



The Holy See

CONCERT OFFERED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE ITALIAN REPUBLIC
ON THE OCCASION OF THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF PONTIFICATE

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

Paul VI Audience Hall
Thursday, 29 April 2010

(Video)

*Mr President of the Republic,
Your Eminences,
Honourable Ministers and Authorities,
Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate and in the Priesthood,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Once again Hon. Mr Giorgio Napolitano, President of the Italian Republic, with a gesture of exquisite courtesy has wished to offer to all of us the possibility of listening to excellent music on the occasion of the anniversary of the beginning of my Pontificate. In greeting you respectfully, Mr President, together with your charming wife, I wish to express my warm gratitude to you for the truly appreciated tribute of this concert and for your courteous words to me. In this caring act I also see a further sign of the Italian People's love for the Pope, an affection that was so fervent in St Catherine of Siena, Patroness of Italy, whose Feast we are celebrating today. I am glad to greet the other Authorities of the Italian State, the ambassadors, the various important figures and all of you who have taken part in this lofty cultural and musical event.

I would like to thank all those who have generously cooperated in the realization of this event and in particular the Directors of the *Fondazione Scuola di Musica di Fiesole* [Fiesole Music School

Foundation], of which the *Italian Youth Orchestra*, competently conducted by Maestro Nicola Paszkowski, forms an important part. Certain of interpreting the sentiments of everyone present, I express my sincere appreciation to the members of the orchestra who have played skilfully and effectively the demanding passages by the Milanese composer Giovanni Battista Sammartini, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and by Ludwig van Beethoven.

This evening we have had the joy of listening to young concert performers, students of the Fiesole Music School founded by Piero Farulli. In the course of time this School has become an excellent national centre for orchestral training, offering many children, adolescents, young people and adults high quality courses aimed at training musicians for the best Italian and European orchestras. The study of music is of great value in the process of a person's education since it has a positive influence on the development of the individual, encouraging a harmonious human and spiritual growth. We know that the formative value of music, with its implications at the expressive, creative, relational, social and cultural levels, is commonly recognized.

Therefore, the more than 30-year-old experience of the Fiesole Music School is of special relevance since daily reality tells us that educating is far from easy. In today's social context, in fact, every educational undertaking seems to become ever more arduous and problematic: parents and teachers often talk of the difficulties they encounter in passing on to the new generations the basic values of existence and of good behaviour. This problematic situation involves both the school and the family, as well as the various bodies working in the area of formation.

The current social conditions demand an extraordinary educational commitment on behalf of the new generations. Young people, even if they live in different contexts, have in common the sensitivity to the great ideals of life but encounter many difficulties in living them out. We cannot ignore their needs and expectations, nor even the obstacles and threats that they encounter. They feel the need to draw close to authentic values such as the centrality of the person, human dignity, peace and justice, tolerance and solidarity. In search of balance and harmony, they also seek spirituality and transcendence, at times in ways that are confused and contradictory. In this regard, I am pleased to note that music is capable of opening minds and hearts to the dimension of the spirit and leads people to lift their gaze to the Most High, to open themselves to the absolute Good and Beauty whose ultimate source is in God. Joyful singing and music is likewise a constant invitation to believers and to all people of good will to work hard to give humanity a future rich in hope. Furthermore, the experience of playing in an orchestra also implies the collective dimension: patience during the constant rehearsals; the discipline of listening to the other musicians; the commitment to not playing "a solo part" but rather making sure that the different "orchestral colours" while retaining their own characteristics blend together; the common search for the best possible expression, all this constitutes a formidable "training ground", not only artistic and professional but also from the overall human viewpoint.

Dear friends, I hope that the greatness and beauty of the musical passages masterfully performed this evening will give to all a new and continuous inspiration to strive for ever loftier goals in their personal and social life. I renew to the President of the Italian Republic, to the organizers and to everyone present the expression of my sincere gratitude for this appreciated tribute!

Remember me in your prayers so that as I begin the sixth year of my Pontificate I may always exercise my Ministry as the Lord wishes. May he who is our strength and our peace, bless you all and your families.

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