



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE  
**BOLLETTINO**

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIÈGE PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHL  
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE SALA DE IMPRENSA DA SANTA SÉ  
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**#iubilaeum2025 – Press Conference to present the cultural events scheduled in Rome before the official opening of the Jubilee and the Holy See Pavilion at Expo Osaka 2025**

At 10.30 this morning, in the Holy See Press Office, Via della Conciliazione 54, a press conference was held to present the cultural events, concerts and exhibitions scheduled to be held in Rome before the official opening of the Jubilee on 24 December, and the Holy See Pavilion at Expo Osaka 2025.

The speakers were: Archbishop Rino Fisichella, pro-prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelization, Section for Fundamental Questions regarding Evangelization in the World; Dr. Barbara Jatta, director of the Vatican Museums; and Dr. Davide Mambriani, curator of the “Jubilee is Culture” programme of concerts and exhibitions.

The following are the interventions by Archbishop Rino Fisichella and Dr. Davide Mambriani:

**Intervention of Archbishop Rino Fisichella**

The wait for the opening of the Holy Door, next 24 December, has become feverish. It is a deadline that will start a Holy Year that will bring millions of pilgrims to Rome. The city has been preparing itself to offer an even more beautiful face than Rome already has, and little by little the building sites that have tested everyone's patience in recent months will disappear.

At 19.00 of 24 December, Pope Francis will preside over the Holy Eucharist in Saint Peter's Square, to be followed by the rite for the opening of the Holy Door. He will be the first to cross the threshold of the Door, and will invite those who come during the course of the Year to follow his example, to express the joy of the encounter with “Christ Jesus, our hope” (1 Tim 1:1). The announcement of the opening of the celebration will be given by a short Bell Concert by the *Pontificia Fonderia di Campane Marinelli*. Bells are the sound dearest to the people and in this case they become the expression of the joyful announcement of an event long awaited and finally arrived.

Pope Francis intends to be the first to make himself a “Pilgrim of hope” and, in this way, as he wrote in the Bull of 26 December, Feast of Saint Stephen, he will go to the Roman Rebibbia prison to open also in that place, symbol of all prisons throughout the world, the Holy Door, a tangible sign of the proclamation of hope. As he himself wrote in the Bull of Indiction of the Jubilee, *Spes non confundit*, “During the Holy Year, we are called to be tangible signs of hope for those of our brothers and sisters who experience hardships of any kind. I think of *prisoners* who, deprived of their freedom, daily feel the harshness of detention and its restrictions, lack of affection and, in more than a few cases, lack of respect for their persons. I propose that in this Jubilee Year governments undertake initiatives aimed at restoring hope; forms of amnesty or pardon meant to help individuals regain confidence in themselves and in society; and programmes of reintegration in the community, including a concrete commitment to respect for law” (SNC, 10). Starting from this perspective, in recent weeks, on 11 September, we signed an Understanding with the Minister for Justice of the Italian Republic, the Honorable Carlo Nordio, and the Government Commissioner, the Honorable Roberto Gualtieri, to make effective, during the Jubilee Year, forms of reintegration for various detainees through their work in socially committed activities.

For several days now it has been possible to consult online the general Jubilee calendar, different from that of the “major events” which was published earlier to provide more immediate information, and it will be constantly updated with the acquisition of the various initiatives proposed by different entities from all over the world. It is advisable to make maximum use of the Jubilee portal and App to check the wealth of information. This general calendar has been divided into three categories: the “Pilgrimage” category to indicate the dioceses and the various entities that have already registered; the “Cultural Event” category; and the “Major Event” category. In this way we hope it will be easier to map, as fully as possible, the numerous initiatives for the entire Holy Year.

Today’s conference is about two different topics: one regarding the presentation of the programme of upcoming cultural events gathered together under the title “The Jubilee is Culture”; and the other, the Expo in Osaka 2025.

