

## INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF CATHOLIC KNIGHTS



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SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATION  
OF THE INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE  
1979 - 2004

#### ***TWENTY- FIVE YEARS OF INTERNATIONAL FRATERNITY***

At the centre of our celebrations will be the Mass of Thanksgiving celebrated by our International Chaplain Bishop Donal McKeown and by all Member Orders and individual Knights throughout the world joining in this great act of fraternal love. Bishop Donal has also marked the occasion by sending the following message

#### **A Quarter of a Century of IACK**

Time is a wonderful invention. And it was invented long before the first clocks and watches came along. It takes its place right at the heart of the Bible. According to the book of Genesis, God divided Creation up into natural blocks of 'days'. In God's eyes, all time is consecrated time. Since the Resurrection, God's grace and activity pervades every century and every place. Jesus Christ was born in our world at the appointed time. (Gal 4:4) He is the same, yesterday, today and forever. (Heb 13:8) And our Judaeo-Christian tradition has both a linear view of history (as the pilgrim people, made in God's image and likeness, we are going somewhere, moving from Creation, via the Fall to Redemption and the Final Coming), and a regular weekly commemoration of Christ's Resurrection. Similarly our liturgical cycle sanctifies time through feasts and celebrations. So the Silver Jubilee of IACK is well worth celebrating – not just because it is a welcome anniversary, but also because it celebrates God's grace working in our time.

1. It took vision in 1979 - long before globalisation was talked of - to think of such a net linking and supporting committed Catholics around the world. The wisdom of that decision is clear in that the six founding orders have now become fifteen. Our Catholic tradition is strong on the universal nature of God's people – and in a world fragmented by violence, fear, greed and poverty, IACK is an invitation for us to prioritise our essential unity in God. For, God so loved the world that he sent his only Son, not to condemn it but so that through him the world might be saved. (Jn 3:16-7). IACK provides a wonderful opportunity for all of its worldwide membership to bear witness to that super-abundant love, even when others prefer to emphasise division. Can we commit ourselves to actively globalise solidarity?

2. In his marvellous document at the beginning of the new millennium (Novo Millennio Ineunte), Pope John Paul II invited us all to centre our work on a number of areas. And even if our local priorities vary from nation to nation, it is essential that we take our broad agenda from the successor of Peter - and not just from narrow self-interest. The Holy Father suggests that we focus on

- Developing a deep sense of spirituality – and one that is focussed on building communion;
- Promoting all vocations within God’s people;
- Supporting inter-church and inter-religious dialogue; and
- Defending life.

In a world where the power of the Creator and the dignity of the created are forgotten, can we put out into the deep and promote these values of the Gospel? Can we actively work to create a culture that supports faith and love, community and openness? Other agendas may be attractive – but not necessarily be of God!

3. We live in a time of much conflict and much fear about the future. At this time we are invited to be world-wide witnesses to hope. The working document issued before the 2001 Synod of Bishops puts it succinctly.

*On the basis of a Christian hope which does not disappoint (cf. Rm 5:5), the Church advances towards the future with a renewed enthusiasm for a new evangelization. Having crossed the threshold of the new millennium, the world now awaits a word of hope and a light to guide it into the future. The Gospel was, is and will be a source of freedom, progress, fraternity, unity and peace throughout history, even in the temporal sphere. (THE BISHOP: SERVANT OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST FOR THE HOPE OF THE WORLD INSTRUMENTUM LABORIS . Para 13)*

That is a call to all Catholic organisations. Can we generate hope, enthusiasm and vision in a time when these are sadly missing in the lives of many? Can we promote forgiveness, dialogue, a fresh start and social cohesion? Can we be a living sign of the power of grace – and not just aware of the power of our contacts? Can we announce with confidence that God is working in the world – and not just in the little area that is precious to us? The Association provides a great tool for promoting such hope.

When people reach the age of 25, they are just beginning to rally make their contribution to society. I hope and pray that, at 25, IACK is just beginning to flourish! My own country, Ireland, has fewer than five million inhabitants. This island has made its own contribution to faith and church in many parts of the world. Can the members of IACK continue to develop their contribution to renewing the face of the earth? Those who celebrate the Golden Jubilee in 2029 will be grateful! But IACK still has every right to celebrate today as well..

**Bishop Donal McKeown**  
**Belfast, Northern Ireland**  
**Chaplain to the International Alliance**