



The Holy See

MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS FOR THE OLIMPIC GAMES

[26 July - 11 August 2024]

*To His Excellency
Archbishop Laurent Ulrich
Archbishop of Paris*

I unite with the intentions of the Mass you are celebrating, Your Excellency, as the Olympic Games are about to take place in your city. I ask the Lord to shower with his gifts all those who will participate in one way or another — whether athletes or spectators — and also to support and bless those who will welcome them, especially the faithful of Paris and other places.

I know that Christian communities are preparing to open wide the doors of their churches, schools and homes. Above all, let them open the doors of their hearts, bearing witness, through the gratuitousness and generosity of their hospitality to all, to the Christ who dwells within them and who communicates his joy to them. I greatly appreciate the fact that you have not forgotten the most vulnerable, especially those in very precarious situations, and that access to the celebration has been made easier for them. On a broader level, I hope that the organization of these Games will provide all the people of France with a wonderful opportunity for fraternal harmony, enabling them to transcend differences and oppositions and to strengthen the unity of the Nation.

I join you in welcoming this prestigious international sporting event. Sport is a universal language that transcends borders, languages, races, nationalities and religions; it has the capacity to unite people, to encourage dialogue and mutual acceptance; it stimulates the surpassing of oneself, forms in the spirit of sacrifice, fosters loyalty in interpersonal relations; it invites people to recognize their own limits and the value of others. The Olympic Games, if they remain truly “games”, can therefore be an exceptional meeting place between peoples, even the most hostile. The five interlinked rings represent the spirit of fraternity that should characterize the Olympic

event and sporting competition in general.

I therefore hope that the Paris Olympics will be an unmissable opportunity for all those who come from around the world to discover and appreciate each other, to break down prejudices, to foster esteem where there is contempt and mistrust, and friendship where there is hatred. The Olympic Games are, by their very nature, about peace, not war.

It was in this spirit that in ancient times, a truce was wisely instituted during the Games, and modern times regularly attempt to revive this happy tradition. In these troubled times, when world peace is under serious threat, it is my fervent wish that everyone will take this truce to heart, in the hope of resolving conflicts and restoring harmony. May God have mercy on us! May He enlighten the consciences of those in power to the grave responsibilities incumbent upon them, may He grant the peacemakers success in their endeavours, and may He bless them.

Entrusting to Saint Geneviève and Saint Denis, Patrons of Paris, and to Our Lady of the Assumption, Patroness of France, the happy outcome of these Games, I impart my heartfelt Blessing to you, Your Excellency, and to all those who will take part in them.

From Saint John Lateran, 27 June 2024

FRANCIS

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