We recall the great success of the El Greco exhibition at Sant’Agnese in Piazza Navona in the month of September 2023 with the presence of over 270,000 visitors. This was followed last June by another major event: the exhibition of Salvador Dalí’s famous “Christ of Saint John of the Cross”, together with the sketch by the same Saint John of the Cross, which Dalí claimed was the inspiration for his work. The exhibition was held in the Church of *San Marcello al Corso*, which houses another famous crucifix, and the event, which was more than an exhibition, since it helped to reflect, contemplate and pray, was attended by around 330,000 people in the short period of forty days. Together with these, I like to remember Antonin Dvořák’s “New World Symphony”, performed by the “Virtuosi of Kyiv” Orchestra in November last year; along with Handel’s “Messiah” in the beautiful setting of the Church of *Sant’Ignazio* performed by the “Grand Prince’s Musicians” from Florence. Last April we proposed a cinematographic programme entitled “Faces and Counterfaces” at the *Cinema delle Province*, with twelve historical and highly evocative screenings, with a turnout of over 2200 spectators in one week. I like to recall that this cinema hall, last month, won the Carlo Lizzani Award at the Cinema Exhibition in Venice, “for commitment to the promotion of independent Italian cinema and the realization of initiatives aimed at inclusion in the complicated reality of the Capital”. Perhaps the initiative proposed also contributed to convincing the jury to award the prestigious prize, especially at a time like ours that sees a crisis in the film system.

The path of beauty once again presents itself as a road to be pursued as a form of evangelization that succeeds in involving many people, believers and non-believers alike, but all eager to enjoy and contemplate the beauty produced by the creative genius of people whose art still speaks a universal language.

The approaching opening of the Jubilee Year prompts us to present new initiatives that will allow us to enter more effectively into the journey of the Holy Year. The first event will be a concert in the Auditorium in Via della Conciliazione, next Sunday 3 November, at 18.00. For the occasion, the Orchestra of the *Accademia di Santa Cecilia* will perform the Fifth Symphony by Russian composer Dimitri Shostakovich (1906-1975), conducted by Maestro Jader Bignamini, currently music director of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. The Symphony, composed in 1937, may be little known to the general public, but it is striking in its intense drama and opens up a horizon of hope. Dr. Davide Mambriani will present this event in more detail.

On 22 December, at 18.00, at the Church of *Sant’Ignazio di Loyola*, it will be possible to attend the second

musical event. The Pontifical Sistine Chapel Choir, under the direction of Don Marcos Pavan, will perform various polyphonic compositions of Palestrina (1525-1594, the 500th anniversary of whose birth will be celebrated next year), Perosi and Bartolucci. This moment will allow us to experience the days immediately preceding the opening of the Jubilee in the light of a genuine contemplation of the mystery of faith.

I am particularly pleased to announce that in addition to these two musical moments there will be three other exhibition events: on 27 November next, the exhibition with Marc Chagall's *White Crucifixion* will be open to the public until 27 January 2025. We were able to obtain from The Art Institute of Chicago such an evocative and unique work, which is coming to Italy for the first time, and will be hosted in the new Museo del Corso - Museum Pole, in Palazzo Cipolla, with free entrance, every day from 10.00 to 20.00. I am particularly grateful to Director James Rondeau for his full compliance with my request made last June and I am sure it will be a great success with the public. A special word of thanks goes to the President Franco Parasassi of the *Fondazione Roma* who immediately responded to our request and wanted to coincide the reopening of Palazzo Cipolla, as the new Museum Centre, with this extraordinary event. Art has no boundaries and finds a positive response in cooperation for the benefit of all. I will give the floor to Dr. Davide Mambriani for a more extensive exposition.

