



Pope commends Knights of Columbus for charity, Gospel of family, aid to persecuted Christians

Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin sent a message on behalf of Pope Francis to the 136th Supreme Convention of the Knights of Columbus in Baltimore, USA.

Pope Francis has encouraged the Knights of Columbus in practical charity and thanked them for their commitment to the Gospel of the family and their outreach to persecuted Christians.

The Pope's sentiments were expressed in a message sent by Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin to the 136th Supreme Convention of the Knights of Columbus, which took place in Baltimore, Maryland, August 7-9.

### **Spirit of the Beatitudes**

Commenting on the theme of the convention, "Knights of Columbus: Knights of Charity," Cardinal Parolin said it evokes the inseparable bond of faith and charity of their founding fathers who wanted to establish a fraternal society committed to the Christian formation and mutual support of its members.

Card. Parolin drew attention to the recent Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis "Gaudete et Exsultate" on the "Call to Holiness" where the Holy Father speaks of the Beatitudes as the "identity card" of the followers of Christ, saying the Sermon on the Mount gives us "a portrait of the Master, which we are called to reflect in our daily lives".

The Pope hoped that the Knights' "Faith in Action" programme, through the addition of a "Helping Hands" component, will bear fruit in a creativity of charity, ever more adapted to the new forms of poverty and human need that are emerging in society today.

### **Marriage and family**

In view of the World Meeting of Families in Dublin, Ireland, August 21-26, the Pope thanked the Knights for their commitment to the Gospel of the Family by encouraging men in their vocation as Catholic husbands and fathers, and defending the authentic nature of marriage and the family within society.

### **Persecuted Christians**

The Holy Father also expressed gratitude for the charitable outreach of the Knights of Columbus towards the persecuted Christians, and particularly urged them to pray for peace in the Middle East, the conversion of hearts, a sincere commitment to dialogue and the just resolution of conflicts.

Founded in 1882 in Connecticut, USA, by Fr. Michael McGivney, the Knights of Columbus is the world's largest fraternal service society in the Catholic Church with nearly 2 million members.