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OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE



BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIEGE
PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS

BOLLETTINO

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

N. 180224b

Saturday 24.02.2018

Audience with Members of the “Diaconie de la Beauté” Movement

At 12.20 today, in the Consistory Hall of the Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the members of the “Diaconie de la Beauté” Movement in Rome on the occasion of the Symposium organised to commemorate the feast of Beato Angelico.

The following is the Pope’s address to those present:

Address of the Holy Father

Dear friends,

I welcome you on the occasion of the Symposium you have organized in Rome to commemorate the feast of Blessed Fra Angelico. I thank the archbishop Robert Le Gall for the words he addressed to me on your behalf. Through you, I wish to express my cordial greeting to all artists who endeavour to make beauty shine, with their talents and their passion, as well as those people in a condition of fragility who are rehabilitated thanks to their experience of beauty in art.

As the saint Pope John Paul II wrote in his Letter to artists, “The artist has a special relationship to beauty. In a very true sense it can be said that beauty is the vocation bestowed on him by the Creator in the gift of ‘artistic talent’. And, certainly, this too is a talent which ought to be made to bear fruit, in keeping with the sense of the Gospel parable of the talents (cf. *Mt 25:14-30*)” (4 April 1999, 3). This conviction illuminates the vision and the dynamic proper to the “Diaconie de la Beauté”, which has its roots precisely here in Rome, from the time of the Synod on new evangelization, in October 2012. Together with you I give thanks to the Lord for the journey that has been made and for the variety of your talents, which He calls you to develop in the service of your neighbour and for the whole of humanity.

The gifts you have received are for each one of you a responsibility and a mission. Indeed, you are required to work without letting yourselves be dominated by the search for a vain glory or easy popularity, and even less so

by the often mean calculations of purely personal profit. In a world in which technology is often interpreted as the main resource for interpreting existence (cf. Encyclical *Laudato si'*, 110), you are called, through your talents and drawing from the sources of Christian spirituality, to propose “an alternative understanding of the quality of life, and [to encourage] a prophetic and contemplative lifestyle, one capable of deep enjoyment free of the obsession with consumption” (*ibid.*, 222), and to serve creation and the protection of “oases of beauty” in our cities, too often “concrete jungles” without a soul.

Therefore I invite you to develop your talents to contribute to an ecological conversion that recognizes the eminent dignity of every person, his special value, his creativity and capacity to promote the common good. May your search for beauty in what you create be inspired by the desire to serve the beauty of the quality of life of people, of their harmony with the environment, of encounter and mutual help (cf *ibid*, 150). So, I encourage you, in this “Diaconate of Beauty”, to promote a culture of encounter, of building bridges between people, between populations, in a world in which many walls are still raised out of fear of others. Take care also to witness, in the expression of your art, that believing in Jesus Christ and following Him “is not only something right and true, but also something beautiful, capable of filling life with new splendour and a profound joy, even in the midst of difficulties”(Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 167). The Church relies on you to make the ineffable Beauty of God’s love perceptible and to enable every person to discover the beauty of being loved by God, to be filled with His love, to live on it and to bear witness to it in attention to others, especially those who are excluded, wounded and rejected in our societies.

While I entrust you to the Lord, through the intercession of Blessed Fra Angelico, I impart my Apostolic Blessing to you and to all the members of the “Diaconie de la Beauté”.
