



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER
POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS**

15 October 1998

Dear Friends,

I am pleased once again to greet the members of the Board of Directors of the Knights of Columbus on the occasion of your visit to Rome. I thank the Supreme Knight for his kind words of presentation. Our meeting today gives me yet another opportunity to express my gratitude for the witness of Christian faith, fraternal solidarity and firm commitment to the Church's apostolate which has always been the hallmark of your Order.

An important aspect of this witness has been your desire, from your foundation, to support the pastoral ministry of the Bishop of Rome, who, by the will of Christ, "is the perpetual and visible source and foundation of the unity both of the Bishops and of the whole company of the faithful" (*Lumen Gentium*, 23; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 882). Rooted in a profound sense of Catholic unity with the Successor of Peter, this desire led to the establishment of the Vicarius Christi Fund as a means of assisting the Pope in a practical way in the fulfillment of his duties. In thanking you for your donation of the proceeds of the Fund for the past year, I ask you to convey to all the Knights my personal appreciation.

In particular, I wish to say a warm word of gratitude for your Order's generous payment of the mortgage of the Holy See's Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations Organization. Thanks to this notable gift, the Mission is better able to carry out its important activity in representing the Church's vision and concerns in the international community. As Christians throughout the world prepare to welcome the New Millennium as a time of hope and promise (cf. *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, 46), I see in this gesture the readiness of the Knights of Columbus to

be an effective part of the Church's joyful proclamation of the liberating power of the Gospel to shape a world of ever greater justice, solidarity and peace.

Dear Friends, I encourage you to carry forward the fine tradition of the Knights of Columbus and, inspired by your Catholic faith, to continue your strenuous efforts for the pro-life cause. In a recent meeting with Bishops from the United States I urged Catholics to continue to make their voices heard in the formulation of cultural, economic, political and legislative projects which defend and enhance human life. A nation "needs the wisdom and courage to overcome the moral ills and spiritual temptations inherent in its march through history... Democracy stands or falls with the values which it embodies and promotes" (*Speech to Bishops of California, Nevada and Hawaii*, October 2, 1998). May the efforts of the Knights of Columbus bear much fruit.

To all of you and your families I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of joy and peace in the Lord.

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