



SECRETARIAT OF STATE

From the Vatican, 24 July 2024

N. 643.929

Dear Mr. Kelly,

His Holiness Pope Francis has asked me to convey to you his warm greetings and the assurance of his closeness in prayer to all who will take part in the 142nd Supreme Convention of the Knights of Columbus, to be held in Québec City from 6 to 8 August next.

The theme chosen for this year's meeting – *On Mission* – centers on the missionary dimension of Christian discipleship that the Holy Father has stressed from the earliest days of his pontificate. In his first Apostolic Exhortation, he reminded us that “every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 120). The foundation of the Knights of Columbus, guided by the prophetic vision of Blessed Michael McGivney, was inspired by the urgent need to bear witness to that love, above all in service to the poor and in apostolic zeal for the building up of the Church in unity, fraternity and fidelity to the saving truth of the Gospel.

In the pursuit of these noble goals, your Order, from its origins, has devoted great attention to the formation of its members as men of faith and family. Over the generations, the Knights have worked for the strengthening of family life through programs of catechesis and spiritual growth, borne public witness to the centrality of the family as the fundamental cell of society, and supported a variety of initiatives to support families in their indispensable social and educational mission. This historic commitment has included a particular concern for passing on the faith to new generations, instilling sound values and accompanying the young in their growth to maturity as men and women of integrity, wisdom and service to the communities in which they live. In his many writings

and addresses to young people, the Holy Father has frequently warned them of the danger, in today's fluid and often frivolous society, of becoming severed from the religious and cultural roots that provide their deepest identity (cf. *Christus Vivit*, 179-186). For this reason, he wishes to encourage in a special way the Knights' "Cor" initiative and sends prayerful good wishes for its spiritual fruitfulness.

All missionary outreach has its heart and beating pulse in the presence of our Lord in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, offered for the peace and salvation of all the world (cf. Roman Missal, *Eucharistic Prayer III*). In this past year, the cross-country Eucharistic Pilgrimage in the United States, promoted by your Order, bore impressive witness not only to the Church's faith in the redemptive power of Christ's sacrifice on the cross, but also his constant accompaniment of the Church on her pilgrimage through history. In these times marked by new wars, conflicts and social unrest, the Holy Father has been untiring in calling all Christians to pray for justice, peace and reconciliation in our human family. He asks the Knights and their families to persevere in offering their prayers and Masses for the triumph of Christ's peace in the hearts of all people and the building of the civilization of love.

Once again, the Holy Father takes this occasion to express his profound gratitude to the Knights of Columbus for their concrete witness to the faith that works through love (cf. *Gal 5:6*). Together with the charitable activities of its local Councils worldwide, your Order continues to give outstanding support and encouragement to efforts to defend God's gift of life at every stage of its development, to uphold the dignity of the institution of marriage, and to advance the mission of the Church in developing countries. His Holiness is likewise grateful for the efforts of the Knights to care for the needs of our brothers and sisters in war-torn Ukraine, the Christian communities of the Middle East, and all those experiencing persecution for their faith in Christ; these are causes especially close to his heart as Pastor of the Universal Church.

In these months, the Church is preparing spiritually for the forthcoming Jubilee Year, when countless pilgrims will pass through the Holy Door of Saint Peter's Basilica to encounter the richness of the Lord's mercies poured out upon our world through her apostolic ministry. It is the Holy Father's hope that as they contemplate the great Bernini *baldacchino* that soars above the Tomb of Saint Peter, even now being restored to its original splendor through the generosity of the Knights of Columbus, they will be strengthened in faith and in unity with the Successor of Peter. His Holiness prays that the graces of the Holy Year will be poured out in abundance on the Knights and their families as they strive to fulfil their baptismal mission to be a leaven of peace and holiness in our human family, weary of war and yearning for the peace that only Christ can give (cf. *Jn* 15:27).

With these sentiments, His Holiness commends the deliberations of the Convention to the loving intercession of Our Lady, Mother of the Church, and he cordially imparts to the Knights and their families his Blessing as a pledge of joy and peace in the Lord.

Yours sincerely,



Pietro Cardinal Parolin
Secretary of State

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