



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE
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Audience with the “Patrons of the Arts” of the Vatican Museums

At 11.00 this morning, in the Clementine Hall of the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the “Patrons of the Arts” of the Vatican Museums on the occasion of the Association’s 35th anniversary.

The following is the text of the Pope’s greeting to those present:

Greeting of the Holy Father

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to welcome you on the occasion of your meeting in Rome, which this year coincides with the thirty-fifth anniversary of your Association’s foundation.

Your generosity over these years has contributed to the restoration of numerous art treasures held in the Vatican Museums. In this way you have continued a centuries-long tradition, imitating the achievements of those who contributed to the Church’s history through art. These works include the frescoes and sarcophagi in the catacombs, the great Romanesque and Gothic cathedrals, and the masterpieces of Michelangelo, Raphael, Bernini and Canova.

Throughout history, art has been second only to life in bearing witness to the Lord. It was, and remains, a majestic road allowing us more than by words and ideas to approach the faith, because it follows the same path of faith, that of beauty. The beauty of art enriches life and creates communion, because it unites God, man and creation in a single symphony. It connects the past, the present and the future, and it attracts – in the same place and with the same gaze – different and far-off peoples.

Celebrating your anniversary allows us to recall this history with gratitude, but it also enables us to renew our

awareness of the important mission of preserving such a beautiful heritage that is so beneficial to men and women. Contemplating great art, which expresses the faith, helps us rediscover what truly matters in life. In leading us both within and above ourselves Christian art points us to the love that created us, to the mercy which saves us, and to the hope that awaits us.

In today's troubled world, unfortunately so often torn and damaged by selfishness and the thirst for power, art represents, perhaps even more than in the past, a universal need because it is a source of harmony and peace, and it expresses the dimension of generosity. Thanking you warmly for the good that you do, I willingly impart my Blessing accompanied by my best wishes for peace, to you and your families. And please do not forget to pray for me. May the Lord bless you all!
