

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE
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BOLLETTINO

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Audience with the artists of the “Concert in the Vatican”

The following is the greeting the Holy Father Francis addressed this morning to the artists of the “Concert in the Vatican”, during the audience in the Apostolic Palace:

Greeting of the Holy Father

Dear friends, welcome; and thank you for your kind greetings!

Thank you for choosing to dedicate this Christmas Concert programme to peace. Peace embraces the deepest yearnings of the human heart, so it is right that we should devote the best of our material, intellectual and spiritual energies in its service.

As we know, peace must be built up day by day; it must inspire and accompany our daily lives and activities. Yet, tragically, at this moment in time, peace is also an *emergency*, as we are reminded by the invitation to take part in the charitable project associated with today’s concert. In Ukraine, the Salesians of the Don Bosco Missions have remained alongside the populace, working to house refugees and to distribute food and medicine. With the present initiative, we want to offer them our support; at the same time, each of us, in whatever way we can, is called to be an artisan of peace, to pray and work for peace.

The participation of so many artists in this project shows a willingness to share in solidarity with our brothers and sisters suffering due to the war. Christmas invites us to feel closer to them. Indeed, what we hear in the word of God each year during this season of Advent is not a message of resignation or sorrow, but a message of hope and joy, a message to make our own and communicate to others. Music and song have a special role to play in this “communication”. The liturgy and the popular traditions of Christmas are filled with music and song. The Gospel account itself speaks of the hymn sung by the angels: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased” (Lk 2:14).

With your song, you help spread this message of love and life, touching many hearts and spreading the spirit of

fraternity. That is how God works in history, even in the painful and desolate of scenarios. In his mercy, he calls each of us; he wants to make use of our talents and our limitations, and to bring salvation to the men and women of our time. At Christmas, and always!

Dear friends, your talent is a great gift, but also a responsibility, for which you should be both thankful and mindful, while – as Saint John Paul II wrote to artists – “with dedication and passion you seek new ‘epiphanies’ of beauty to offer as gifts to the world” (*Letter to Artists*, 4 April 1999). Music soothes the heart; it opens us to dialogue; it fosters encounter and friendship. In this sense, music is an invitation and a path to peace.

Thank you for coming. To you and your loved ones I extend my prayerful good wishes. I cordially impart my blessing and ask God to bless you. And I ask you, please, not to forget to pray for me. Thank you!
