

## **Report by the International Praeses to the International Board of Directors' Meeting 2004**

**Dear Kolping Friends;**

According to our international constitution, the annual meeting of the International Board of Directors gives the International Praeses the opportunity to report on the status of our Social Movement in the Church and in society. My purpose for the next half hour is not only to look back to what has been, but the objective of my observations will be to look to the prospects that are ahead of us.

For me, the past year was characterized by getting to know and deepening the already made contacts on the continents where the International Kolping Society, i.e. National and Regional Kolping Societies, do their work. The intention of my visits was, above all, to analyze the situations of society and the Church, in which Kolping work has to prove itself. In my opinion, the inculturation of the Kolping-specific approach in a given environment has to be a substantial first step of our endeavours. That is the only way to make sure that Kolping's fundamental idea of "help for self-help" actually falls on fertile ground and is not paralyzed in the emptiness of an ideological super structure.

I see it as a privilege and, at the same time, a responsibility of the International Praeses and a few other staff members of the International Kolping Society to be able to be in constant exchange and contact with as many structural levels of our organization as possible. This will continue to be the only way that contacts within the organization can develop into friendships and partnerships. This is why it gives me great pleasure to be able to report that we were again able during the past year to secure the financial basis of our partnership work. The managing director will give more details on this topic toward the end of this meeting. However, that does not mean that this material foundation is guaranteed for the future. Because the development of project support within the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and the European Union, as well as internal Kolping donations are dependent on crucial factors. At the moment, the desire for support of socio-economic measures is no doubt continuing in the German government and in the European Union. And Kolping friends can still be motivated to enormous efforts, if they can be certain that their gift is being used in meaningful ways in the countries of the recipients. In this context I want to stress emphatically that improved communication between the supporters and those who receive funding is urgently required. Otherwise, the willingness to cooperate quickly turns into distrust and apathy, a development that can be reversed only in rare cases.

Those who attended last year's meeting of the International Board of Directors in Lucerne, Switzerland, will remember that the focus of my report was on an overview of the countries I visited over the course of the year. This year, dear Kolping friends, I want my report to highlight another facet. On the basis of four points, I would like to bring to your attention the nature of the main tasks for our Catholic Social Movement that I foresee presenting themselves to us over the coming years.

I continue to consider the International Kolping Society's first priority to be an advocate in the fight against poverty. Pursuing the "option for the poor" (CELAM: Puebla 1979) will continue to be the centre of our partnership work. With our modest resources we

will do our part to break through the often unbreakable cycle of poverty, unemployment, and potential criminality. Showing as many people as possible a tiny light on the dark horizon of life without any prospects will continue to be at the centre of all our efforts. Apparent hopelessness must be penetrated. In this I know we are truly continuing what our founder, Father Kolping, started. By its definition as a family-like community, the Kolping Society is obligated to support and promote the Christian view of the family. Here it is not only that the culturally varying definitions of family must be taken into consideration, but we must also make sure that the theological definition of family remains the basis of our argumentation. The family is the place where one can encounter, be touched by, and experience God. Therefore, the family is God's sacrament for us human beings. This is something we should not forget over the social dimensions of our family life.

The longing of many people to escape the spiritual poverty of many a culture is becoming more and more obvious. More and more people join questionable cultures and sects, where they hope to find spiritual fulfillment and human acceptance. The helplessness of some of the pastoral structure within our Church is thereby playing into the hands of many an aggressively recruiting sect. In the coming years, we will have to come to terms with this challenge more and more. On all continents in the world it will depend on how much missionary energy our faithful, and therefore our Church, can develop in order to convince people of the Good News of Jesus Christ. As a pastoral structure, the Kolping Society will naturally play an important role in this endeavour. Not only in Europe, but everywhere in the world, we will have to ask ourselves whether our Kolping Families are prepared for this task.