The second event sees the exhibition of some rare icons owned by the Vatican Museums that will be displayed in the magnificent Borromini sacristy in the Church of *Sant'Agnese* in Piazza Navona, from 16 December to 16 February 2025. Why an exhibition of icons? Because the icon represents more than just a painting. It becomes an authentic scripture in which to read the history of salvation. The symbolism of the icon reflects the life of the Church; a history of traditions that from generation to generation has been able to transmit not only the faith, but together with it the technique, the colours, the likeness... and all that was needed to make the icon an object of prayer, worship and veneration. The icon thus became an instrument of universal evangelization, evoking a holiness that always refers back to the central mystery of faith. It was necessary that the Jubilee also welcome this experience, which is the fruit of two years of work among experts. I will give the floor to the Director of the Vatican Museums, Dr Barbara Jatta, to whom special thanks are due because although she has to leave for the United States in a few hours, she did not want to miss this public moment.

The third event will be the now traditional Exhibition of 100 Nativity Scenes in the Vatican. In the evocative Bernini Colonnade, from 8 December 2024 to 6 January 2025, the eighth edition of the International Exhibition will take place, which every year is enriched with new displays and an increasing number of participants. As we know, every year a different country, depending on the historical moment, becomes a partner of this Exhibition. This year, the Jubilee Year, Rome will be directly involved because for more than twelve months it will be at the centre of the world's attention.

Let us now move on to the second major theme of this Press Conference: the Osaka Expo, the Universal Exposition in Japan to be held from 13 April to 13 October 2025. It is now customary for the Holy See to participate. It will also do so on this occasion with its own Pavilion. It is better to say that the Holy See Pavilion will be hosted inside the Pavilion of Italy. It is my obligation to thank the Italian Government in the person of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Honorable Antonio Tajani, who immediately accepted our invitation. By the time Pope Francis appointed me as Commissioner General for the Holy See on 18 November 2023, time was so tight that I could no longer find much exhibition space. The generosity of the Government and the Minister enabled us to solve the problem, and we are particularly grateful for this. At the same time, I thank His Excellency Ambassador Mario Vattani, Commissioner General of Italy for Expo 2025, and the architect Mario Cucinella, who has planned the Italian Pavilion. Their almost daily attention is of great help and satisfaction. I am also pleased to greet the Ambassador to the Holy See, His Excellency Chiba Akira, who is closely following our steps with steadfast support.

The theme of the Holy See Pavilion will be "La bellezza porta speranza" - "Beauty brings Hope". It represents a universal message intended to be shared with all visitors. Beauty is a force that transforms, that is capable of touching the heart of people, of reawakening the desire for a better world. We have intentionally used the verb *porta*, which in this case has a dual meaning: on the one hand, it indicates a dynamic movement, because it transmits access to hope; on the other, it is intended to recall the Holy Door (Porta Santa) of the Jubilee, the "porta" that opens to welcome whoever is in search of peace and reconciliation. We know that we have used a play on words difficult to translate into other languages; however, at least in Italian it conveys the messages we

wished to express.

It was Pope Francis himself who wanted the Expo's representative work to be the only work by Caravaggio preserved in the Vatican Museums: Caravaggio's *Deposition*. Paradoxically, it is intended to convey a message of hope. Faced with the drama of death, we know that there is faith in the resurrection, true and real life that is given to believers in Christ. The Director of the Museums will talk to us about the value of the work, and once again, to them, we give our thanks for having granted the Caravaggio to the Expo in the crucial period of the Jubilee.

In this context, I am pleased to inform you that I have appointed two Vice-Commissioners in the person of Msgr. Pietro Bongiovanni, parish priest of *San Salvatore in Lauro* in Rome, and the Reverend Fr. Nuno Alexandre Henriques De Lima, parish priest of *Tamatsukuri Catholic Church*, Saint Mary's Cathedral in Osaka. I have also proceeded, as required by the Statutes of the Expo, to appoint some Ambassadors who will give lustre and prestige to the presence of the Holy See: the sculptors Etsuro Sotoo and Cecco Bonanotte, the conductor Tonomi Nishimoto, and the comic artist Kan Takahama. I would like to thank them all for their availability and for the work of accreditation that their persons will enable us to have in relation to the Holy See.

