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Audience with the Patrons of the Arts of the Vatican Museums

This morning, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the Patrons of the Arts of the Vatican Museums, to whom he addressed the following words:

Greeting of the Holy Father

Dear friends,

I welcome you and thank you once again for your collaboration in the important work of the conservation and restoration of the artistic and cultural heritage of the Vatican Museums. Your commitment is a tangible sign of appreciation for the potential of the arts, in their many forms, to open minds and hearts to the beauty of creation and the mysterious richness of our life and our human vocation. The work of conservation to which you contribute, as it protects this precious legacy from the past, also invites the new generations to reflect on the intrinsic nexus between art, history, culture and faith. There is an intrinsic nexus between these things: art, history, culture and faith.

Your aim as the *Patrons of the Arts of the Vatican Museums* is that of ensuring that the artistic treasures of the Vatican collections, in which the immense diversity of cultures, traditions and creative expressions that enrich the world is reflected, may continue to “inspire, elevate and reveal” the deepest hopes and aspirations of the human heart (cf. *Mission Statement 2022 of the Patrons of the Arts of the Vatican Museums*). Art, in particular religious art, can carry a message of mercy, compassion and encouragement not only to believers, but also to those who doubt, who feel lost, uncertain or perhaps lonely. Because art always speaks to the soul. It has the power of promoting recognition of our common humanity, of building bridges between cultures and peoples, and of creating that sense of solidarity of which we are in great need in our world, sadly divided and war-torn world. Art regenerates the human spirit, just as water regenerates the dry, arid desert.

The forty-year-long history of the *Patrons* has been inspired not only by a love for the arts, but also by the conviction that each generation has a collective responsibility to guard and preserve the priceless heritage

entrusted to us. This awareness has borne fruit in the important restoration work carried out over the past four decades and, in particular, during the years of lockdown due to the pandemic.

Dear friends, with these sentiments, I reiterate my appreciation for your support of the mission of the Vatican Museums and encourage you to persevere in this laudable endeavour. Upon you, your families and all those associated with the work of the *Patrons of the Arts*, I heartily invoke the blessing of Almighty God, the eternal source of all beauty, truth and goodness.