In this context, the deepening of the religious component in our Kolping Families and Kolping Societies will play a crucial role. Our surroundings will surely not remain unaffected by what spirit motivates our fellow staff members, our volunteers and paid employees in their work. In this context, special attention has to be paid to the culture in which our Kolping spirituality is rooted. The inculturation of "a spirituality of social commitment" is an absolutely crucial component of our work. For a modern implementation of our Blessed founder's vision, it will be necessary to find an approach that makes sense in any given culture. And special care needs to be taken in this area that along with cultural autonomy a joining of spiritual forces in world-wide activities (feast days, days of prayer, and common prayers) will become visible. Particularly in view of a possible canonization of Blessed Adolph Kolping it is important that the world-wide dimension of our spiritual work is not being neglected. My dear Kolping friends, allow me to spend the next few minutes by going into more detail with respect to each of these four points, which will, in my opinion, be of crucial importance during the coming years.

## 1) **The International Kolping Society as Instrument in the Fight Against Poverty**

***“The human being is the most honourable and the highest entity to be found in the entire visible world” (A. Kolping)***

My dear Kolping friends, there is something wrong in this world when more than 1 billion people have to live on less than 1 dollar a day. There is something wrong when subsidies of more than 1 billion dollars a day drive the European and American agricultural production, which is then passed on dirt-cheap to the developing countries, bringing ruin to the local small farmers. It is not right that it is made impossible for many developing countries to export their agricultural products to the EU or the US, in order to keep the Western prices at an artificially high level. It is a scandal that extreme wealth and extreme poverty in the developing countries threaten to destroy or have already paralyzed their societal structures, as we can see from the increasing number of civil wars.

My dear Kolping Friends, in the fight against poverty two factors have to be considered in particular.

Firstly, the need for immediate help and, secondly, the importance of lasting effectiveness. It becomes more and more difficult not to unwillingly stabilize the structures which bring injustices to our world and our society. The individual repeatedly needs a Samaritan who provides help immediately. However, we must not cease to look for the structures of injustice in order to eliminate them. An organization like the Kolping Society has the opportunity to do both. In our partnership work we have to strive time and again not to force our partners and friends into the role of grateful relief recipients. Our joy must not depend on how euphoric the expressions of gratitude are that come back to us from the partner country. However, the relationship between donors and recipients is often put to the test because of inadequate communication. We should be aware, and this I want to emphasize once again, that a not unsubstantial component of the financial footing for our partnership work depends on this communication. At a time of increasing economic crises in Europe as well, our efforts must concentrate on not letting the dialogue break off, because that is the only way (I emphasize this once again) it is truly the only way to guarantee the continuity of our partnership work.

The fundamental philosophy of our Kolping work remains unchanged: the objective of our help must be to develop in our partners their own talents and strengths in their local environment. Being regulated from outside on a long-term basis leads to dependency and paralyzes the initiative of the individual. Our friends are not our patients who can seemingly survive only if they are infused by us. The International Kolping Society will continue to encourage measuring the dialogue between the partners along the just mentioned criteria, because ‘help for self-help’ remains the objective of partnership work in the Kolping Society.

To do something *for* the poor is important – to do something *with* them is more important!

For many years it has been a tradition in the Kolping Society not to understand the fight against poverty only as assistance for the destitute of a society. A continuous and long-

lasting solution to the poverty question is the training of a productive middle class which, in turn, will provide jobs and thereby material security for many. Due to economic crises in many countries around the world, this particular area has been somewhat relegated to the back burner, especially since the press, radio, and TV concentrate their calls for donations to natural catastrophes and other disasters. At a time when the universal societal existence is characterized by the slogan “globalization”, I consider our work as an international Catholic Social Movement as a piece of mosaic in raising the awareness that we all live in “One World”. We all bear responsibility for the destiny of the community which is called mankind. In an ocean of discord and oppression, of poverty and ecological destruction, a slowly expanding realization emerges that there is no island of peace and of freedom, of prosperity and preservation of the natural fundamentals of life.

Let us from now on measure our actions even more stringently on the following criteria:

- a) To what extent do our efforts truly benefit people?
- b) To what extent do our efforts enable them to act on their own responsibility?
- c) To what extent do our efforts contribute to overcome marginalization?

The dominant theme of our international efforts must be measured against to what extent we succeed in strengthening and promoting self-responsibility, independence, and solidarity within a given organization and the society in which it operates.

