

**His Eminence Tarcisio Cardinal Bertone, S.D.B.**  
**Knights of Columbus**  
**2007 Gaudium et Spes Award Honoree**

**CITATION**

“The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ.”

These opening words of the Second Vatican Council’s *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, entitled *Gaudium et Spes*, eloquently express the reason behind the establishment of the highest honor given by the Order of the Knights of Columbus, the Gaudium et Spes Award. Bestowed only periodically and with special care, the award recognizes individuals who are extraordinary exemplars of the Faith, having rendered outstanding service to the Church and to humanity in the name of Jesus Christ.

The first honoree was Mother Teresa of Calcutta, who received the award in 1992. The second award was presented two years later

to His Eminence John Cardinal O'Connor. Subsequent Gaudium et Spes Award recipients have been: His Eminence James Cardinal Hickey; His Eminence William Cardinal Baum; His Beatitude Patriarch Michel Sabbah; and Jean Vanier, the founder of L'Arche. Through these honorees, the Knights of Columbus has recognized a breadth of service within the Church that includes a simple nun working among the poorest of the poor, a layman offering God's love to persons with disabilities, and members of the hierarchy reaching out to God's people everywhere.

During our 125th Annual Supreme Council Meeting, we now honor His Eminence Tarcisio Cardinal Bertone who, on June 22nd of last year, was named Secretary of State by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI and assumed that office on September 15th. Making his first visit to the United States as Secretary of State, Cardinal Bertone honors all Knights of Columbus by his presence, and we welcome him with open hearts.

In his long and faithful service to the Church, Cardinal Bertone has labored in a number of fields: as a scholar, a trusted colleague, an indispensable collaborator within the Vatican's Curia, and a faithful pastor as the Archbishop of Vercelli and, more recently, of Genoa – the birthplace of the patron of our Order, Christopher Columbus.

The Secretary of State is the Holy Father's closest adviser, with responsibility for matters internal to the Church and its governance, as well as external matters involving relations with states. In naming Cardinal Bertone to this position, the Holy Father has chosen someone with whom he has worked closely on many occasions and with whom he has formed a strong bond of trust.

Recognizing that His Eminence would be missed by the faithful in Genoa, Pope Benedict wrote a pastoral letter to them last year to explain his decision to transfer their much-loved archbishop to Rome. "In these past three years, during which he has led the Church in Genoa, you have learned to appreciate the gifts and qualities that make him a faithful pastor, especially capable of combining pastoral

care and doctrinal wisdom,” wrote the Holy Father. “It is precisely these characteristics, together with the mutual understanding and trust we developed in the years of our common service at the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, that have induced me to choose him for this lofty and delicate task at the service of the universal Church at the Holy See.”

Born in Romano Canavese, in the Province of Turin, our honoree became a professed member of the Salesians of Don Bosco in 1950. He was ordained a priest ten years later and received a licentiate in theology from the Salesian Theological Faculty in Turin. Continuing studies in Rome, he earned a doctorate in canon law at the Pontifical Salesian Athenaeum. He began his teaching career there in 1967 and was later named Rector.

He served as a collaborator on the final phase of the revision of the *Code of Canon Law*, which His Holiness Pope John Paul II promulgated in 1983, and was a lead member of the team that translated the *Code* into Italian under the direction of the national

Episcopal Conference. Showing great pastoral concern, he visited some one hundred dioceses in Italy and abroad to explain the new *Code of Canon Law* and thus facilitate its proper implementation.

Having served four years as Archbishop of Vercelli, our honoree was named Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 1995, the dicastery which His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI, as Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, served as Prefect for many years. As Secretary of the Congregation, Archbishop Bertone was entrusted with the responsibility of interviewing the visionary Sister Lucia dos Santos about the Third Secret of Fatima, which was published in the Great Jubilee Year 2000. Recently, Cardinal Bertone published a book on the message of Fatima entitled *L'ultima veggente di Fatima (The Last Seer of Fatima)*, for which Pope Benedict wrote a letter of personal commendation.

Appointed to the See of Genoa by Pope John Paul II, our honoree was installed as archbishop there on February 2, 2003. In the consistory of October 21, 2003, he was elevated to the Sacred College

of Cardinals, with the titular Church of Santa Maria Ausiliatrice in via Tuscolana.

Since becoming Secretary of State nearly one year ago, Cardinal Bertone has brought the deep thinking of a scholar and the compassionate outlook of a pastor to his ministry to the Universal Church. He has referred to himself as Secretary “of Church,” underscoring the fact that the temporal concerns of the Vatican as a state are necessarily tied to the spiritual and apostolic mission of the Church founded by Jesus Christ.

In April of this year, Pope Benedict bestowed another honor on Cardinal Bertone, naming him Camerlengo, or Chamberlain, of the Holy Roman Church. The main responsibility of this office comes with the death of a pope, when the Camerlengo seals the papal apartments and heads the committee preparing for the election of a new pope.

A true man for all seasons, Cardinal Bertone has a pastoral heart that allows him to be as comfortable speaking to the media as

he is greeting parishioners at a local church. His Eminence even has been known to provide media commentary for Italian soccer matches.

The Knights of Columbus is most pleased and privileged, therefore, to welcome this esteemed member of the Church's hierarchy, this priest of Don Bosco, in whom the Holy Father places such trust, and to bestow the seventh Knights of Columbus Gaudium et Spes Award upon His Eminence Tarcisio Cardinal Bertone, Secretary of State.