



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO A POLISH GROUP
FROM THE CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC FORMATION CENTRE**

Sunday, 25 January 2004

I extend a heartfelt welcome to all the artists and to those accompanying them. Thank you very much for having entrusted to me the "Book of Cherubin" - the register of the offerings made by those who understand the value of every act of creativity in the life of society and of peoples.

I once wrote that in the human *craftsman* is mirrored the image of the *Creator* (cf. [*Letter to Artists*](#), n. 1). Today I repeat these words in front of the representatives of the Foundation which has as its purpose the promotion of life's creative style, especially among youth. I repeat them as the basic motivation for the correctness of your activity. I say them also to bring to the attention of all artists here present that "mirroring God" entails a great responsibility.

It is above all a responsibility for oneself and for one's own talent. Artistic talent is a gift from God and those who discover this gift in themselves sense at the same time a certain duty: they understand that this talent cannot be wasted, but must be developed. They also realize that they do not develop it for their own satisfaction, but in order to serve with this talent their neighbour and the society in which they live. This is the second dimension of the responsibility of an artist: the responsibility to form the spirit of society and of peoples.

The third dimension of this responsibility is revealed in the perspective contained in the saying of the Greek philosopher Plato: "The power of the Good has taken refuge in the nature of the Beautiful" (*Philebus*, 65). When we speak of creativity, spontaneously we think of the beautiful. However, the beautiful can begin to exist only when the power of good resides in her nature. The artist, therefore, is responsible not only for the aesthetic dimension of the world and of life, but also for its moral dimension. If creativity is not guided by good, or worse still it is directed towards evil, it is not worthy of the title of "artist".

To you, dear young people who desire to live creatively, and to all you who want to help them in different ways, I place on your hearts this three-fold responsibility. Be faithful to the beautiful and to the good: this will bring you closer to God, the first Creator of the beautiful and the good, so that you are able to help others to draw from this wellspring inspiration for their spiritual growth. May God assist you!

For this creative effort I cordially bless you.