



## SECRETARIAT OF STATE

No. 364.346

From the Vatican, 18 July 2017

Dear Mr. Anderson,

His Holiness Pope Francis was pleased to learn that from 1 to 3 August 2017, the 135<sup>th</sup> Supreme Convention of the Knights of Columbus will assemble in St. Louis, Missouri. He has asked me to convey his warm good wishes to all present, together with the assurance of his closeness in prayer.

The theme of this year's Convention – *Convinced of God's Love and Power* – points to the secret source of all Christian life and mission: our conviction that God's saving love, revealed in the death and resurrection of his Son and poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, impels us to share the Good News of salvation with every man and woman. It is precisely this "conviction" that underlies all our enthusiasm for evangelization, for "we have a treasure of life and love which cannot deceive, and a message which cannot mislead or disappoint" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 265).

This same experience of God's love and power, lived in the heart of the Church, led to the founding of the Knights of Columbus as a fraternal and charitable union of Catholic laymen, workers, husbands and fathers. The subsequent history of your Order demonstrates how a spirit of solidarity and mutual concern inspired by God's love can grow, like the mustard seed in the parable (cf. *Lk* 13:19), into something immensely greater, contributing to the glory of God, the spread of his Kingdom, and the universal mission of the Church.

“If God is for us, who can be against us?” (*Rom* 8:31). Saint Paul’s question to the Romans expressed his own firm conviction that the infinite power of God’s love, revealed in the cross of Christ, prevails over every form of worldly evil. The Holy Father has often observed that in our own day a new world war is being fought piecemeal, as an ungodly thirst for power and domination, whether economic, political or military, is leading to untold violence, injustice and suffering in our human family. He has asked Christians everywhere, truly convinced of the infinite power of God’s love, to reject this mentality and to combat the growth of a global culture of indifference that discards the least of our brothers and sisters. In fidelity to the vision of the Servant of God Father Michael McGivney, may the Knights, in their families, their parishes and their local Councils, respond generously to this challenge, first and foremost by recommitting themselves to their properly lay vocation of striving for the sanctification of the world from within, by carrying out their daily responsibilities in the spirit of the Gospel and revealing Christ to others through the witness of their lives (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 31). In this way, they will help to lay solid foundations for the renewal of society as a whole, by working to change hearts and build peace, one person and one community at a time.

His Holiness is especially appreciative of the unremitting efforts of the Knights of Columbus to defend and promote the sanctity of marriage and the dignity and beauty of family life. In his Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, echoing the concerns expressed by the 2015 Synod of Bishops, he linked healthy family life to the health of society as a whole, and emphasized the special task of education that, in God’s plan, is entrusted to Christian parents (cf. Nos. 274-279). It is in the family that we come to see that the larger world is also our home, in which we are called to live together, to learn closeness, care and respect for others, and to value the God-given gifts that each of us has to offer for the good of all. The strengthening of sound family values and a renewed vision of our responsibility for the moral health of the greater community will contribute to overcoming the polarization and general coarsening of the social fabric that is an increasing source of concern even in the most prosperous of our societies.

Finally, and in a very particular way, Pope Francis has asked me to express his gratitude for the commitment of the Knights to supporting our Christian brothers and sisters in the Middle East in their witness of fidelity to the Lord, often borne at great personal cost. None of us can be blind to the sufferings of those whom fratricidal violence and religious fanaticism have left homeless or forced to flee their ancient homelands. The Knights of Columbus Refugee Relief Fund is an eloquent sign of your Order's firm commitment to solidarity and communion with our fellow Christians. The Holy Father once more asks the Knights and their families to pray for those in need, for the conversion of hearts, and for an end to the spiral of violence, hatred and injustice in that region.

With these sentiments, His Holiness commends the deliberations of the 135th Supreme Convention to the intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church, and assures the Knights and their families of a special remembrance in his prayers. With great affection he imparts his Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of strength and peace in the Lord.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pietro Parolin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "P" and a long, sweeping underline.

✠ Cardinal Pietro Parolin  
Secretary of State

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