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Press Conference to present the cultural events of the “Jubilee is Culture” Programme for 2024

At 11.30 this morning, a press conference was livestreamed from the Holy See Press Office to present the cultural events of the “Jubilee is Culture” Programme for 2024.

The speakers were: Archbishop Rino Fisichella, pro-prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelization, Section for Fundamental Questions regarding Evangelization in the World; Msgr. Dario Edoardo Viganò, vice chancellor of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and Social Sciences; and Don Alessio Geretti, curator of the exhibition and external collaborator of the Dicastery for Evangelization, Section for Fundamental Questions regarding Evangelization in the World.

The following are the interventions of Archbishop Rino Fisichella and Msgr. Dario Edoardo Viganò:

Intervention of Archbishop Rino Fisichella

In the letter by which Pope Francis, in February 2022, tasked the Dicastery for Evangelization with the preparation and celebration of the next Jubilee in 2025, he wrote that “the Jubilee has always been an event of great spiritual, ecclesial, and social significance in the life of the Church”. It is from this perspective that we have moved for the immediate preparation and, of course, for the celebration that is now just around the corner with the official Announcement that will take place next 9 May, the Feast of the Ascension, with the publication of the Bull.

“Pilgrims of hope” is a motto that intentionally possesses universal characteristics. Everyone hopes, no-one excluded. The experience of hope is rooted in the heart of every person, as the expectation of good and the desire that it may be fulfilled. Hope is the object of study in various sciences: from literature to psychiatry, from sociology to philosophy and theology ... the need to give a voice to hope unites all forms of knowledge and makes humanity more engaged in a process of progress and wellbeing. The wishes exchanged by millions of people in these days found a special point of reference in the term “hope”, a sign that the desire for peace and love that Easter brings with it may be identified as a real desire to be achieved.

In these months, the Jubilee machine has not been limited to controlling the state of implementation of the work being carried out on the various building sites, which we continue to trust will be fully completed before the start of the Holy Year. In May, we plan to make public the detailed programme of each major event, which will entail extraordinary organization on the part of the city and the Holy See for the presence of a qualifying number of pilgrims arriving from different parts of the world. Diocesan and national pilgrimages are already being registered, and the general calendar of the Jubilee is starting to fill up day by day.

It has been reiterated several times that the Jubilee possesses, first and foremost, a profound spiritual relevance. Our daily work is concentrated on this dimension because, as Pope Francis writes: "Now, as the first twenty-five years of the new century draw to a close, we are called to enter into a season of preparation that can enable the Christian people to experience the Holy Year in all its pastoral richness". The pastoral dimension of the Holy Year, however, is not limited solely to the experience of prayer, but rather extends to the spiritual component of the entire person and of every person. The direction from the Holy Father: "The Dicastery charged with promoting the new evangelization can help make this season of grace a significant stimulus to the pastoral outreach of the particular Churches", is intended to mean for us the need to extend the experience also to the cultural dimension which by nature reaches out to all, and becomes a genuine vehicle for the sharing of the values that precede faith. This is why, from the earliest days of planning, a Cultural Commission was also set up with the intention of finding the most appropriate forms to give depth to the Jubilee experience. The Commission has been able to accept and evaluate many proposals that have arrived from different quarters. Some have already started while others will be implemented in the coming months. For instance, I like to refer to the "In Cammino" project, a modern pilgrimage among the fourteen major abbeys of Europe, conceived and organized by Livia Pomodoro, president of the "No-hma – In cammino" Association. The pilgrimage, which started from Canterbury Abbey in July 2023, crosses seven European countries, finally arriving in Rome in 2025. The primary purpose of this initiative is to propose, as the organizers explain, a genuine journey of the heart and the mind, bringing together reason and faith, and the rediscovery and respect for the environment under the banner of hope.

For our part, we have always thought of the great value of evangelization possessed by the *praeambula fidei*. They are signs of experiences that precede the proposal of faith, and are by nature capable of establishing sincere dialogue with those who are seeking to give meaning to their life. In this context, as a Dicastery we have organized a series of cultural initiatives preparing for the Jubilee, marking certain phases in its celebration. The Project has been favourably received by the Governing Commission and the Jubilee 2025 Agency, so as to become a shared initiative that will be presented to the City of Rome. They are initiatives of diverse cultural characteristics that come together in a happy synthesis to meet to different expectations.

I will focus on some initiatives that have already elicited a very positive response, and then I will leave the floor to two excellent collaborators to enter more fully into the merits of the initiatives for 2024. I am particularly pleased to recall, first of all, the edition of the "100 Nativity Scenes in the Vatican", which involved the presence of the Ambassador of Ukraine to the Holy See at the exhibition held from December 2022 to January 2023, which offered 210,000 visitors the opportunity to view primarily the Nativity scenes created in the midst of war, such as "Christmas in Mariupol". Or the tree, decorated with little angels, bearing witness to the hundreds of children who were the innocent victims of the senseless war. From December 2023 to January 2024, the Edition involved the Italian Embassy to the Holy See to celebrate the eighth centenary of the first nativity scene in Greccio. The Mayor of the city, accompanied by many fellow citizens, attended and animated the inauguration, also bringing a historical nativity scene that enriched the collection. The visits this year amounted to over 280,000.

In the month of September 2023, in the Church of Saint Agnes in Piazza Navona, three works by El Greco, which had never before left Spain, were exhibited. It was a major cultural event, enabling the great artist, born in Candia, on the island of Crete, to return to Rome after his stay from 1570 to 1576. The exhibition was viewed, only in the month of September, by 288.129 visitors.

