



# The Holy See

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***ADDRESS BY HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI  
AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE CONCERT GIVEN BY  
THE CHINA PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA  
AND THE SHANGHAI OPERA HOUSE CHORUS***

*Paul VI Audience Hall  
Wednesday, 7 May 2008*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear Friends!*

Another high-quality musical performance sees us gathered once again in the Paul VI Audience Hall. For me and for all of us here, it takes on a particular value and meaning. Since it is offered and performed by the China Philharmonic Orchestra and the Shanghai Opera House Chorus, it puts us in touch, as it were, with the living reality of the world of China. I thank the choir and orchestra for this generous tribute and I congratulate the organizers and the artists for their skilful, refined and elegant performance of a musical work that forms part of the artistic heritage of all humanity. In a group of such accomplished artists, we see represented the great cultural and musical tradition of China, and this performance helps us to understand better the history of the Chinese people, their values and their noble aspirations. Heartfelt thanks for this gift! Thanks also for the music that is about to be performed! I extend sincere thanks not only to the promoters and the artists, but to all those who, in different ways, took part in arranging this truly unique event.

It is worth emphasizing that this performance by Chinese artists of one of Mozart's greatest works brings together their own musical talent and Western music. Conductor Long Yu, with his orchestra, the soloists and the Shanghai Opera House Chorus have comfortably risen to the challenge. Music, and art in general, can serve as a privileged instrument for encounter and reciprocal knowledge and esteem between different populations and cultures; a means attainable by all for valuing the universal language of art.

There is another aspect that I wish to emphasize. I note with pleasure the interest shown by your orchestra and choir in European religious music. This shows that it is possible, in different cultural settings, to enjoy and appreciate sublime manifestations of the spirit such as Mozart's *Requiem* which we have just heard, precisely because music expresses universal human sentiments, including the religious sentiment, which transcends the boundaries of every individual culture.

I should also like to say a word regarding this place where we have come together this evening. It is the great hall in which the Pope receives his guests and meets those who come to visit him. It is like a window opening onto the world, a place where people from all over the world often meet, with their own personal stories and their own culture, all of them welcomed with esteem and affection. In greeting you this evening, dear Chinese artists, the Pope intends to reach out to your entire people, with a special thought for those of your fellow citizens who share faith in Jesus and are united through a particular spiritual bond with the Successor of Peter. The *Requiem* came into being through this faith as a prayer to God, the just and merciful judge, and that is why it touches the hearts of all people, as an expression of humanity's universal aspirations. Finally, as I thank you once again for this most welcome tribute, I send my greetings, through you, to all the people of China as they prepare for the Olympic Games, an event of great importance for the entire human family.

*(in Chinese)*

I thank you all and I offer you my best wishes.

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