



The Holy See

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to greet you, distinguished representatives of the Nippon Television Network Corporation and publishers of the Volume " New Light on Michelangelo ". Your visit to the Vatican coincides with the holding of a Symposium on the restorations being carried out in the Sistine Chapel, and offers me a welcome opportunity to thank all those who are contributing to that important undertaking.

The Catholic Church has not hesitated to turn to the genius of outstanding artists to illustrate her teaching and worship, for she is conscious of the power of the arts to express something of the infinite beauty of God the Creator and to touch human hearts with a longing for all that is good and true. True works of art have an innate capacity to inspire contemplation of universal human experiences and values. Thus art draws people together in a way that transcends every difference of language, culture and time. It is my hope that the attention now being given to the artistic genius of Michelangelo Buonarroti will aid the rediscovery of the perennially valid religious vision which inspired his work. I am convinced that the power of that vision to elevate the human spirit can be of decisive importance in fostering the development of authentic unity and peace among the peoples of the world.

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