



## To the Knights of Columbus

As the Supreme Council of the Knights of Columbus gathers in Toronto for its 119th Annual Convention, I warmly greet all the Knights and their families. My greeting goes in a special way to Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson and to the new members of the Supreme Council. May the Convention provide sure guidance and direction as the Order seeks to carry on its outstanding tradition of charity, fraternity and generous cooperation in the mission of the Church at the dawn of the third millennium.

Your meeting this year follows the theme of my Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, addressed to the whole Church at the conclusion of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000. The Knights of Columbus made a significant contribution to the Church's celebration of the Jubilee, thanks to the active participation of so many local Councils in the three-year-long program of spiritual preparation and the personal presence of the Knights and their families at the Jubilee celebrations, whether in Rome and the Holy Land or in their local Dioceses. I cannot fail to express my gratitude for your Order's

generosity in underwriting the restoration of the porch of the Patriarchal Basilica of Saint Peter in the Vatican, which welcomed the millions of pilgrims who passed through the Holy Door on their way to pray at the Tomb of the Fisherman.

The Jubilee was in fact a moment of immense grace and spiritual renewal for the whole Church, and a summons to respond with renewed enthusiasm to the command which the Lord addresses to his disciples: *Duc in altum* – “Put out into the deep”. Now that the Jubilee is ended, this call needs to resound even more insistently in the heart of each believer and in the life of the entire Church. Each of the Lord’s followers is challenged in a personal way to “put out into the deep”, to encounter the Lord in the depths of prayer and to allow his Holy Spirit daily to guide and inspire our thoughts and actions. The Church as a whole is likewise called to renewed missionary zeal and challenged to cast wide her nets in order to draw the men and women of our time to Christ the Savior of the world.

I encourage the Knights to respond to this great challenge by a renewed commitment to the vision of your founder, the Servant of God

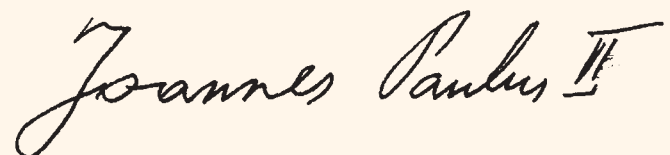
Michael McGivney. Father McGivney, at the end of the nineteenth century, foresaw the importance of a united and informed laity for the progress of the Gospel in the new world. Almost a century before the Second Vatican Council, he sought to enable Catholic laymen to live up to their baptismal vocation “to seek the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and ordering them according to the divine plan” (*Lumen Gentium*, 31). In today’s increasingly secularized culture, which at times rejects and even tries to ridicule religious belief and fundamental norms of the moral law, the Knights of Columbus can play a significant role in teaching and embodying the religious and civic ideals capable of shaping a future of hope and promise for coming generations.

As the new Supreme Council begins its deliberations, I take this opportunity to thank your Order once again for its public witness to the Church’s teaching, especially with regard to the dignity and sanctity of human life. Particularly important are your tireless efforts to defend the life of the unborn and to support the Church’s proclamation of the Gospel of Life. It is my hope that, as the evil fruits of the culture of death become more and more apparent, the

Order will continue to make its voice heard in presenting the reasons for the Church's moral teaching, which is meant to offer "a service to culture, politics, the economy and the family, ensuring that the fundamental principles upon which depend the destiny of human beings and the future of civilization will be everywhere respected" (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 51).

Invoking upon all the Knights and your families joy and peace in our Lord Jesus Christ, I commend the deliberations of the Supreme Council to the loving intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church. I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of abundant divine graces.

From the Vatican, June 26, 2001

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joannes Paulus II". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a distinct flourish at the end.