Conversely, we will look more intensively for elements in our work that create new dependencies, hinder individuals from taking responsibility, and block solidarity. I see ourselves in a good Kolping tradition when we foster particularly people who would otherwise be without the opportunity to improve the circumstances of their lives.

When the Catholic Social Teaching uses the concept “solidarity” they certainly mean not only the support by the individual for our weak fellow human beings. That concept means just as much the mutual support of all for one another. In that sense I understand the development and expansion of the International Kolping Society as a solidarity institution which protects the individual National Kolping Society from becoming overburdened.

In this context, I want to add a few words with regard to the lobbyism of the international development politics. The development politics is in the process of becoming a victim of many governments having to economize. It will therefore remain our function to point out that development politics can do justice to its mandate only if it is an integral part of the political decision-making as a whole. In times of economic crises it is difficult to explain to people the purpose of spending money which does not benefit them directly but is essential for peace and the future of the whole world. We will not lessen our efforts to make the “new social question’ appear on the agendas of many a conference. Expanding our contacts to people in official positions will remain at the core of our endeavours. Development politics must remain focused on making the values of freedom, justice, and solidarity universally acknowledged. Toward this goal Kolping wants to contribute as much as it can.

## 2) The International Kolping Society as Advocate for the Christian Family

***“In a truly good family, religion finds its most careful and most sincere nurturing.” (Adolph Kolping)***

In addition to the option for the poor, as a Christian Social Movement we are also committed to the option for the Christian family. The leading theme of all our work “People need Family – Children need Parents” points to the complexity of the family’s significance for our society. Many different contributions and activities have described the particular social dimension of the family as the solidarity structure, without which living together in society seems hard to imagine. It is my opinion that the theological fundamentals of this discussion keep losing more and more ground in this debate. For us Christians the family is, indeed, important not only to learn social competence, but also to grow into a personal relationship with God. For it is only where positive connections can be experienced within the family that those can be transferred to a positive image of God. Family life, my dear Kolping Friends, has a missionary dimension, and who would have any doubt about it. This statement was the basis for our discussions which are to take place during our 2004 International Board of Directors’ meeting in Cape Town. As Christians, the strengthening of the missionary force of the family as a place to learn about our faith and experience God must continue to be our concern.

The Second Vatican Council states in its dogmatic constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium, Chapter 11): *“The family is, so to speak, the domestic Church. In it parents should, by their word and example, be the first preachers of the faith to their children.”* This task is not a one-way street. This is explained very clearly by our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, in his encyclical ‘Familiaris Consortio, #52). Here the Pope writes: *“The family, like the Church, ought to be a place where the Gospel is transmitted and from which the Gospel radiates. In a family which is conscious of this mission all the members evangelize and are evangelized. The parents not only communicate the Gospel to their children, but from their children they can themselves receive the same Gospel as deeply lived by them.”* The family is a sacrament. The love that parents have for their children reflects God’s love for mankind. Children must feel our love simply because they are around, not because they have achieved something. This unconditional love reflects God’s love for us. Father Kolping is right once again when he says: *“Love is the soul of the family”*.

Naturally, it is the task of all Kolping friends and the Kolping Society as a whole to continually draw attention to the social disadvantages that families with children are faced with. Those who mess with the family as a societal solidarity structure also destroy the primary place of learning about the faith and of experiencing God for the first time. The Christian family is not a private matter. All of us in a ‘family-friendly’ organization must make sure of that.

At this point, my dear Kolping Friends, allow me to make a brief two-part point. It is our repeated duty to introduce unambiguously the Christian perspective into the debate on the role of individual family members. A discussion among Christians on the role and significance of the family can not happen without considering the calling of the woman to motherhood and the man to fatherhood. Particularly in the western cultural spheres, a

