

## Cultural Heritage. Scenarios 2015-2017

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Gentili amici, cari colleghi,

a warm *benvenuto* to you all from the Scuola Grande di San Rocco in Venezia.

I am particularly glad to receive and greet so many people interested in the conservation and preservation of the common heritage, the *non-material* intangible culture.

The tradition, the language, the behaviour are the fundamentals of our civilization. Without them we are not persons, because the past time is the precondition for the present and for the future, the base of the 'humanism'.

For our society, so quickly changing, often in worse, is necessary to maintain values and expressions of memory and identity.

The Scuola Grande - *scuola* is a Greek Byzantine word significantly meaning 'association of solidarity' - has several centuries of work to assure to the Republic of Saint Mark both help and tolerance to the poor, to the ill, to the foreigner.

The treasures of art and the charitable help were going together to assure a strong base to the social paleo-democracy of the common state. For this reason, we think that Venice is the right place to explain and to discuss this problem so emergent and impelling. With other eminent experts examining the different aspects of the great theme at issue, Prof. Clive Wilmer (Master of the English Guild of Saint George) and Prof. Maria Laura Picchio Forlati of the University of Padua are representing the spirit of the Schools. We thank them for their commitment to explain and discuss our values and common traditions.

According with John Ruskin and taking into account the work of other Venetian Scuole Grandi, they will provide an insight on the dimension and the importance of those confraternities for the history of the Serenissima Republic.

We expect the result of this Conference to inspire our activities in the years ahead.

The Scuola Grande is engaged to maintain alive this patrimony and heritage, because Venice represents for all the place of culture, tradition and memory.

Venice and its significant sites belong to the entire humanity and are the common house, represented by the stones, as Ruskin said, but also by the 'in-tangible', 'non-material' spiritual heritage.

I wish you an engaging discussion and 'keep going'.

Thank you for the attention and congratulations to the organizers.

