



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE PAUL VI TO THE SOVEREIGN MILITARY ORDER OF MALTA*

Wednesday, 28 October 1970

Dear Sons and Daughters,

At the close of Our heavy schedule this morning, We willingly reserve these few moments to welcome your noble delegation of the Order of Knights of Malta, with its grand priors, regents, presidents of national associations and diplomatic representatives. With Our cordial greeting of welcome, We wish to express to all of you Our paternal encouragement to work generously in the spirit of your vocation of service.

Your Order has acquired a great reputation during these past centuries. Times have indeed changed, and it is in response to the needs of the present times that you wish to continue your charitable activity, in keeping with the directives of the Church. Rightly have you chosen as the theme of your meeting: "The Knights of Malta in the World of Today", in the light of the teachings of the ecumenical Council and in particular the Decree *Perfectae caritatis*: Communities should faithfully maintain and fulfil their proper activities. Yet, they should make adjustments according to the needs of time and place and for the benefit of the universal Church and individual dioceses. To this end they should resort to suitable techniques, including modern ones, and abandon whatever activities are today less in keeping with the spirit of the community and its authentic character" (No. 20).

How could We not approve the aims you have set for all the members of your Order: the defence of the Catholic Church, especially in mission countries, and assistance to the sick and help to the poor? These are legion and of all types, especially in developing countries for whom you know Our grave concern. We strongly exhort you to pursue this urgent service with all the means at your disposal and in collaboration with those responsible for the regions to which you give your help and assistance.

In your last meeting you insisted upon the spiritual renewal which should animate your activities. May all your undertakings bear witness to the Catholic faith you profess, the defence of which has always been one of your basic principles, and to that evangelical spirit which you draw at its very source, as we read this morning during the Mass of the Holy Apostles Simon and Jude: "This I command you, to love one another" (John 15, 17).

Relying on your desire to be faithful to the Holy See, We recommend your intentions to God and With all Our heart give to each one of you and to your families Our Apostolic Blessing.

*ORa n°46 p.2.