Finally, I am pleased to share the Holy See official logo for Expo 2025. The image represents a happy union between Christian symbols and Japanese culture. As you can see, the Dome of Saint Peter's, with the red of the rising Sun, to symbolize on the one hand the coming of Christ, light and redeemer of the world, and the sun of the Japanese flag. At the bottom, the black strip is instead a reference to the typically Japanese brush-painting technique known as *Sumi-e*. During the Expo, there will be several cultural events, but information will be provided in a timely fashion once the study and realization phase has been concluded.

*Dulcis in fundo*, I am pleased to present the mascot for the Jubilee and for Osaka: it is *Luce*, created from the desire to enter also into the world of pop culture, so loved by our young people. The creative work of Simone Legno, Luce is the mascot that will accompany us. As you can see, she is a pilgrim depicted with the typical elements of the pilgrim: the yellow windcheater for protection from the elements, muddy boots from the road travelled, the missionary cross around her neck, the pilgrim's staff and above all, shining eyes, symbol of the hope of the heart.

### **Intervention of Dr. Davide Mambriani**

As His Excellency has already said, the upcoming concert of the musical review "Harmonies of Hope" marks the third stage of the concert programme that the Dicastery for Evangelization is proposing in preparation for the Holy Year and the opening of the Holy Door of Saint Peter's Basilica.

The choice of the Orchestra of the *Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia* and Šostakovič's *Fifth Symphony* are not accidental. This concert is the last of "profane" music before the start of the Holy Year and therefore has a special significance. The Orchestra of the *Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia* is among the oldest and most renowned musical institutions in the world. It was founded in 1585 by Pope Sixtus V with the bull *Ratione congruit*, the official act of foundation of the Congregation of Musicians under the invocation of the Blessed Virgin and Saints Gregory and Cecilia, thus uniting among its patrons, alongside the Virgin, the two musical saints par excellence. Gregory the Great is the one who traditionally instituted (Gregorian) chant, and Cecilia, the virgin and martyr who, from the late Middle Ages onwards, gradually replaced David in the role of patron saint of music. The association had already been formed in the mid-1670s, at the instigation of a group of musicians that brought together the most important composers of the time active in Rome, among whom the name of Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina stands out, the 500th anniversary of whose birth we will celebrate during this Jubilee year.

The Fifth Symphony, composed by Dmitri Šostakovič in 1937, is divided into four movements for an orchestra of more than 90 orchestral players and has a total duration of approximately 45 minutes. The Symphony is by far

the most performed, best known and best loved of Dmitri Šostakovič's fifteen. Reduced by the solemn critique of his previous work, the composer decided to withdraw the bold, expressionistic, "formalistic" Symphony No. 4, which had already been completed and was about to be performed, in order to opt, as Franco Pulcini has well summarized, for a more concise, square and thematically simplified composition than the previous one.

Introduced by an incisive theme in canon form, the first movement presents a bithematic sonata-form that is very traditional in the expository section - a well-rhythmic theme is followed by a more explained and singable one - but very complex in the development section. The strong contrasts are sharpened in the buoyant Allegretto that follows, in Scherzo form, whose main theme manifests itself in the biting prologue of a stylized Russian folk dance. The Largo, in ternary form, represents one of the most inspired and emotionally intense pages in Šostakovič's entire repertoire, while the thunderous Allegro finale, not too much in rondo form, alternates a martial theme, well punctuated by the brass, with contrasting episodes, the last of which seems to constitute a pause for more intimate and private reflection while a festive town square scene takes place.

The composer says of his symphony: "The theme of my Symphony is the development of the individual. I considered as a central idea of the work, which is essentially lyrical from the beginning to the end, man with all his sufferings; the Finale resolves the tragedy and the tension of the preceding movements with a joyous and optimistic note". The concert will take place on Sunday 3 November at 18.00 at the Conciliazione Auditorium.

