



*To Mr. Carl A. Anderson
Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus*

On the occasion of the 125th Supreme Convention of the Knights of Columbus, being held in Nashville, Tennessee, from August 7 - 9, 2007, I send my best wishes to you and to all those gathered with you for this important event. I am especially pleased that His Eminence Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, the Secretary of State, has been able to travel to the United States in person in order to be with you and to convey my greetings. Please be assured of my prayers for all of you during this Convention and for the fruitfulness of your deliberations.

As Saint Paul wrote in his Second Letter to the Corinthians, “The Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we preached among you ... was not Yes and No; but in him it is always Yes” (2 Cor 1:19). You have chosen as the theme for your meeting: “Celebrating 125 Years of Faith in Action: Witnessing to the ‘Yes’ of Jesus Christ.” How important it is to emphasize that the message of the Gospel is one that answers “Yes” to all the deepest hopes and aspirations of humanity. Without God, the human person remains restless and unfulfilled – in Saint Augustine’s classic formulation, our hearts were made for the Lord and they find no peace until they rest in him (cf. *Confessions*, 1:1). Yet when we acknowledge God and welcome him into our lives, the Spirit comes to dwell within us, enkindling our hearts with divine love. Then we begin to understand the greatness of our vocation to become children of God, and we marvel at the irrevocable “Yes” that God has spoken to us in his Son Jesus Christ.

For 125 years, the Knights of Columbus have sought to respond to that “Yes” by wholeheartedly accepting the summons to discipleship. The Second Vatican Council teaches that “as sharers in the mission of Christ, priest, prophet

and king, the lay faithful have an active part to play in the life and activity of the Church" (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 10). This includes the mission of proclaiming the Gospel, especially by means of catechetical instruction and by leading to the Church people who are perhaps far removed from her (cf. *Christifideles Laici*, 33). It includes service to society through acts of charity, care of the poor and the sick, and assistance to those in need of any kind, in the spirit of your founder, Father Michael McGivney. It includes the faithful witness of Christian marriage and family life, whereby the sanctifying presence of the "domestic Church" transforms society from within. In all these ways, and many more, the Knights of Columbus have actively built up the Kingdom of God on earth, and I know you will continue to devote your energies and your apostolic zeal to promoting the Church's mission wherever you may be.

At the same time I urge you to be ever mindful of the need to draw sustenance for the missionary endeavor from your fidelity to prayer. As Blessed Teresa of Calcutta taught her followers, time devoted to God in prayer not only does not detract from effective and loving service to our neighbor, but is in fact its inexhaustible source (cf. *Deus Caritas Est*, 36). By drinking ever

more deeply from the wellsprings of God's love, you will be transformed ever more perfectly into the likeness of Christ, so that you in turn can proclaim his "Yes" to the world around you.

Your Convention is taking place in the days immediately following the feast of the Lord's Transfiguration. May the light which shone so gloriously from the face of Christ on Mount Tabor fill your minds and hearts with the knowledge and love of God, inspiring you to bear joyful witness to him in everything you do. Commending you and the work of the 125th Supreme Convention to the loving intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church, I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing to you, to the members of the Supreme Council, to all the Knights and to your families, as a pledge of lasting peace and joy in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

From Lorenzago, 23 July 2007

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