struggle started in the 70s about the same-level identity of men and women which, in my opinion, will fail in the end, because it contradicts the will of our Creator. Let us therefore look at the realities: In many member organizations of the International Kolping Society, the membership is made up of up to 80% by women and mothers. This is particularly true in Kolping Societies in Latin America. In other Societies, women have also contributed considerably to the life of a Kolping Family even before their official initiation. In society, women also carry the largest portion of the burdens of raising children within the family. Women still have to accept a higher degree of occupational disadvantages when they choose motherhood. And women in particular suffer from an unfair evaluation of their educational services by politicians and society and have to accept considerable curtailments in their quality of life, because they devote themselves to raise their children. We can not tolerate that a woman, who lives her calling as mother of a family and thereby in many aspects gives a crucial service to the life and survival of our society, be considered and treated as a person with reduced rights. There is no reason, and certainly not a Christian one, to deny women equal rights in all spheres of life. Women around the world have no reason to bow down to the dominion of men, and it must be prevented that motherhood hampers women in their quest for personal self-fulfillment. In fact, the form in which women can accept their calling to motherhood depends to no small extent on us men.

The Pope expresses this in his words: *“Although it is correct that the function of a mother should be coordinated with the presence and responsibility of the father, it is nevertheless the woman who plays the significant role at the beginning of life. In this role, a crucial characteristic of the human person becomes obvious which is not destined to be enclosed in oneself but is meant to be open and giving oneself to others... That is why God has entrusted the human being to the woman in a special way.”* All those who have realized that the calling to give life and nurture this life brings true fulfillment should find encouragement and support particularly among members of a Catholic Social Movement. *“By nature, the family is put into the hands not of the man by himself or the woman by herself but to both together.”* (Adolph Kolping)

The program of the International Kolping Society obliges all members to give “witness for the values of marriage and family”. During the last few generations, the role of the father has been subject to substantial changes. Adolph Kolping saw himself face-to-face with a generation of young men who were living separate from their families. Necessity and the will to survive motivated countless men to bow to the circumstances – the Social Question of the 19<sup>th</sup> century came into being. Women, children, and the old were left behind. The man as the family’s breadwinner– this is a role which has become cast in stone. I ask myself, who in Europe ever thinks about the fact that millions of ‘economic immigrants’ have to feed their families in this way? Many of us take their services for granted. Latin American foreign workers, sailors from the Philippines, and Ukrainian harvest workers are not unknown to us. The father has therefore become merely a partial component of the family. His significance in the raising of the children is hardly noticeable any more. Whenever we, as a Catholic Social Movement, strive for more just societal structures, it is always a service for the Christian family as well. A development, in which more and more men (fathers) are enabled to act as co-educators in their families, must therefore, in my opinion, be supported as a matter of course.

### 3) The Kolping Family as a Missionary Community

***“Jesus Christ is the greatest world truth in our possession” (Adolph Kolping).***

This topic, my dear Kolping Friends, will have to become the focus of discussions in the considerations within the Kolping Society in many different ways. Filling the ideological vacuum in many parts of the western world, the fruitful debate with Islam, and raising the image of the Catholic faith and its positioning against the increasing influence of many Protestant sects, all make it necessary to come to terms with this topic. To delve into the overall complexity of this topic is not possible here and now. But let us spend a few minutes looking at a continent where the Kolping Society’s activities cover a lot of territory. Latin America is an ethnic, cultural, and religious cosmos. The great majority of the population is Catholic. However, alongside there are Afro-American cults and remainders of original Indian religions. Lutheran churches were brought into Latin America by European travelers as early as the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A different matter is the large number of Protestant sects which have worked in missions within the structures of the poorer population over the past three decades.

From my own experience in Latin America I know that these tightly organized smaller communities under almost all circumstance refuse to enter into the ecumenical dialogue. They stir up considerable prejudices against the Catholic Church. It is difficult to get concrete data with regard to numbers and memberships of these communities, particularly since the situation varies considerable from one Latin American country to the next. They seem to be strongest in the countries of Central America, including Mexico, Brazil, and Haiti, where they have even developed into a political entity.

Giving particular cause for concern is the advance of the sects in Brazil. Over the past years, “The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God” has systematically built up a veritable network of subsidiaries. Through the purchase of centrally located warehouses in certain districts, a widely-covering network of churches was established. The sect has a TV station and tries to strengthen its influence over the economy and political parties. The other large Protestant sect, the “Assambleia Deus” (The Assembly of God), also tries to have its say in politics.

