



The Holy See

CONCERT ON THE 110th ANNIVERSARY
OF THE BIRTH OF POPE PAUL VI
ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

Hall of the Swiss, Papal Summer Residence, Castel Gandolfo
Wednesday, 26 September 2007

Your Eminences,
Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We have spent an evocative musical evening together which has permitted us to listen once again to certain passages, well known, of course, but always able to inspire new, deep, spiritual emotions. The reason for this event is a special occasion: the 110th anniversary of the Servant of God Paul VI's birth in Concesio on 26 September 1897, the same date as today.

With sentiments of deep gratitude, I address my greeting to all of you who have taken part in this commemoration of a great Pontiff who made a mark on the history of the 20th century. My heartfelt thanks go to the promoters, organizers and musicians who have performed at this concert with appreciated skill. I greet with affection the Cardinals present, and in particular, Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, who comes from the same region as Pope Montini. I address a special greeting to Auxiliary Bishop Francesco Beschi of Brescia, whom I thank for the tribute he has just paid me, to the other Prelates, to the priests and to you all. I then extend my respectful thoughts to the various Personalities who have honoured us with their presence, mentioning in particular the Mayors of Brescia and Bergamo, the other Civil and Military Authorities and the Representatives of those Institutions which have made a special contribution to this meaningful event. I am anxious above all to express the common sentiments and my grateful appreciation to the soloists and all the members of the *Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli Piano Festival Orchestra* of Brescia and Bergamo, conducted by the well-known Maestro Agostino Orizio. With extraordinary talent and effectiveness, they have played passages from the music of Vivaldi, Bach and Mozart, helping our

spirit to perceive in the language of music the intimate harmony of divine beauty.

This evening, listening to these famous pieces of music has given us an opportunity to recall an illustrious Pope, Paul VI, who rendered a particularly precious service to the Church and the world in times far from easy and in social conditions marked by profound cultural and religious changes. Let us pay homage to the spirit of evangelical wisdom with which my beloved Predecessor was able to guide the Church during and after the [Second Vatican Council](#). With prophetic intuition, he perceived the hopes and anxieties of the people of that time; he strove to make the most of the positive experiences, seeking to illuminate them with the light of the truth and love of Christ, the one Redeemer of humanity. Yet, his love for humanity with its progress, marvellous discoveries, benefits and the facilitation of science and technology did not prevent him from highlighting the contradictions, errors and risks of a scientific and technological programme that is not anchored by a sound reference to ethical and spiritual values. So it is that his teaching still remains timely today and is a source on which to draw for a better understanding of the conciliar texts and an analysis of the ecclesial events that characterized the second part of the 1900s.

Paul VI was cautious and courageous in guiding the Church with realism and Gospel optimism, nourished by indomitable faith. He looked forward to the coming of the "civilization of love", convinced that evangelical charity is an indispensable element for building an authentic universal brotherhood. Only by recognizing God as Father, who in Christ revealed his love to all, can human beings truly become and feel like brothers and sisters. Only Christ, true God and true man, can convert the human soul and enable it to contribute to achieving a society based on justice and solidarity. The Successors of Paul VI have gathered in the spiritual inheritance of the Servant of God and have walked on the same path. Let us pray that his example and teachings will be an encouragement and incentive to us to love Christ and the Church more and more, motivated by that indomitable hope which supported Pope Montini to the very end of his life. With these sentiments, I once again thank those who prepared, enlivened and put on this musical gathering, and as I invoke upon those present the constant protection of the Lord, I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing to you all.

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