

Pope Francis: Sacred music points to the beauty of Paradise

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ROME - Liturgical and sacred music can be a powerful instrument of evangelization, because it gives people a glimpse of the beauty of heaven, Pope Francis said Saturday at an international meeting of choirs.

“Your music and your song are a true instrument of evangelization insofar as

you witness to the profoundness of the Word of God that touches the hearts of people, and allow a celebration of the sacraments, especially of the Holy Eucharist, which makes one sense the beauty of Paradise,” the pope said Nov. 24.

“Never stop this commitment” to music, he emphasized, “such an important commitment to the life of our communities... In moments of joy and sadness, the Church is called to always be close to people, to offer them the company of faith.”

Music has the ability to make a deep impression on moments in people’s life, preserving them “as a precious memory that has marked their existence,” he noted.

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Francis spoke in a meeting with over 8,000 singers and musicians from around the world, who are attending an international meeting of choirs at the Vatican Nov. 23-25.

The third edition of the conference, it began with talks on “Music in the Liturgy and Catechesis for the New Evangelization,” presented by Msgr. Marco Frisina, a renowned composer and founder and director of the Choir of the Diocese of Rome.

Other experts in sacred and liturgical music also gave presentations, including Msgr. Guido Marini, Pope Francis’s master of liturgical ceremonies.

The conference of choirs also had a moment for testimonies from singers and musicians from around the world, including Brazil, the Central African Republic, Mexico, Lebanon, Iraq, China, Vietnam, Turkey, and the United

States.

The culmination of the meeting will be a choral concert in the afternoon Nov. 24, where participants will sing works by Palestrina, Mozart, Perosi, Handel, Vivaldi, and Bartolucci.

The event was scheduled to conclude Nov. 25 with Mass in St. Peter's Basilica followed by attendance at Pope Francis' Sunday Angelus in St. Peter's Square.

"Your presence," the pope told the singers and musicians, "while highlighting the internationality of your respective countries, allows us to grasp the universality of the Church and its different traditions."

"Your song and your music, especially in the celebration of the Eucharist, make it clear that we are one body and sing one faith with one voice. Even if we speak different languages, everyone can understand the music we sing, the faith we profess and the hope that we await," he stated.

The pope encouraged musicians and singers to study and prepare so that they can accompany the liturgy well, and not be tempted to draw attention to themselves: "Please, do not be a 'prima donna!'" he said.

Liturgical musicians, he said, should be "animators of the song of the whole assembly," not replace it.

"Through these musical compositions and songs," he said, "voice is also given to prayer and in this way a real international choir is formed, where in unison the praise and glory rises to the Father of all from his people."