



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI
TO THE STUDENTS AND TEACHERS OF
THE FLORENTINE INSTITUTE «PIO XII»***

Saturday, 23 March 1974

Dear sons and daughters, dear friends,

We are always happy to greet students of the arts and we willingly extend to you today our cordial welcome.

We know the opportunities that have been yours over the past year: how you have been able to study and become personally acquainted with the masterpieces of Florentine art, and absorb the culture of those great surroundings. You have had time to reflect, and on countless occasions to lift your own minds and hearts to the great episodes and realities of revealed religion, which you have so often seen depicted.

And now at the end of an academic year you have wished to come to this City and pay a visit to the Bishop of Rome who, as Vicar of Christ, has likewise the chief pastoral responsibility and care of all his people.

It is by reason of this pastoral office of ours that we have profound interest in everything that touches on the life of man, especially everything that can uplift him, promote his natural dignity and help him to attain his supernatural destiny. In the attainment of these ends the fine arts can play a role of significant importance.

We are convinced that you are in a position, by reason of your training, to promote the arts and consequently to render a great service to mankind. And we see this likewise as a great challenge for your youthful energies—a challenge which becomes all the greater when viewed in the context of the Christian faith.

We are convinced moreover-as we said last year-that “there still exists, there exists even in this arid and secularized world of ours, which is at times profaned by obscenities and blasphemies, a wonderful capacity (and this is the marvel that we are seeking!)- a wonderful capacity for expressing not only what is genuinely human but also what is religious, divine and Christian” (Cfr. *L'Osservatore Romano*, 24 June 1973).

We hope-we trust-that you will consider this a vocation, and that your activities-and your lives themselves-will be directed towards fulfilling these marvellous aims.

May your Christian outlook on all creation enable you to experience the deepest spiritual joys of life and render worthy service to a world so much in need of the redeeming and uplifting message of Christ, who is himself the full expression of the Father's glory.