



Pope Francis greets Supreme Knight Carl Anderson at the audience with the Board of Directors of the Knights of Columbus (Vatican Media)

 POPE POPE FRANCIS CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS AUDIENCES

# Pope praises Knights of Columbus for charity, devotion to Peter

Pope Francis received members of the Knights of Columbus in an audience at the Vatican on Monday. The Knights are marking the one hundredth anniversary of their charitable activity in the city of Rome.

By Christopher Wells

In 2020, the Knights of Columbus – the world’s largest Catholic family fraternal organization – are celebrating one hundred years of charitable activity in the city of Rome.

## Charitable work in Rome

In his address to the Board of Directors of the organization, Pope Francis recalled that Pope Benedict XV had invited the Knights to provide humanitarian aid to young people and others in Rome “following the terrible conflict of the First World War”. He praised their efforts to establish sports centres for youth “which quickly became places for education, catechesis, and the distribution of food and other essentials so needed at the time”. In this way, he said, the Knights “proved faithful to the vision of [their] founder, Venerable Michael McGivney, who was inspired by the principles of Christian charity and fraternity to assist those most in need”.

## Faithful witness to sacredness of human life

Turning to the works of the order today, Pope Francis highlighted the Knights’ “faithful witness to the sacredness and dignity of human life”, and their aid to Christian communities in the Middle East. He thanked them “for seeing in our persecuted and displaced brothers and sisters of that region our neighbours for whom you are a sign of God’s infinite love”.



## Devotion to the Pope

Pope Francis also noted the Knights’ “unswerving devotion to the Successor of Peter”, shown especially in the establishment of the *Vicarius Christi* Fund (which supports the Pope’s personal charities), and in the Knights’ desire “to share in the Pope’s solicitude for all the Churches and in his universal mission of charity”. He said, “In our world, marked by divisions and inequalities, the generous commitment of your Order to serve all in need offers, especially to young people, an important inspiration to overcome a globalization of indifference and build together a more just and inclusive society”.

Pope Francis concluded his address by entrusting all the Knights “to the loving intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary”, and assuring them of his prayers for them and their families, “and for all the good works accomplished by the local Councils worldwide”.

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10 February 2020, 12:04

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