



To the Supreme Knight Virgil C. Dechant  
and the Knights of Columbus

As the Supreme Council of the Knights of Columbus assembles for its 111th Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C., I am once again pleased to extend cordial greetings and prayerful good wishes to all of you and your families.

The whole Church and the international community are preparing for the forthcoming International Year of the Family. It is therefore fitting that the theme chosen for the activities and discussions of your Assembly is the Catholic family and those moral values necessary in today's world. As I noted in my Apostolic Exhortation Christifideles Laici, it is in marriage and the family that the primary humanization of the person and of society takes place (cf. No. 40). If society is to be truly human, it is imperative that both marriage and the family be protected from the many dangers threatening them.

In contemporary society, these dangers include attitudes of de-christianization and religious indifference which are exposing the family to profound changes and ever greater tensions and crises. Thus, working to support and strengthen Catholic families and moral values is at the same time working effectively to renew and rebuild society. With faith and trust in the victorious

presence of the Risen Christ, and sustained by his grace, you are renewing your commitment to testify strongly and convincingly to the values of faithful love and generous self-giving in marriage and family life. Christian families need to be challenged to bear witness to the standards of the Gospel within a consumer society; Christian young people need to be challenged to respond to Christ's call to perfection in a society affected by a crisis of moral truths and values.

In all of this, I strongly encourage you to continue to give the outstanding example of Christian commitment for which the Knights of Columbus are known, to continue undaunted in your tireless efforts to uphold and promote Catholic teaching, to continue to lend your faithful support to my own universal ministry in the Church, and to the pastoral labors of Bishops, priests and Religious throughout the world. I encourage you, in the words of Saint Paul, to fight the good fight of faith (cf. 2 Tm. 4:7).

With affection in the Lord, and commending you to the protection of the Holy Family of Nazareth, I gladly impart to you my Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of abundant grace and peace.

From the Vatican, July 30, 1993

*Joannes Paulus* 