

The Knights of Columbus Gaudium et Spes Award

Named for the landmark 1965 document that was released as part of Second Vatican Council, the Gaudium et Spes Award is the highest honor bestowed by the Knights of Columbus, the world's largest Catholic fraternal benefit organization with over 1.9 million members.

The Gaudium et Spes Award is awarded only in special circumstances and only to individuals or groups of exceptional merit. It was first given in 1992, when the Knights of Columbus named Mother Teresa of Kolkata as the award's inaugural recipient.

Since then, 12 more recipients have been honored with the Gaudium et Spes Award. In chronological order, they are: Cardinal John O'Connor, former archbishop of New York; Cardinal James Hickey, former archbishop of Washington, D.C.; Cardinal William Baum, former archbishop of Washington and Major Penitentiary of the Vatican; Archbishop Michel Sabbah, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem; Jean Vanier, founder of L'Arche and co-founder of Faith and Light; Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, former secretary of state; Cardinal Jaime Ortega, archbishop of Havana; Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz, archbishop of Kraków and former secretary to St. John Paul II; Virgil Dechant, former supreme knight of the Knights of Columbus; Cardinal Francis George, former archbishop of Chicago; the Little Sisters of the Poor; and Maryknoll Father Gerard E. Hammond.

The award recognizes individuals or groups for their exemplary contributions to the realization of the message of faith and service in the spirit of Christ as articulated in the document for which it is named. The Gaudium et Spes Award comes with an honorarium of \$100,000.

