



The Holy See

**GREETING OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO THE PATRONS OF THE ARTS IN THE VATICAN MUSEUMS**

Clementine Hall

Thursday, 9 November 2023

[[Multimedia](#)]

Dear friends,

Art always speaks to the soul, has the power to build bridges between cultures and people and creates a sense of solidarity, Pope Francis said to members of the *Patrons of the Arts* in the Vatican Museum, whom he received in audience on Thursday, 9 November. The following is the English text of the Holy Father's address which he delivered in Italian in the Clementine Hall.

I offer you a cordial greeting and once more I thank you for your cooperation in the important work of preserving and restoring the artistic and cultural patrimony of the Vatican Museums. Your commitment is a concrete sign of your appreciation of the potential of the arts, in their many forms, to open minds and hearts to the beauty of God's creation and the richness and mystery of our human life and calling. The work of conservation to which you contribute not only safeguards this precious legacy of the past, but also invites new generations to reflect on the profound interplay between art, history, culture and faith. There is an intrinsic connection between these things: art, history, culture and faith.

Your goal as *Patrons of the Arts* in the Vatican Museums is to ensure that the artistic treasures of the Vatican collections, which reflect the immense diversity of cultures, traditions and creative expressions that enrich our world, may continue to "inspire, elevate, and reveal" the deepest hopes and aspirations of the human heart (cf. *PAVM Mission Statement 2022*). Art, and religious art in particular, can bring a message of mercy, compassion, and encouragement not only to believers, but also to those who doubt, who feel lost, unsure, or possibly alone. For art always

speaks to the soul. It has the power to foster a recognition of our common humanity, to build bridges between cultures and peoples, and to create that sense of solidarity so greatly needed in our sadly divided and war-torn world. Art refreshes the human spirit, just as water replenishes the dry and parched desert.

The 40-year history of the Patrons has been inspired not only by love of the arts, but also by the conviction that each generation has a collective responsibility to cherish and preserve the priceless heritage with which we have been entrusted. This conviction has borne fruit in the significant works of restoration carried out over the past four decades, and, in a particular way, during the years of “lockdown” due to the pandemic.

Dear friends, with these sentiments, I renew my appreciation for your support of the mission of the Vatican Museums, and I encourage you to persevere in your praiseworthy enterprise. Upon you and your families, and upon all associated with the work of the Patrons of the Arts, I cordially invoke the blessings of Almighty God, the eternal source of all beauty, truth and goodness.

L'Osservatore Romano, Weekly Edition in English, Fifty-sixth year, number 45, Friday, 10 November 2023, p. 12.