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Pope Francis leads an audience with a group of musicians, actors, poets, painters, dancers, sc

Pope Francis leads an audience with a group of musicians, actors, poets, painters, dancers, sculptors and architects at the Vatican Feb. 17, 2022. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

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February 17, 2022
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VATICAN CITY — The beauty that emanates from art, poetry and music can overcome obstacles and bring people closer to God, Pope Francis said.

"A characteristic of the artist is that he or she is not limited by time, because art speaks to all ages. The artist is not limited by space either, because beauty can touch in each person what is universal — especially the thirst for God — transcending the borders of languages and cultures," the pope told a group of musicians, actors, poets, painters, dancers, sculptors and architects Feb. 17.

The artists are part of a movement called "Diakonia of Beauty," created in 2012 to restore a relationship in which the Catholic Church relies on artists to share the Gospel and in which the artists seek to learn from and serve the church.

"Beauty is capable of creating communion, because it unites God, humanity and creation in a single symphony; because it joins the past, the present and the future; because it draws different people and distant people into the same place and involves them in the same gaze," he said.

Among those present were the Lefèvre family — Gabriel, Anne and their six children — who were the season 15 winners of "France's Got Talent."

In his address, the pope congratulated the movement on its 10th anniversary and said the work of artists completes "the beauty of creation and, when inspired by faith, it more clearly reveals the divine love that is at its origin."

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Authentic art, he added, can show God's goodness to others and is "capable of speaking about God better than anyone."

Recalling St. John Paul II's 1999 letter to artists, the pope said the church needs art "in order to transmit the message entrusted to her by Christ."

Pope Francis encouraged members of the movement to continue to "speak to the men and women of our time" through their art and to "try to touch what is best in them."

"The church counts on you today to help brothers and sisters have a sensitive and compassionate heart, a renewed gaze of love on the world and on others," the pope said.

"In the difficult current context that the world knows, in which bewilderment and sadness sometimes seem to have the upper hand, your mission is more necessary than ever, because beauty is always a source of joy, putting us in contact with divine goodness," he said.