



## BENEDICT XVI'S ADDRESS ON SACRED MUSIC

"Renewal Can Only Happen in the Wake of the Great Tradition of the Past"

VATICAN CITY, JULY 23, 2006 (Zenit.org).- Here is a translation of the address Benedict XVI gave on sacred music, delivered in the Sistine Chapel on June 24, 2006, after a concert sponsored by the Domenico Bartolucci Foundation.

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Your Eminences,  
Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate and in the Presbyterate,  
Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

At the end of this concert, evocative because of the place we are in -- the Sistine Chapel -- and because of the spiritual intensity of the compositions performed, we spontaneously feel in our hearts the need to praise, to bless and to thank. This sentiment is addressed first of all to the Lord, supreme beauty and harmony, who has given men and women the ability to express themselves with the language of music and song.

"Ad Te levavi animam meam," (to you, Lord, I lift up my soul), the Offertory of Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina has just said, echoing Psalm (25[24]:1).

Our souls are truly lifted up to God, and I would therefore like to express my gratitude to Maestro Domenico Bartolucci and to the foundation named after him that planned and put on this event.

Dear Maestro, you have offered to me and to all of us a precious gift, preparing the program in which you wisely situated a choice of masterpieces by the "prince" of sacred polyphonic music and some of the works that you yourself have composed.

In particular, I thank you for having wished to conduct the concert personally, and for the motet "Oremus pro Pontefice" that you composed immediately after my election to the See of Peter. I am also grateful to you for the kind words you have just addressed to me, witnessing to your love for the art of music and your passion for the good of the Church.

Next, I warmly congratulate the choir of the foundation and I extend my "thank you" to all who have collaborated in various ways.

Lastly, I address a cordial greeting to those who have honored our meeting with their presence.

All the passages we have heard -- and especially the performance as a whole in which the 16th and 20th centuries run parallel -- together confirm the conviction that sacred polyphony, particularly that of the so-called "Roman School," is a legacy to preserve with care, to keep alive and to make known, not only for the benefit of experts and lovers of it but also for the entire ecclesial community, for which it constitutes a priceless spiritual, musical and cultural heritage.

The Bartolucci Foundation aims precisely to safeguard and spread the classical and contemporary tradition of this famous polyphonic school that has always been distinguished by its form, focused on singing alone without an instrumental accompaniment. An authentic renewal of sacred music can only happen in the wake of the great tradition of the past, of Gregorian chant and sacred polyphony.

For this reason, in the field of music as well as in the areas of other art forms, the ecclesial

community has always encouraged and supported people in search of new forms of expression without denying the past, the history of the human spirit which is also a history of its dialogue with God.

Venerable Maestro, you have also always sought to make the most of sacred music as a vehicle for evangelization. Through numberless concerts performed in Italy and abroad, with the universal language of art, the Pontifical Musical Choir conducted by you has thus cooperated in the actual mission of the Pontiffs, which is to disseminate the Christian message in the world. And you still continue to carry out this task under the attentive direction of Maestro Giuseppe Liberto.

Dear brothers and sisters, after being pleasantly uplifted by this music, let us turn our gaze to the Virgin Mary, placed at Christ's right hand in Michelangelo's Last Judgment: let us especially entrust all lovers of sacred music to her motherly protection, so that always enlivened by genuine faith and sincere love of the Church, they may make their precious contribution to liturgical prayer and effectively contribute to the proclamation of the Gospel.

To Maestro Bartolucci, to the members of the foundation and to all of you who are present here, I cordially impart the apostolic blessing.