On 26 November 2023, we wished to express another sign of solidarity with Ukraine, by organizing the concert with the "Virtuosi of Kyiv" concert, which performed Antonin Dvorak's work *Aus der neuen Welt*, in the Auditorium of Via della Conciliazione, packed with people who flocked to hear an important but rarely

programmed work.

All the cultural initiatives organized by the Dicastery for the upcoming Jubilee are grouped under the motto: "The Jubilee is culture". We could find no better expression, in light of what we have expressed above. For the different programmes, however, we have come up with two further expressions to characterize the concerts and exhibitions respectively. The Music Review will be brought together under the motto: "Harmonies of Hope", with the intention of thus expressing a truly unique concert offering feelings of hope. The Exhibitions will have the motto "Open Skies", to indicate the broad and transcendent horizon towards which hope calls us.

In addition, I will present the three concerts that will take place in the coming months. The first event will be on Sunday 28 April at 17.30, at the Church of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, where G. F. Handel's *Messiah* will be performed in full. It is a very-well known work, but not always performed fully. Handel composed it in 1741, and one of his most famous pieces, the *Halleluja*, will be performed this Easter season, expressing the entire journey of Jesus Christ's life from His birth to His resurrection. A timeless masterpiece that will be performed by the Florentine Ensemble of the "Musici del Gran Principe" conducted by the young Maestro Samuele Lastrucci.

A second scheduled event will be on 3 November 2024 at 18.00 at the Auditorium in Via della Conciliazione, and will feature the *Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia*, whom I would like to thank in advance in the person of the President Superintendent Michele dall'Ongaro for his prompt support of the initiative. The Orchestra conducted by Maestro Jader Bignamini, currently Music Director of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, will perform Dimitri Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony composed in 1937, little known to the general public, but striking for its intense drama.

The third event will take place just before the Opening of the Holy Door. At 18.00 on 22 December 2024, at the Church of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, the Sistine Chapel Choir will perform several polyphonic compositions by Palestrina, Perosi and Bartolucci. With its 1,500 years of history, the Sistine Chapel Choir, under the direction of Maestro Marcos Pavan, will make it possible to experience the immediate days leading up to the opening of the Jubilee in the light of a genuine contemplation of the mystery of faith sung by a Choir known throughout the world, and which will give a special performance in the city of Rome.

The floor now passes to two experts whom I sincerely thank for their cooperation. First of all, Monsignor Dario Viganò, currently vice chancellor of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and Social Sciences, but for many years professor of filmology at the Pontifical Lateran University, author of important essays, film critic and for several years Director of the "*Rivista del Cinematografo*".

After him, Don Alessio Geretti of the diocese of Udine, a great art expert and curator of numerous exhibitions, among which I wish to mention that of Peter held at Castel Sant'Angelo for the Year of Faith, and the now traditional exhibitions that every year attract hundreds of visitors to the town of Illegio, in the province of Udine, which has now become the "art capital of Friuli" for the occasion.

In conclusion

As one can see, we have before us an interesting programme intended above all to bring about events that would be difficult to match. As Pope Francis writes, "The forthcoming Jubilee can contribute greatly to restoring a climate of hope and trust as a prelude to the renewal and rebirth that we so urgently desire". We hope that this programme, and the one we are working on for 2025, may fulfil the Pope's wish, so that the Jubilee may be experienced by all, without distinction, as a moment in which hope is perceived as a force that does not disappoint.

Intervention of Msgr. Dario Edoardo Viganò

Opening: *La porta del cielo* (Vittorio De Sica and Cesare Zavattini, 1945), in a recently restored copy. A joint work carried out by the Fondazione MAC, the Cast Research Centre of Uninettuno, the *Officina della Comunicazione*, Isacem and the National Cinema Library. In particular, the work of De Sica and Zavattini, *La porta del Cielo*, tells the story of a pilgrimage of sick people to the Loreto shrine. Shot between March and June 1944, during the Nazi-Fascist occupation of the Capital, filming took place in Rome in the Basilica of Saint Paul Outside-the-Walls. Giovanni Battista Montini, the future Pope Paul VI, then substitute of the Secretariat of State, was also involved in the making of the film. In his diary, Zavattini noted: "They would like [me to make] a film that is entirely mine, leaving me totally free, I say totally, even though the film is based on Christian morality, but who is not a Christian? Christ is at the doors".

The other films come largely from the current cinema season, selected by the *Fondazione Ente dello Spettacolo* (www.cinematografo.it).

On life (2023) by James Hawes, with the Oscar winner Anthony Hopkins in the role of the English philanthropist Nicholas Winton;

La chimera (2023) by Alice Rohrwacher with Josh O'Connor and Isabella Rossellini

Perfect Days (2023) by Wim Wenders

Fallen Leaves (2023) by Aki Kaurismäki.

Then, other titles released in theatres in recent years:

L'intrepido (2013) by Gianni Amelio

Silence (2016) by Martin Scorsese

Chiara (2002) by Susanna Nicchiarelli

Le concert (2009) by Radu Mihăileanu

Susanna Nicchiarelli and Radu Mihăileanu will be present to converse with the public.

The film *Cristo proibito* (1951) by Curzio Malaparte closes the festival.

The initiative takes place at the Cinema delle Province, one of the Community Cinema Halls of the diocese of Rome. The Community Cinema Halls number approximately 500 throughout Italy, and are coordinated by ACEC (*Associazione Cattolica Esercenti Cinema* - www.acec.it). The National Film Evaluation Commission of the National Office for Social Communications of the Italian Episcopal Conference offers fact sheets on films and TV series (www.cnvf.it).