The fourth appointment of the Jubilee musical review is instead dedicated to sacred music of excellence, so to speak. The performance of this concert, the last before the opening of Saint Peter's Holy Door, has been entrusted to the Pontifical Sistine Chapel Choir, which will perform a polyphonic concert. Sacred polyphony is the hallmark style of the Catholic liturgical music tradition and the Pontifical Sistine Chapel Choir is a first-class institution in this field. The choir of the Sistine Chapel, officially founded in 1471 by Pope Sixtus IV - but about whose pre-existence it is now agreed - is the oldest choir in the world still active.

Beyond the operative role during the Papal Celebrations in Saint Peter's, the choir will perform concert activities at international level, both in its entirety and just with the white voices, thus carrying out a work of evangelization through the historic heritage of music for liturgy. The Pontifical Sistine Chapel Choir is made up of twenty permanent adult vocalists and approximately thirty-five young vocalists, the *Pueri Cantores*.

The concert directed by Maestro Marcos Pavan is conceived as a musical and spiritual journey that follows the liturgical year of the Jubilee year and will perform antiphons, hymns, responsories, sequences and sacred motets dedicated to particular moments of the liturgical year. The concert will also feature the participation of Maestro Josep Solé Coll, first organist of the Papal Basilica of Saint Peter's in the Vatican and organist for the Liturgical Celebrations of the Supreme Pontiff, who will perform an interlude on the organ composed by a chapel master of the *Schola Pontificia*. An extraordinary concert that will allow people to pray while listening to sacred music ranging from the ninth century to the twenty-first century, with a key passage to the sixteenth century, composed by the chapel masters of the Sistine Chapel and Saint John Lateran.

Moving on to consider the theme of the Jubilee exhibitions, I will present the third art event, this time dedicated to Marc Chagall, in which the *White Crucifixion*, a work of extraordinary historic and symbolic value, will be displayed for the first time.

Marc Chagall (Lėzna, 1887 – Saint-Paul-de-Vence, 1985) was a Russian painter naturalized French, one of the best known of the twentieth century. Forced to leave his homeland, he always remained very attached to it, despite the fact that, for various reasons, he was aware that he could not settle there. Chagall became famous for his paintings depicting dreamlike and imaginative scenarios that cannot, however, be pigeon-holed into a particular movement or current, but rather are an expression of a personal style that draws partly from the avant-gardes of the last century, only to go beyond them. Preserved at the Art Institute of Chicago in the United States, the 1938 painting entitled *White Crucifixion* represents a fundamental turning point for Chagall: it is in fact the first of an important series of compositions that present the image of Christ as a martyr and dramatically draw attention to the persecution and suffering of the Jewish people in the 1930s.

The painting depicts the suffering of the Jews and of Jesus. Violent conflicts are represented, such as the burning of the synagogues. At the centre of the image, Jesus is depicted crucified and symbolically represented as a Jew, adorned with a prayer shawl. The *White Crucifixion* reveals important influences of fourteenth-century Italian art and is an element of great colouristic value. This painting has thematic links to Renaissance religious painting, in particular the works of Michelangelo, but also bears references to Rembrandt's *Election of the Cross*. In the *White Crucifixion*, the crucified Jesus is surrounded by three biblical patriarchs and a matriarch, dressed in traditional Jewish clothing.

At the sides of the Cross, Chagall illustrated the devastation of the pogrom: on the left, a village is sacked and burned, forcing the refugees to flee by boat, while the three bearded figures beneath them, one of whom clasps a Torah, flee on foot. On the right, a synagogue and the ark of the Torah are in flames, while below, a mother comforts her child. Together with Pablo Picasso's *Guernica*, the *White Crucifixion* is one of the twentieth century's most eloquent condemnations of war and hatred and its message is still dramatically relevant today. The profound spiritual significance of the work allows the visitor to immerse themselves in a moment of extraordinary meditation that will make the enjoyment of the work a moment not only of exceptional artistic value, but even more of introspection and reflection on the mystery of the cross that is *arbor vitae* and bearer of hope of redemption, resurrection after atrocities and victory over death.

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