The spectrum of the Protestant sects is very broad. Many were imported from the United States and some were founded in Latin America. A reason for their success is to be seen in the almost perfect inculturation of their message. They have adjusted their activities to the culture and the societal environment of any given country, and this is how their growing influence among the population can be explained. Further-more, they manage to finance themselves in ever greater numbers. The accusation that the sects could work successfully only because they can count on substantial financial support from the United States is, in fact, no longer justified. Nowadays, the sects finance themselves for the most part through their members. This becomes possible because many take the concept of ‘tithing’ literally. The willingness of the people to commit themselves financially with the little they have is great, because they very often feel their human needs accepted by the sects’ preachers. The struggle against alcoholism, lack of discipline, and anonymity is cleverly orchestrated by some of the communities. Added to that is the structure of the small community, where the appearance is fostered

that the personal realities of the individual member can be taken into consideration. This is actually not a rare occurrence. Because of these positive results, many sect members are inclined to overlook misuses by their leaders particularly in the financial area.

My dear Kolping Friends, I think that this brief analysis adequately covers the situation which many of our Kolping Families in Latin America have to come to terms with. The pastoral structure of Latin American parishes, the lack of priests, and the anonymity of many a pronouncement from our Church are not the least of the causes for the popularity enjoyed by the sects. This is a challenge for the family-like structure of a Kolping community. Without being able to do without the contact to a priest and pastor, more and more small communities will evolve world-wide, where people learn to share their faith and their lives. A parish, which in Latin American cities often consists of 30 – 40,000 faithful and in rural areas has many distant subsidiary stations, will not be able to do without this pastoral structure. A parish as a “community of communities”, where people can live and practice their faith together, will be the objective of future pastoral endeavours. In my opinion, a crucial task for the International Kolping Society will be to strengthen this small-scale pastoral structure that a Kolping Family exemplifies already today. At a time of solidarity structures, such as the family, breaking down, people will increasingly look for groups and communities, where they see their feeling about life and their search for spirituality fulfilled. As a faith and education community, the Kolping Family will continue to gain a higher priority in the life of the Church, if it can take into account these needs of an ever-increasing number of people.

I think that this applies to the struggle against the further advance of the sects, the encounter with Islam, as well as the filling of the vacuum of values and faith in the western world. More and more active Christians join new spiritual movements. Without giving up its character of a faith and education community, the Kolping Family of the future should, out of necessity, think about revitalizing the religious sphere of its activities. To learn together with others something about one’s faith and to live this faith in the company of familiar people, that is the wish of many Catholics for the future. For this, the Kolping Family is, in my opinion, a suitable place. I visualize the Kolping Family of the future as a group, where people begin to share their lives. Kolping members are people who do not leave one another alone with their concerns and problems. In an atmosphere of trust it must be possible in a Kolping Family to ponder experiences, difficulties, and problems of one’s personal life, in the raising of one’s children, and in one’s faith and to look for common answers and solutions. Herein lies an opportunity for the Kolping Family. It is the place where trust can grow and hesitancy to speak out can be overcome.

#### **4) Deepening of the Religiousness of our Kolping Families and Kolping Societies Initiatives to Foster Adolph Kolping’s Canonization**

My dear Kolping Friends, this topic has already been dealt with extensively in my last year’s report. There is a multitude of ideas and suggestions on how to increase the degree of awareness of Blessed Adolph Kolping in the Church and in society. Some of

my ideas were taken up during the past year and put into practice on different levels of our organization. Allow me therefore to concentrate today on just a few points.

Beside the internationality of our organization, it is the vibrant relationship to our founder that has to be reflected in a deep spiritual veneration, which is one of the recognizable characteristics of the members of the International Kolping Society. The world-encompassing veneration of Blessed Adolph Kolping as the advocate in the cares and worries of our members as well as Christians everywhere is of great interest for a Catholic Social Movement, which is active in over 50 countries and sees itself as part of the world-encompassing Catholic Church. Consideration must also be given to adjust the forms of veneration for Blessed Adolph Kolping to the various national, cultural, and psychological differences. It is however indisputable that there have to be some characteristics that connect all structures of our organization, so that our members can see themselves as part of a world-encompassing prayer network. I would like to go into a few more details on these topics.

