SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE
BOLLETTINO

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIÈGE PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE SALA DE IMPRENSA DA SANTA SÉ
BIURO PRASOWE STOLICY APOSTOLSKIEJ دار الصحافة التابعة للكرسي الرسولي

N. 191207c

Saturday 07.12.2019

Audience with members of the Catholic Association of Cinema Operators – Sale della Comunità

This morning, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the members of the Catholic Association of Cinema Operators – *Community Theaters* (ACEC), on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of its founding.

The following is the Pope's address to those present:

Address of the Holy Father

Dear brothers and sisters,

I greet you and I thank the secretary general of the CEI for his kind words. I am happy to share this moment of celebration for your anniversary with the other organizations in the Italian Church that deal with cinema and entertainment. This anniversary is not an end in itself, but an opportunity to renew the commitments made seventy years ago. For this reason, I would like to entrust you briefly with three tasks that I draw from the context in which you work.

The first: *communion*. Cinema, as we know, is a great instrument of aggregation. Especially in the post-war period, it contributed in an exceptional way to reconstructing the social fabric with many aggregative moments. How many squares, how many halls, how many speakers, animated by people who, in viewing the film, transferred hopes and expectations. And from there they picked up again, with a sigh of relief, their daily anxieties and difficulties. It was also an educational and formative moment, to reconnect relationships consumed by the tragedies experienced. How can we not also remember the great productions that recounted those years? I like to mention – because I feel it is very familiar to this meeting – the film "*I bambini ci guardano*". It is a beautiful work, full of meaning. But all post-war cinema, those greats... All post-war cinema is a school of humanism. You Italians did this, with the greats, do not forget this. And I am not speaking for the sake of it. When we were children, our parents would take us to see those films, and they formed our hearts. We have to take these up again. I mentioned one for the family, but there are many, many... You are the heirs of this great

school of humanism, of humanity that is the cinema of the post-war period.

Your associations are also evaluated on the ability to aggregate or, better, to build communion: “We Christians are called to manifest that communion which marks our identity as believers. Faith itself, in fact, is a relationship, an encounter; and under the impetus of God’s love, we can communicate, welcome and understand the gift of the other and respond to it” (*Message for the 53rd World Communications Day*, 24 January 2019). The invitation, then, is to build communion among you, but also communion between associations and organizations that in the Catholic world deal with cinema, to convey the beauty of being together in the events of which you are promoters. Without communion, aggregation lacks soul.

The second: *creativity*. Cinematographic art, like every form of artistic expression, is the fruit of creativity, which reveals the uniqueness of the human being, his interiority and intentionality. When a craftsman shapes his work, he does so by integrating head, heart and hands according to a clear and defined design. I encourage you to give space to creativity, imagining and building new paths. Creativity is fundamental: we know very well how the new digital platforms represent a challenge for traditional media.

Cinema is also challenged by the developments offered by modern technologies. If your associations and organizations do not wish to become “museums”, they must actively and creatively grasp these questions. Boldness, as was the case with the founders, once again demands to be at the forefront, but not in isolation or in a scattered order, but all together. What can you say about change? Of course we need a holistic conversion, which calls into question the richness and depth of everyone. The boldness and creativity to move forward and not remain on the sidelines of innovation.

The third: *vision*. The viewing of a cinematographic work can open different chinks of light in the human soul. Everything depends on the emotional charge that is given to the vision. There can be escape, emotion, laughter, anger, fear, interest... Everything is connected to the intentionality placed in viewing, which is not just an exercise of the eye, but something more. It is a gaze trained on reality. The gaze, in fact, reveals the most diversified orientation of interiority, because it is capable of seeing things and seeing inside things. The gaze also provokes consciences to a careful examination. Let us ask ourselves: what is our gaze like? Is it an attentive and close look, not slumbering? Is it an overall gaze, one of unity? In particular, to you who deal with cinema: is it a look that arouses emotions? Is it a gaze that communicates communion and creativity? The answers are not obvious and require great inner work. The gaze communicates and does not betray, it engages in lifestyles and actions coordinated for a greater good than mere personal interest. The gaze is the foundation of community-building. And you know very well how important it is to overcome the barriers of the past to project oneself into the paths of the future. All of you have an ecclesial feeling in your DNA. I urge you to live your passion and your competence with ecclesial sense and style: the best medicine is not to become self-absorbed, which always kills.

May the Lord help you to walk in communion, with creativity and with an attentive gaze. I bless you, I pray for you; and you, please, pray for me. Thank you!