



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS VISITS THE NEW PERMANENT EXHIBITION SPACE OF THE VATICAN
APOSTOLIC LIBRARY
AND THE EXHIBITION "EVERYONE. HUMANITY ON ITS WAY"

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS

Vatican Apostolic Library
Friday, 5 November 2021

[[Multimedia](#)]

Dear brothers and sisters!

I warmly greet you all. I thank the Cardinal Archivist and Librarian for his words. I greet Cardinal Farina, who has honoured us with his presence. I greet the Prefect, the Vice-Prefect, the members of the working community of the Vatican Apostolic Library and all the distinguished guests and friends present.

In the Gospel of John, the adjective *kalòs* (beautiful) is used exclusively with reference to Jesus and his mission. It is here, for example, that the Christological epithet "I am the *beautiful* shepherd" (10:11) appears on Jesus' lips, which we usually translate as, "I am the *good* shepherd". True, Jesus is the good shepherd, but he is also beautiful. In the Gospel of Matthew, on the other hand, Jesus speaks of the beauty of his disciples: He challenges them to shine, to make visible the beauty of their works as a form of praise to God: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (5:16).

Beauty is not the fleeting illusion of an appearance or an ornament: it springs instead from the root of goodness, truth and justice, which are its synonyms. But we should not neglect to think and speak of beauty, because the human heart does not only need bread, it does not only need what guarantees its immediate survival: it also needs culture, that which touches the soul, which brings

the human being closer to his or her profound dignity. This is why the Church must bear witness to the importance of beauty and culture, in dialogue with the particular thirst for the infinite that defines the human being.

For these reasons too, I am happy to inaugurate the exhibition hall of the Vatican Library, today, and my wish is that its light may shine. It will certainly shine through science, but also through beauty. And I thank all those who have worked so hard to create this space, made possible by the generosity of friends and benefactors and by the architectural and scientific care of professionals.

You wanted the opening exhibition to be a reflection on the Encyclical *Fratelli tutti*. You have set it out as a dialogue built around works belonging to the Library and works by a contemporary artist, whom I greet and thank. I appreciate this challenge of creating a dialogue. Life is the art of encounter. Cultures ail when they become self-referential, when they lose their curiosity and their openness to the other. When they exclude instead of integrating. What advantage do we have in making ourselves guardians of borders, instead of custodians of our brothers and sisters? The question that God repeats to us is: “Where is your brother?” (cf. *Gen 4:9*).

Dear friends, the world needs new *maps*. In this epochal change that has been accelerated by the pandemic, humanity needs new maps to discover the meaning of fraternity, social friendship and the common good. The logic of closed blocks is barren and full of misunderstandings. We need a new beauty, which is no longer the usual reflection of the power of a few, but the courageous mosaic of the diversity of all. May it not be the mirror of a despotic anthropocentrism, but a new canticle of creatures, where an integral ecology is made tangible.

From the beginning of my pontificate, I have called the Church to make herself an “outbound Church” (cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 20-24) and a protagonist of the culture of encounter. The same thing applies to the Library. It serves the Church all the better if, in addition to preserving the past, it dares to be a frontier of the present and the future. I know that you are aware of this: that our responsibility is to keep roots and memory alive, always looking towards the flowers and the fruits. Let us dream together of “new maps”. I am thinking in particular of the need to move from analogue to digital, increasingly to translate our heritage into new languages. It is true, it is a historic challenge that we must face with wisdom and boldness. I count on the Apostolic Library to translate the deposit of Christianity and the richness of humanism into the languages of today and tomorrow.

I thank you for this fine outcome of your work and for the good that you do. May my Blessing accompany you. And please, pray for me. Thank you!

Pope Francis then addressed the following words to the staff of the Vatican Apostolic Library:

Thank you for your work, your witness: it is a hidden work, but to support everything... At times,

we think of the value of the things or the people that can be seen, but there are many, many hidden people who lead forth life, the family, the world, society, everything, culture... Thank you for this work, thank you. And I ask the Lord to bless you, you and your families. [Blessing]. And thank you, thank you once again.

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