inner resources and the importance of its mission in the City of God and in that of man" (John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, 86). It was precisely in order to assist the Church in offering this indispensable pastoral service that I established in 1981 the Pontifical

Institute for Studies on Marriage and the Family. And it is also for this reason that I wish sincerely to thank you, the representatives of the Knights of Columbus, for your support in making possible the establishment of a branch of the Institute in the United States.

I am confident that the Order will continue to work for the strengthening and deepening of the Christian formation of its members. Without an enlightened and well-instructed laity the ecclesial community cannot respond adequately to present-day challenges to faith and morality.

Upon all the Knights of Columbus and your families I cordially invoke the grace and peace of Jesus Christ our Savior. With my Apostolic Blessing.

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