



# The Holy See

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**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE INAUGURATION  
OF THE EXHIBITION  
"A MIRROR OF CREATION"**

*Braccio di Carlo Magno (Vatican Museums)  
Tuesday, 23 September 1980*

*Your Eminences,*

*Dear Friends of American Art in Religion,*

It is a pleasure for me to welcome you today, and with you to inaugurate the first major exhibition of American paintings in the Vatican.

With this exhibition your Association pursues its laudable initiatives; it likewise expands the contacts that it has already had with the Vatican through the seminars that took place here in 1976 and 1978.

The title itself that you have given to his exhibition is expressive of the sentiments that have motivated this most recent activity of yours: "A Mirror of Creation - 150 Years of American Nature Painting". Through your generous efforts many people in the weeks to come will be able to admire these paintings; with you they too will be able to reflect on nature as an example of God's handwork, a manifestation of his power and beauty, an expression of the generosity with which he endows the world and adorns it for the good of human beings. From these reflections on nature there emerges a deep realization of the glory of creation, the dignity of man, and above all the majesty of the Creator. The Psalmist was moved to proclaim: "O Lord, my Lord, how glorious is your name over all the earth! You have exalted your majesty above the heavens"<sup>[1]</sup>.

I am happy also to have the occasion of this gathering today to add my voice once again to the great witness of respect, esteem and confidence given over long years by my predecessor Paul VI

to the artists of the world. Artists have indeed a noble contribution to make in building the civilization of man and in promoting the Kingdom of God on earth.

May this endeavour and all your endeavours at the service of art be blessed. "The Lord bless you and keep you! The Lord let his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you! The Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace!"<sup>[2]</sup>.

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<sup>[1]</sup> *Ps.* 8, 2.

<sup>[2]</sup> *Num.* 6, 24-26.

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