



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS
POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PATRONS OF ARTS
OF THE VATICAN MUSEUMS**

18 April 1997

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to greet the *Patrons of Arts of the Vatican Museums* on the occasion of your meeting in Rome.

The Church's age-old concern for the promotion of the arts and a sound humanistic culture is closely linked to her universal spiritual mission. She is convinced that beauty, particularly the beauty which is the fruit of human artistic creativity, is a clear expression of mankind's highest aspirations and a manifestation of the glory of God, the transcendent Author of all truth and goodness. The collections of the Vatican Museums represent the Church's immense contribution to mankind's cultural heritage, but also, and more importantly, they manifest the inspiration which the Gospel continues to offer to contemporary artists and to all who see in their works a reflection of that divine beauty which is "ever ancient and ever new" (Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, X, 27).

Dear friends, your patronage enables the Vatican Museums to offer a unique witness to these spiritual values as it opens its doors each day to visitors from widely differing backgrounds and from every part of the world. With deep appreciation of your efforts to further the work of the Museums, I cordially invoke upon you and your families God's blessings of joy and peace.

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