



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE JOHN PAUL II TO THE PLENARY ASSEMBLY OF THE ORDER OF THE KNIGHTS OF MALTA*

Wednesday, 25 October 1972

Ladies and gentlemen,

You did not wish to conclude the plenary assembly of grand prior, regents, presidents of the national associations and heads of the diplomatic missions of the Order of the Knights of Malta, without coming to greet the humble successor of Peter. Allow us to tell you what a joy it is for us to receive you and to be able to talk to you for a few moments.

We know and appreciate, in fact, the noble ideal that animates you, so well expressed in your constitutional Charter: "To promote the glory of God by means of the sanctification of members, the service rendered to faith and to the Holy See, and aid to one's neighbour, in conformity with century-old traditions" (art. 2, 1).

Undoubtedly, this demanding and difficult programme deserves that you should consecrate your whole life to it: by, the gift of your person to Christ, the first served, and by multiplying works of charity for the benefit of the poorest, particularly in developing countries. Yes, it is a good defence of the faith to help other Christians, by one's own example, to consider love of the humble as an essential dimension of spiritual life and the apostolate.

But since you expect from us some evangelical guidance for your future action, we exhort you to be vigilant; straining to pick up the new needs manifested in our times. These needs do not only assume the fact of material poverty – which always requires help and investment – but they are often called loneliness, insecurity, anonymity; despair. They prevent the complete development of man, soul and body. Meditate incessantly, therefore, on the words of the Apostle St. Paul: "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant?" (2 Cor. 11 29).

At the same time, take care always to introduce a personal character in your contacts, to make the meeting with the other a meeting with the suffering Lord Jesus. You will then see that your generous gift will be amply compensated by all you receive from the other.

Communicating these simple thoughts to you, we repeat to you our encouragement and our confidence, and we willingly grant our fatherly Apostolic Blessing to you and to your families.

*ORa n°45 p.2.
