



The Holy See

INAUGURATION OF THE "ANIMA MUNDI" MUSEUM AND EXHIBITION ON AMAZONIA IN THE VATICAN MUSEUMS

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

Friday, 18 October 2019

[Multimedia]

Dear Friends,

I cordially greet you all and I thank Cardinal Bertello for his words.

I like to think that what we are inaugurating today is not simply a Museum, in its traditional conception. Indeed, I found fitting, so evocative, the name that has been selected for this collection: *Anima Mundi*. The soul of the world.

I think that the Vatican Museums are called to become ever more a living “home”, inhabited and open to all, with its doors wide open to the peoples of the entire world. Vatican Museums open, to all, without closure. A place where everyone can feel represented; where one can perceive concretely that the gaze of the Church knows no preclusion.

Those who enter here should feel that in this house there is room for them too, for their people, their tradition, their culture: the European as the Indian, the Chinese as the indigenous of the Amazon or the Congolese Forests, from Alaska or the Australian deserts or the Pacific islands. All peoples are here, in the shadow of the dome of Saint Peter’s, close to the heart of the Church and of the Pope. And this is because art is not something uprooted: art springs from the heart of peoples.

Here they should also feel that “their” art has the same value and is cared for and safeguarded with the same passion that is reserved for the masterpieces of the Renaissance or the immortal

Greek and Roman sculptures, which every year beckon millions of people. Here they will find a special space: the space of dialogue, of openness to the other, of encounter.

I appreciate that the installation created, and for which I thank those who have worked on it — curators, architects, engineers and labourers, everyone! — is a sign of *transparency*.

Transparency is an important value, especially in an ecclesial institution. We always need it! In these showcases, over the course of time, thousands of works coming from every part of the world will find space, and this kind of installation is meant to place them effectively in dialogue among themselves. And as works of art are the expression of the spirit of peoples, the message received is that one needs to always look at every culture, at the other, with openness of spirit and with benevolence.

Beauty unites us. It invites us to live in human brotherhood, opposing the culture of resentment, of racism, of nationalism, which is always lurking. These are selective cultures, cultures of limited numbers.

A few months ago, from this Museum, several works of Chinese art departed for Beijing. And before that others had gone to several Islamic countries.... How many good initiatives can be achieved thanks to art, managing to overcome even barriers and distances.

Today I would like to thank those who each day take care of these very precious works: the *Anima Mundi* Museum Curator, Fr Nicola Mapelli, who is a pime missionary! — and this is very consistent! —; the restorers of the Multi-Material Laboratory, and all those who cooperate in this work. Thanks to everyone!

And also thank you for having wished to inaugurate this new installation with a special exhibition dedicated to the Amazon, precisely in the days in which we are experiencing the Synod dedicated to this region. And for this I also thank the Consolata Missionaries, the Salesians, the Capuchins, the Xaverians: different charisms that have encountered each other on behalf of the Amazon.

May this Ethnological Museum safeguard its specific identity over time and remind everyone of the value of harmony and of peace among peoples and nations. And may the art collected here make the voice of God resonate in those who will visit this collection. Thank you very much.