A) The international prayer for the canonization of Adolph Kolping

Of special significance is, in my opinion, that a common prayer be formulated, which expresses our desire for the canonization of our founder in one text, though in many languages. The participants of last year's meeting will remember that I invited all member countries to formulate on their own a prayer which corresponds to their veneration of Father Kolping. Already existing drafts were naturally taken into account. From the submissions I received, I have tried to formulate a draft, which meets the theological, contextual, and formal criteria and also corresponds to the form and language of the cultures in which our members live. Care had to be taken, of course, to incorporate the rhythms of the various languages to facilitate a joint recitation. I deliberately wanted to avoid a mere translation from the German language, because it corresponds neither to the spirituality nor the feeling for life and language that many have. In order to meet the formal requirements, our Protector wanted to have several passages amended or changed. Particular suggestions applied to the liturgical correctness of the wording.

While talking with the future postulator of the 'Causa Kolping', we discussed among other things that the emotion factor is to be part of the prayer. That is why I have tried to involve as many as possible in the discussion on the formulation of the future prayer. Of special concern was to formulate the historic merits of Blessed Adolph Kolping in such a way that they will interest young people and motivate them to venerate Father Kolping. Many wordings can surely be understood from this perspective. The intention was to also express the mission of the International Kolping Society at the same time. In order to enable even Christians outside of the Kolping Society to recite this prayer, such formulations had to be chosen deliberately.

So that the prayer would enjoy the greatest possible acceptance in many of our member Societies, I took the following steps:

- a) In May 2003, all member Societies were asked to formulate text suggestions.
- b) On the basis of the texts received, a draft text was formulated.

- c) For clarification with respect to theological correctness and formal aspects, this draft was submitted to the Protector of the International Kolping Society, as the bishop in charge, on September 19, 2003, with the request for final approval.
- d) On the 190<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Father Kolping's birth (Dec. 8, 2003), the composite draft was sent to all National and Regional Kolping Societies once again with the request to examine it and make final editorial changes.
- e) During the last meeting of the International Executive Board, the final version was discussed.
- f) In accordance with the International Executive Board' resolve, the text in front of me is to be presented to the public today.

My dear Kolping Friends, I think that the extensive process of consultation in as many languages and cultures as possible will guarantee a wide acceptance of this prayer, and I want to now introduce it to the International Board of Directors for publication and distribution within our organization and the Church as a whole. I trust that the efforts of all those involved in the consultation process have not been in vain and that the International Kolping Society has now at its disposal a prayer that can be recited and prayed by over 500,000 members simultaneously. The identification of all members with one prayer is to be strengthened through the introduction of a common pilgrimage picture. Accordingly, the International Executive Board has decided during its last meeting to suggest that the picture of Father Kolping in front of me, which has already been used for the beatification, be used as a pilgrimage picture, thereby following the request by Kolping Brazil, in particular. The fact that we have a common pilgrimage picture will surely make our organization more recognizable.

#### B) Pilgrimages

As many of you may remember, the celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the "Father of the Journey-men" Monument of was the occasion to attempt for the first time a new form of broadcasting a liturgical celebration. The large participation which, in part, taxed the technological facilities beyond their capabilities, has given us the confidence to continue on this route. For the year 2005 (on May 28) we have planned a pilgrimage by boat on the Rhine River with as many Kolping Families as possible in honour of the 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Father Kolping's death. A possible closing event could take place in the Cologne Cathedral once again. In order to enable as many people as possible to participate, we should not do without broadcasting the event on the internet. I am sure that additional technological options will be available by then to improve the broadcast capabilities.

C) During Lent of 2004, I have tried for the first time to approach particularly our full-time staff members in the National and Regional Kolping Societies to participate in a prayer campaign via an e-mail prayer chain. For this purpose, meditations and an invitation to pray were sent out every week during Lent. The meditations as a unit can be made into another International Kolping Rosary, which we had already prayed once before during a meeting of the International Board of Directors. It seems to me of

particular importance to remind also full-time staff members of the spiritual aspects of the work done in our organization. I would like to continue to take this route.

