



# The Holy See

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SCREENING OF THE DOCUMENTARY FILM  
"ART AND FAITH - VIA PULCHRITUDINIS"

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE BENEDICT XVI***

*Paul VI Audience Hall  
Thursday, 25 October 2012*

*Venerable Brothers,  
Distinguished Authorities,  
Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,*

At the end of this film, I am pleased to extend my warm greeting to you all.

[*In Polish*] First of all, I would like to greet the Polish Delegation, especially the Government Authorities, the Ambassador to the Holy See and all those who contributed to the realization of this film.

I greet Cardinal Bertone, Secretary of State, and Cardinal Bertello who, as President of the Governorate, presented this initiative — I thank him and I congratulate him and the Direction of the Vatican Museums. I greet with gratitude the administrators of the Societies who made the film and supported its production.

The Vatican Museums are not new to initiatives that illustrate the bond between art and faith, based on the patrimony kept in the Pontifical Galleries. Different exhibitions have illustrated this theme, as well as several audiovisual productions. However, the film we have just watched seems to be an especially worthy contribution, above all because it comes at the beginning of the Year of Faith. It constitutes in effect a specific and qualified contribution of the Vatican Museums to the Year of Faith, and justifies all the commitment at various levels. As the final part of the film highlights, for many people coming to Rome, their visit to the Vatican Museums is their point of

contact, sometimes their only contact, with the Holy See; thus, and a privileged opportunity to become acquainted with the Christian message. One could say that the artistic patrimony of Vatican City constitutes a kind of great “parable” through which the Pope speaks to men and women of every part of the world, and so from many cultures and religions, people who might never read one of his Discourses or Homilies. This brings to mind what Jesus said to his disciples: to you the secret of the Kingdom of God has been given, but to those on the “outside” everything is said “in parables” (Mk 4:10-12). The language of art is a language of parables, endowed with a special universal openness: the “via Pulchritudinis” is a path to guide the mind and the heart to the Eternal, to elevate them to the heights of God.

I much appreciated the fact the film repeatedly refers to the Roman Pontiffs’ commitment to the preservation and promotion of the artistic patrimony; and also, in today’s age, to the renewed dialogue of the Church with artists. The Vatican Museums Collection of Modern Religious Art is a practical example of this fruitful dialogue. But this is not all. The entire great body of the Vatican Museums — which is actually a living reality — also possesses what could be called an “evangelizing” dimension! And we see, that these works on display depend upon work that is not seen, that is totally indispensable for their best preservation and display.

*[In Polish]* I am particularly delighted to pay tribute to my beloved Predecessor Blessed John Paul II’s great sensitivity to the dialogue between art and faith. The role Poland has played in the production attests to its merits in this field and bears witness to its prominence in this field.

Art and faith: a combination that has accompanied the Church and the Holy See for 2,000 years, a combination that still today we must value more in our commitment to the men and women of our time to proclaim the Gospel, to proclaim the God who is Beauty and infinite Love.

I once again thank all those who, in different ways, cooperated to bring about this documentary-film, and I hope that it will arouse in many people the desire to understand the faith better: faith able to inspire these and many other works of art. Goodnight to all of you.