



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Knights of Columbus to Support Restoration of Baldacchino in St. Peter's Basilica *Project Targeted for Completion for Jubilee Year 2025*

Vatican City — The Knights of Columbus announced today that it is underwriting a restoration of Gian Lorenzo Bernini's iconic Baldacchino above the altar of St. Peter's Basilica. The project, to be undertaken by the Fabbrica of St. Peter's, will inspect and restore every inch of the nearly 400-year-old bronze, marble, and gilded wood structure, which rises 10 stories above the high altar of the basilica and the tomb of the Apostle Peter. Bernini, considered one of the leading Baroque artists of his era, was commissioned by Pope Urban VIII to sculpt the Baldacchino. The complete restoration, the first of its kind since 1758, will employ state of the art technologies including drone videography and 3-D modeling.

Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly emphasized the spiritual significance of the support, "On behalf of the Knights of Columbus and our more than 2 million members in 13 countries around the world, we are honored to lend our support to this project, which is more than caring for a magnificent piece of art. It points to the reality of God's love for us and His coming down to earth to dwell with us and to build the Church upon St. Peter and his profession of faith."

He continued, "I'd like to thank our Holy Father, Pope Francis, as well as Cardinal Mauro Gambetti, for allowing us to partner in this project, in continuation of what is now more than a century of support for various projects in Rome, and nearly 20 projects in support of St. Peter's over the last 44 years. In addition to all the service we carry out for the poor, for our parishes and families, the Knights are very grateful for the privilege of serving the Church in this way."

The Knights of Columbus has enjoyed a long and enduring relationship of more than 100 years with the Vatican and the Popes, beginning with Pope Benedict XV's request that the Knights open sports fields to serve poor youth of Rome, following the First World War. Since 1980, the Knights has sponsored 17 other restoration projects, including the cleaning of the façade of St. Peter's Basilica in anticipation of the Jubilee Year 2000, work in the Vatican Grottoes, and the restoration of the Madonna della Colonna, and a 14th-century, 7-foot-tall wooden crucifix that was present in the original St. Peter's Basilica.

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The restoration of the Baldacchino is soon to be underway and is expected to be completed by the Jubilee Year 2025. The project will be conducted under the leadership of Dr. Pietro Zander, head of the Necropolis and Classical Antiquities of the Fabbrica di San Pietro in the Vatican.

About the Knights of Columbus

In 1882, Blessed Michael McGivney, a young parish priest in New Haven, Connecticut, founded the Knights of Columbus to serve the needs of a largely immigrant Catholic community. What began as a small fraternal benefit society has since grown into the world's premier lay Catholic men's organization, with more than 2 million members in over 16,600 local councils. As members of one of the world's leading international charitable organizations, Knights around the world donated approximately 50 million service hours and nearly \$185 million for worthy causes in their communities in 2022. The Knights of Columbus also offers a range of life insurance products to members and their families and was named by Forbes as one of America's Best Insurance Companies 2024 in the permanent life insurance category. Knights of Columbus Insurance currently has more than \$122 billion* of life insurance in force. In addition, the organization offers investment services in accord with Catholic social teaching through its wholly owned subsidiary, Knights of Columbus Asset Advisors, which holds more than \$26 billion** in assets under management. Based on the founding principles of charity, unity and fraternity, the Knights of Columbus is committed to strengthening Catholic families and parishes, and to practicing faith in action through service to all in need. To learn more or to join the Knights of Columbus, please visit kofc.org/join.

*As of September 30, 2023

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