



The Ambassador

*Embassy of Italy
Washington
Prof. 293*

January 22, 2014

Dear Director Chumiecki,

I wish to warmly thank you for inviting me to attend the opening ceremony of the "Forbidden Art" exhibition, organized by The Polish Mission and the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, this forthcoming January 27, in Orchard Lake, Michigan.

Regrettably, previous engagements preclude me from coming to attend what will undoubtedly be a most moving - I should say unforgettable - ceremony and exhibition. Following your suggestion, I am however pleased to include a personal message to mark this special occasion.

"Dear guests,

Italy was among the very first countries where Parliament approved a Law, in the year 2000, to establish January 27 as the "Giorno della Memoria" - the *Holocaust Remembrance Day*.

The main purpose of that Law is to strengthen Holocaust education in Italian schools and Universities. Students and young generations can thus continue to learn, and fully comprehend, how and why the Shoah came to be, and its tragic historical consequences. To understand that the Shoah derived from the suppression of freedom and the founding of dictatorships in Europe. To appreciate that these were, in turn, the product of the denial of all cultural and religious values, and the repudiation of the dignity of mankind.

However, even in the darkest hours of European history, brave and honest people fought and used their integrity and intelligence to oppose what was wrong and inhuman.

Promotion of human rights and religious freedom occupy a pivotal place in Italian foreign policy to this day, and on every Holocaust Remembrance Day I encourage Italian consular and cultural offices throughout the United States to contribute pro-actively to its observation. Because, as Primo Levi once said, "Se comprendere è impossibile, conoscere è necessario" [*If to understand is impossible, to know is necessary*]."

With my very best wishes for a successful commemoration and exhibition, I remain

sincerely yours,


Claudio Bisogniero

Mr. Marcin Chumiecki
Director
The Polish Mission
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Orchard Lake, MI 48324