



## **The Holy Father receives Andrea Bocelli**

*The world's most loved tenor and his family together with the Managers of the Foundation that bears his name were received, in a private audience, by the Pope yesterday. A joyful meeting informal and touching, where all the philanthropic projects of ABF were exposed to the Holy Father.*

Vatican City – *“It was a great privilege to be able to meet personally Papa Francesco and bow down in front of this higher spirit, a bridge between the earthly existence and Heaven. His voice, his words and that ineffable sweetness of which he is abundantly endowed, speak to my heart in a touching and overwhelming way.”* So, Andrea Bocelli, the famous tenor, who was received by the Pope, in a private audience, on Wednesday morning, in a lounge of Casa Santa Marta in Vatican City.

During the meeting which lasted about one hour, they spoke of the considerable engagement that the *Andrea Bocelli Foundation* is lavishing in supporting national and international projects aimed primarily at fighting poverty (an urgency which does not only pertain to Developing Countries), because - as Bocelli himself said: “Solidarity is the only intelligent response to inequality: everyone of us is called to build a better world than the one found”.

Also present to the meeting, Laura Biancalani, President of ABF, and also Father Raniero Cantalamessa, theologian, preacher (for many years a Commentator of the Gospel on TV), and a close friend of the tenor and of his family.

Next to the singer, all the Bocelli Family, including little Virginia, the youngest child (fifteen months) who, mediating the solemnity of the place with the urgency of appetite, given the length of the interview decided for a quick baby meal, in a discreet corner of the room where the audience was held.

By Andrea Bocelli and his foundation the Pope has received the gift of a Haitian *fer forgé* made with recycled metal, simple but with a great symbolic significance also for the work that ABF is carrying on. Pope Bergoglio was particularly intrigued by the colorful craft object, the result of the creativity of a suffering land that even the Pope bears in his heart.

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ANDREA BOCELLI FOUNDATION

Via Volterrana 49, 56030 Lajatico (PI) – T (+39) 0587 643353

[info@andreabocellifoundation.org](mailto:info@andreabocellifoundation.org)

[www.andreabocellifoundation.org](http://www.andreabocellifoundation.org)