



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE DIRECTORS AND EXECUTIVES
OF THE CARRIER CORPORATION AND DELCHI/CARRIER ITALIA**

*Clementine Hall
Friday, 4 June 1993*

Dear Friends,

1. The decoration of the Sistine Chapel fulfils to an eminent degree the Church's aim "that all things set apart for use in divine worship should be truly worthy, becoming and beautiful, signs and symbols of heavenly realities" (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 122). Those who enter the Chapel come away with their hearts ready to echo these words from the Liturgy for the Dedication of a Church: "This is a place of awe..., God's house, the gate of heaven." The frescoes of the Sistine Chapel are remarkable examples of how the human spirit, nourished by the faith of the Church, grew in its ability to wonder, to understand, to contemplate and to depict the divine mysteries revealed in the Old and the New Testaments. The painstaking restoration of the Sistine Chapel, begun in 1964 and now moving towards completion in 1994, has been undertaken for the very purpose of ensuring that this treasure of our religious and cultural patrimony will be preserved for future generations.

Because of your part in supporting this work of restoration, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the Vatican, the Directors and Executives of the *Carrier Corporation and Delchi/Carrier Italia*, together with the Directors of the parent company, *United Technologies*, and your associates and co-workers. I am happy to have this opportunity to express my thanks for the system of atmospheric and climatic control which you have designed, built and helped to install in the Sistine Chapel. This system of sophisticated technology will go a long way to ensuring that the results achieved through the restoration of the frescoes in the Chapel will last for many generations to come.

2. On the ceiling of the Chapel, Michelangelo, with incomparable genius, has placed before us the splendour of the works of Creation. At the centre is the creation of man. When God made our first parents in his own image and likeness (Cf. Gen. 1: 26), he gave them a share in his creative designs. By his command to "fill the earth and subdue it" (Ibid. 1: 28), he called upon them and their descendants to cooperate with him in bringing into being those things which in their goodness reflect him and give him glory (Cf. John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, 4).

Michelangelo, Botticelli, Perugino and the other great masters whose works adorn the Chapel built by Pope Sixtus IV enjoy undying fame because of their success in responding to this challenge and vocation. Their gifts of mind and heart and hand enabled them to take the humble elements of plaster and pigment and reshape them into works of transcendent beauty. They breathed new life into their materials; they gave them form, so that there shines forth a light which dazzles all who behold the results of their skills.

3. And yet the joy which any work of human art brings is always tinged with the sad knowledge that the artist's creation is fragile, for the materials can decay and the form which so delights us disappear.

It is in order to fight those processes of decay that you have offered your talents and resources. You have applied your knowledge to the task of creating a physical climate in which the frescoes will be better protected from the elements. In this way you have, we might say, become co-workers with the painters in making present their vision of God's glorious deeds in creation and salvation history. Technology should not be man's enemy but an "ally of work" – facilitating, perfecting, accelerating and enhancing the activities of man (Cf. John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, 5). It is an instrumental good produced by human thought and ingenuity, and it achieves its proper purpose by helping man to rise to the higher things which are part of his essential end. I am happy to point to what is being accomplished in the Sistine Chapel as an illustration of an excellent use of technology at the service of masterpieces of religious art. The divine goodness which shines out from the frescoes of the Sistine Chapel is also expressed, though in another way, in what is done to protect these works of art.

4. All who have combined their efforts and skills in the task of restoring and protecting the Sistine Chapel have carried out a true work of solidarity: solidarity with our forebears in preserving what they have given us, solidarity with generations to come in guaranteeing that this precious artistic heritage inspired by the Gospel will be theirs. For this I express the gratitude not only of the Holy See but of all men and women of culture, all lovers of art, all those who will continue to admire the beauty and conceptual uniqueness of the Sistine Chapel paintings.

With cordial good wishes to you and all your dear ones, I invoke upon you abundant divine blessings.

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