



### To the Knights of Columbus

As the Supreme Council of the Knights of Columbus prepares to meet for its 113th Annual Convention in Kansas City, Kansas and Missouri, I send cordial greetings to all of you and your families. I pray that the members of the Supreme Council will be sustained by God's grace and that their deliberations will provide sound guidance and direction to the Knights throughout the world in their efforts to advance the Church's universal mission.

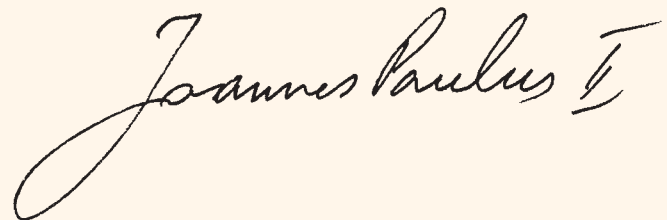
It is my particular hope that the 1995 meeting will enable the Knights of Columbus to contribute in a significant way to the Church's preparation for the Third Millennium of Christ's Incarnation. The Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 demands of all believers in Christ a renewed commitment to bear witness to the Gospel, to grow in holiness and to work for the spread of God's Kingdom on earth. As I wrote in my Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, the celebration of the Jubilee is both a great challenge and "a special grace of the Lord for the Church and for the whole of humanity" (No. 54). I urge the Knights to respond generously to this challenge by deepening their understanding of the Catholic faith, by their fidelity to prayer and good works, and by seeking to bring about an authentic renewal of society in the spirit of the Gospel.

Certainly the recently concluded Year of the Family was an important aspect of the Church's preparation for the Great Jubilee. I am deeply grateful for the active part which the Knights took in this celebration and for its many initiatives in support of marriage and the family. I encourage you to continue to explore new ways of assisting Christian families to live their vocation as sanctuaries of life and schools of self-sacrificing love. Young families in particular need to feel encouragement and support as they take up the decisive and irreplaceable role which they are called to play in the building of a civilization based on respect for God's gift of life and on openness to the aspirations and needs of all our brothers and sisters in society (cf. *Evangelium Vitae*, 92).

In this regard, I cannot fail to express my gratitude and praise for the persevering commitment of the Knights of Columbus to the protection and defense of human life, particularly the life of the unborn. I am confident that at every level of society the Knights will seek appropriate and effective means of responding to the Church's call for "a general mobilization of consciences and a united ethical effort to activate a great campaign in support of life" (*ibid.*, 95). For the sure measure of a society's commitment to justice and freedom is its ability to respect God's gift of life and to recognize the dignity of its members who are most vulnerable and most in need.

With deep esteem for the outstanding tradition of service of our Lord and his Church which has been the hallmark of the Knights of Columbus, I offer fervent prayers that this year's Convention will strengthen your devotion to the Order's high religious and fraternal ideals. Invoking upon you and your families the loving protection of Mary, Mother of the Church, I willingly impart my Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of grace and peace in our Lord Jesus Christ.

From the Vatican, June 1, 1995

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Johannes Paulus II". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the typed text. It features a large, elegant initial 'J' and a distinct 'II' at the end.