

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:
Padre Jorge Santiago Cartagena SDB introduces the Artist.
Opening Night of Lenten Exhibit *Toques de Fe*
State Department, San Juan Puerto Rico, 31 March 2011

Good evening!

Today, we are here admiring the works of Arthur Vonn Hartung.

Since when have I known Arturo and Patricia, his wife? Destiny made us travel together to Rome for the beatification of Carlos Manuel Rodriguez.

What better place to meet an artist than in the eternal city!

There, among mosaics, paintings, sculptures, old and beautiful basilicas, tombs of saints, and the remnants of a dazzling empire, a friendship was born that over time has become deeper and closer.

Later, my projects as a pastor in Orocovis converted the new priest friend into a patron of the artist friend.

First, the great mural of the Dream of the Two Columns in the chapel dedicated to St. John Bosco and the *Via Lucis*, painted in the manner of stained glass. Then the three large mosaics in the town parish, passing by other stained-glass windows painted in the remodeled Sacristy and in the new chapel of the Blessed Sacrament.

All this art and creativity by Arturo made a cascade of beauty in these two churches, and I appreciate it.

However, what I appreciate most about Arturo and Patricia is their genuine friendship, affection, gentleness, and humility.

Arturo has a life to write about in a book; he was a globetrotter and a bohemian, but above all, a Christian. In him is fulfilled the parable of the pearl found in the field. When he rediscovered Jesus Christ and his Catholic faith, he left everything less to serve his true Lord and his Church with his art.

Today we are here in this beautiful room. It has become a large gallery for Arturo's art, but nothing better than Arturo and Patricia's studio home. There, among dogs, cats, recycled materials, hanging paintings, and carvings, is where Arturo gets to work his muse and affectionately receives visitors.

Thank you, Arturo for having fallen in love with our island. Today, when so many flee from her, you chose long ago to stay among us, you favored the colony over the metropolis, the warmth of our climate over cold New England.

I invite you to like Arturo's art. To also become his patrons. He needs people who appreciate art and understand that the beauty that radiates reflects the divine, and its contemplation brings us to achieve the ineffable.

That's my friend Arturo, with his difficult Spanish, yet speaking very clearly a language that transcends borders, languages, races, and political ideas —the unique language of Art.