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Letter of the Holy Father to the Cardinal Vicar for the diocese of Rome for the cultural valorisation of the Lateran Palace

The following is the letter sent by the Holy Father Francis to the Cardinal Vicar for the diocese of Rome, Angelo De Donatis, for the cultural valorisation of the Lateran Palace:

Letter of the Holy Father

To Venerable Brother

Cardinal Angelo DE DONATIS, Vicar for the diocese of Rome

Throughout the centuries, the Church has always worked to promote the fruit of the genius and mastery of artists, often as a testimony to experiences of faith and as instruments for honouring God. This has been done not only out of love for art, but also to safeguard cultural heritage in the face of challenges and dangers that would deprive it of its function and value.

This special responsibility, accompanied by a careful concern to consider places, buildings and works as expressions of the human spirit and an integral part of the culture of humanity, has enabled my Predecessors to hand them down to several generations and to work to preserve them and make them available to visitors and scholars. Today, too, the Bishop of Rome is engaged in this task of rendering available the beauty and meaning of the goods and artistic heritage entrusted to his protection.

For these reasons, I also designate for this purpose the buildings annexed to the Papal Basilica of Saint John Lateran, the See of my Episcopal Cathedra, well aware of the nature that the course and events of history attribute to that complex, together with the provisions of the Lateran Treaty (cf. Art. 13 and Annex II, 1).

I entrust to Your Eminence, my Vicar for the diocese of Rome, the task of realising, in the complex of what has

been known for centuries as the Lateran Patriarchate, museum and cultural activities in the various forms and contents, making the necessary arrangements, "relying entirely on the high artistic traditions of the Catholic Church" (Lateran Treaty, Art. 16).

To this end, Your Eminence will work with the cooperation of the Governing Bodies of the Vatican City State and, where appropriate, the operational bodies of the Governorate, considering the provisions in force for extraterritorial areas in the context of their specific juridical status (cf. Law on the Government of Vatican City State, No. CCLXXIV, 6 December 2018, Art. 1).

In thanking Your Eminence for your demanding daily service, I invoke every heavenly blessing upon you and upon the entire community of the Vicariate of Rome.

Rome, at Saint John Lateran, 20 February 2021

FRANCIS
