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Dear brothers of the New Orleans Province, Christ's Peace!

As you gather to celebrate the first vows of your newest companions in the Society of Jesus at the novitiate in Grand Coteau, Louisiana, I send you greetings and congratulations on the occasion of the first centennial of your Province. On June 7, 1907, the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, my predecessor, Fr. General Francis Xavier Wernz, S.J. sent news of the change of status of the Mission of New Orleans to the Province of New Orleans, which would occur with the solemn promulgation of the decree on the Feast of the Assumption. On the feast day itself, the "Te Deum" was sung in thanksgiving for the many graces the members of the Province hoped to receive. May this time of jubilee in your Province be a time of reflection on the continuing and growing needs of the people of God and of thanksgiving for the many graces received during this hundred years of service.

In addition to the traditional ministries of education and the Spiritual Exercises, members of your Province have worked actively in pastoral ministry in those areas of the southern United States where few Catholic resources existed. From the parish and missions in New Mexico to the parishes founded in south Florida, Jesuits served an infant church as it grew into maturity. Nor has your generosity in service ever ended at the boundaries of the Province. Sri Lanka, Brazil, Paraguay, and many other parts of the world have benefited from the service of New Orleans Province Jesuits. Your Province has also struggled with the injustice of segregation in the culture of southern U.S. society. Through the prophetic example of many noteworthy Jesuits as well as the institutional commitments of your schools, you worked in solidarity with many other citizens to bring about a greater equality and justice for all people.

Celebrating the centennial of the New Orleans Province as the U.S. Assistancy discerns the best means to serve the People of God in the coming years provides an opportunity to remember that all living things grow and change over time. Fr. Wernz reminded your predecessors that there would be obstacles to your ministry that often would come from human sinfulness, but to the extent that you allow divine charity to direct your actions, all obstacles could be overcome. Let the same love that inspired so many members of the New Orleans Province to give their lives in the service of their neighbor continue to inspire you to work for the faith that does justice in our world today.

May the Lord bless you with much joy and consolation throughout this year of preparation for GC 35.

Sincerely in Christ,

Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J.
Superior General