D) In order to deepen the spirituality within our organization, it seems to me to be particularly important to further deepen the Catholic theology pertaining to the saints. It is necessary to introduce Father Kolping as an intercessor, upon whom one can call with personal concerns, not only to our members but to all Christians as well as. This is the only way that we can strengthen the confidence in our founder's help in many of our members. The success of this campaign will determine whether we can succeed in submitting further documentations of miraculously answered prayers to the appropriate congregation in Rome. These are precisely the crucial prerequisites for the continuation of Father Kolping's canonization process. Particularly in countries which are determined by the dialogue and the debate with the Protestant churches, this is not an uncomplicated point.

E) In order to deepen the theme "People need Family – Children need Parents" in a spiritual way as well, I would like to suggest to search for aspects which could solidify the veneration of Blessed Adolph Kolping. I agree with Kolping Brazil's opinion that venerating Blessed Adolph Kolping as the "Patron of the Christian Family in the World of Work" can be an appropriate form. I want to use this and other ideas in order to design a corresponding Adolph-Kolping-Altar in the Church of the Minorites in Cologne. This is to be a pictorial portrayal of Father Kolping, which will bring the idea of Father Kolping as the advocate for the family in the world of work closer to the faithful, something that is actually still missing in the church of Father Kolping's tomb. Therefore, I would like to specifically invite you – and I beg you to take this invitation very seriously – to make available to me appropriate pictorial material from the life in the Kolping Families of all National Kolping Societies. I think we will succeed to turn selections from what has been submitted little by little into a collage which will show Father Kolping as special inter-cessor for the given groups. I am eager to see already now whether we can succeed to run this campaign on an international level. An exhibition in the Minorite Church of various pictures from our National Kolping Societies points out the internationality of our organization already now.

F) After completing the liturgy of the Holy Mass for the Kolping Memorial Day in four languages (Latin, English, German, and Spanish) and the introduction of the first International Kolping Rosary last year, I want to continue to work intensively on the dissemination of prayer forms that bring more unity to our organization. As already mentioned, I was able to introduce the second International Kolping Rosary over the course of this week. The preparation for texts for prayers at the canonical hours should be completed in the foreseeable future. By next year, I want to have a text for the International Kolping Stations of the Cross ready for publication. In selecting liturgical forms of prayer, I pay special attention that they be known internationally. They can and should, of course, be augmented, broadened, and accompanied by local forms of prayer.

## G) World Youth Day

The preparations for the 20<sup>th</sup> World Youth Day in August of 2005 in Cologne are in full swing. Already a year ago, hosts and guest were told about possible forms of participation and invited to announce their cooperation. Together with Kolping Germany and the German Kolping Youth, the International Kolping Society will naturally be present in a special way at this Festival of Faith. Alongside with the encounters within the partnership programs of the Diocesan Kolping Societies in Germany, we will strive to offer enhancing programs for the days spent together in Cologne. High priority will be given to the organization of a Kolping Pilgrimage, an international Kolping Youth Parliament, as well the Church of the Minorites as the spiritual centre and the International and/or the Federal Head Office as providing meeting opportunities. With respect to the opportunities to participate, all National and Regional Kolping Societies were informed this past February and they are now called upon urgently to make the preparations necessary for attendance. I am convinced that the World Youth Day is a great opportunity for an international Catholic Social Movement to make itself and its concern known to the more than 500,000 young visitors. All those in responsibility are aware of the challenge that comes with the organization of a big event. We depend on the cooperation and assistance of many and ask people to understand that last minute wishes can be accommodated only with great difficulty. Given all possible flexibility, the application formalities have to be observed. The National Head Offices have to function as communication centres between guest and hosts, otherwise a smooth course of organization is impossible and disappointments become part of the outcome.

My dear Kolping Friends, allow me to end my observations at this point. I am fully aware that in only half an hour a list of activities and their spiritual foundation can be only incomplete. But I would be pleased if I succeeded in reminding you once again of how important the cooperation across all national, cultural, and linguistic borders is for the International Kolping Society. It is among others for precisely this reason that the Kolping Society enjoys a high esteem within national and international structures of the Church. We will endeavour to keep it that way.

Thank you very much and Treu Kolping