



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE
BOLLETTINO

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BIURO PRASOWE STOLICY APOSTOLSKIEJ دار الصحافة التابعة للكرسي الرسولي

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Audience with the participants in the International Meeting of Choirs

From 23 to 25 November, in the Paul VI Hall, the Third International Meeting of Choirs is taking place, attended by singers and musicians from all over the world. The event is organized by the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization, in collaboration with the *Nova Opera Onlus*.

At 12.20 today, the Holy Father Francis met with the participants in the meeting in the Paul VI Hall, and gave an address, the full text of which is given below:

Address of the Holy Father

Dear brothers and sisters,

Your presence in this hall has somehow allowed music and songs to resonate beyond the walls: you have awakened the Vatican! It is nice to listen to your melodies and to feel the joy and the seriousness with which you give voice all together to the beauty of our prayer. I thank Archbishop Rino Fisichella for his creativity, and for his words, and for the initiative that allows you to experience directly the many paths of evangelization.

In recent days, as you know, the Synod of Bishops took place, dedicated to young people, and a topic that was treated with interest was indeed music: "Entirely particular is the importance of music, which is a genuine environment in which young people are constantly immersed, as well as a culture and language capable of arousing emotions and shaping identity. Musical language also represents a pastoral resource, which particularly challenges the liturgy and its renewal" (*Final Document*, 47).

Your music and your song are a true instrument of evangelization to the extent to which you become witnesses of the profoundness of the Word of God which touches the heart of people, and permits a celebration of the sacraments, in particular the holy Eucharist, which allows the beauty of Paradise to be perceived. Never cease this commitment that is so important for the life of your communities; in this way, with song you give voice to the emotions that are in the depth of the heart of every person. In moments of joy and sadness, the Church is called

always to be close to people, to offer them the company of faith. Very often music and song along these moments to be made unique in the life of a person, as they conserve them as a precious memory that has marked their existence.

Vatican Council II, in implementing the renewal of the liturgy, reiterated that the “musical tradition of the Church constitutes a patrimony of inestimable value” (Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 112). It is exactly thus. I think, in particular, of the many traditions of our communities dispersed throughout the whole world, that make the most rooted forms emerge in popular culture, and which also become a genuine prayer. That popular piety that knows how to pray creatively, that knows how to sing creatively; that popular piety that, as an Italian bishop said, is the “immune system” of the Church. And song carries this piety forward. Through this music and song, one also gives voice to prayer and in this way a true international choir is formed, in which there rises to the Father all the praise and glory of His people.

Your presence, while it emphasizes the international nature of your respective countries, enables the universality of the Church and her diverse traditions to be grasped. Your song and music, especially in the celebration of the Eucharist, makes it clear that we are one Body and that we sing with one voice alone our single faith. Even if we speak different languages, everyone can understand the music with which we sing, the faith we profess and the hope that awaits us.

You study and you prepare yourselves to make your song a melody that favours prayer and liturgical celebration. Do not give in, however, to the temptation of protagonism that overshadows your commitment, and humiliates the active participation of the people in prayer. Please, do not be the “prima donna”. Be animators of the song of the whole assembly and do not replace it, depriving the people of God of the possibility of singing with you and giving witness to an ecclesial and community prayer. At times I am saddened when, in some ceremonies, one sings so well but the people cannot sing those things... You who have understood more deeply the importance of singing and music, do not devalue the other expressions of popular spirituality: saint’s day festivals, processions, dances and religious songs of our people are also a true patrimony of religiosity that deserve to be valued and supported as this too is an action of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the Church. May the Spirit held us to go forward in song.

May music, therefore, be an instrument of unity to make the Gospel effective in today’s world, through the beauty that still fascinates and makes it possible to believe by relying on the love of the Father.

I accompany you with my blessing and I entrust you to St. Cecilia, your Patron, but above all I ask you not to forget to pray for me; pray for me also with your song! Thank you.
