



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI TO THE STUDENTS OF THE «ISTITUTO PIO XII» FROM FLORENCE

Monday, 28 May 1973

Once again we wish to extend our welcome to the students of the Istituto Pio XII, from Florence. We know well the scope for which your Institute was founded and we know likewise the generosity and dedication of those responsible for its coming into being as a Graduate School of Fine Arts.

The Second Vatican Council has spoken to us about the dignity of art. In the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy we are given this assurance: "Very rightly the fine arts are considered to rank among the noblest expressions of human genius. This judgment applies especially to religious art and to its highest achievement, which is sacred art" (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 122). And in the document on the Church in the Modern World we read: "Literature and the arts are also, in their own way, of great importance to the life of the Church. For they strive to probe the unique nature of man, his problems and his experiences, as he struggles to know and perfect both himself and the world. They are preoccupied with revealing man's place in history and in the world, with illustrating his miseries and joys, his needs and strengths, and with foreshadowing a better life for him. Thus they are able to elevate human life . . ." (*Gaudium et Spes*, 62).

The implications of this teaching are a challenge for all who are devoting themselves to this field. In a special way, these words constitute a challenge for you who have the great privilege of studying art in a Florentine environment. We hope that you will use your opportunities well and that you will indeed profit from your studies. We hope that all of you will open up your heart to the Supreme Artist and be docile to his promptings.

May you find inspiration in the great themes of the Christian faith which you see around you. May you be able to render authentic service to your fellowmen by helping them to lift up their hearts to the Father of us all, from whom comes every good and perfect gift (Cfr. *Jac.* 1, 17).

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