



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
AT THE END OF THE CONCERT
GIVEN BY THE ROMANIAN CONTEMPO QUARTET**

*Castel Gandolfo
Sunday, 22 August 1999*

*Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

1. At the end of this concert, I would like to offer my cordial thanks to the musicians of the Contempo Quartet, who with their sensitivity and skill have offered us a moment of deep aesthetic contemplation. I also extend my thanks to the Embassy of Romania accredited to the Holy See, which planned and organized this musical evening.

The alternation of serene and lively, dramatic and nostalgic passages has been for all of us an opportunity for involvement and reflection. Indeed, art would be an empty aesthetic exercise did it not open one to the insight of reality's deepest aspect, expressed in an invitation to commitment, so that what has been perceived should not remain a useless abstraction but become concrete in everyday life, bringing it the light of beauty and truth. Art, as I wrote in my [*Letter to Artists*](#), is an "appeal to the mystery" (n. 10).

The artistic experience offers us two pedagogical indications in particular: indications which in turn become an inspiration for our lives. The first stems from observation of the harmony that flows from diversity: beauty springs from various elements which do not cancel one another out, but blend together in one design. The second concerns the nobility of sentiments: beauty is never the fruit of a levelling out or mediocrity, but of striving for what is loftier and more perfect. It is through being committed to achieving these values in daily life that individuals and societies grow and develop.

2. There is another reason why this evening is particularly happy and evocative: several months ago I had the joy of visiting Romania, meeting authorities and citizens of that beloved nation and welcoming in my heart the hopes and intentions of the men and women of that noble land. This evening's musical performance, like a faithful echo of the Romanian people's cultural riches reminds me of that

extraordinary meeting, full of warmth and sharing, and renews my sincere admiration for the history, civilization and achievements of that great people.

Mr Ambassador, please convey my sentiments of sincere esteem and cordial closeness to your country's authorities. I wish the talented musicians a successful professional career and an even more satisfying human fulfilment.

May the Lord, God of beauty and harmony, fill your lives with joy, and shower his Blessings on each of you.