

Paul VI and Sport

The educational value of sports competition

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The organisers of your Congress have transmitted your desire to visit Us during your brief and studious stay in Rome, and it is a pleasure for Us to spend a moment with you this morning, quite simply, as becomes a cordial meeting.

As representatives of the National Olympic Committees from most States of the world, distinct in language, culture, way of living, deep convictions too, you present in a certain manner the image of our planet with all its human riches and its differences.

Certainly, the Pope has no particular authority to deal with the subjects which occupy you. However, all that is fostered in man interests him. You will therefore permit him to express the importance that he, and the Catholic Church with him, attaches to sport and the Olympic ideal that, in spite of its vicissitudes, you try to promote at international level.

It seems to Us firstly that sport in itself offers real educational value. By the indirect development of the individual's physical capabilities, it contributes to its moral expansion from many aspects: search for human balance in the person, respect of partners, discovery of what is a rule of the game, a loyal rivalry.

But it also offers a civil value, not any less real, to which it is right to testify at a time like ours that is unfortunately troubled. We wish to speak of the contribution that it can bring, by its

own ethics and the meetings it instigates, to the cause of understanding and peace between peoples. Our wish would be that at sports competition level all antagonism alien to the nature of sport may be overcome and that on the contrary friendship may spring up between momentary rivals and that the need for universal reconciliation and brotherhood may then form in all hearts.

Finally, We think that you try, to the extent of all possibilities, to ease the spiritual well-being of man. Because sport—is it not true?—brings about self-control and domination of instincts, and it predisposes the awakening of the spirit. Thereon, a free and serious reflection is promoted. It is necessary therefore to supply it with the conditions to exercise fully.

Ladies and Gentlemen, We thank you for your attendance. We congratulate you on your noble aspirations and encourage you most sincerely. May Almighty God help you and grant you his favour!

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Bienvenue ici aujourd'hui aux sportifs et sportives. La discipline librement consentie du sport aide à bâtir la personnalité entière, pas seulement le corps. De la même façon, l'esprit de lutte aide à développer des vertus personnelles comme la magnanimité dans la défaite, l'humilité dans la victoire, et un profond respect pour tous. Que ces qualités puissent vous aider toujours!

Amadisimos hijos:

Con gozo particular os acogemos. Os sabemos entrenados no sólo en el campo deportivo sino en el cultivo de las virtudes cristianas. Recordad siempre que sois portadores de valores humanos, si, pero también espirituales, eternos.

Con nuestra Bendición Apostólica.

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Herzlich begrüßen Wir auch die Sportler aus Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz! Seid alle willkom-

men! Die Durchführung eurer sportlichen Wettkämpfe möge nicht nur eure physischen Kräfte anspornen und vervollkommen, die Kameradschaft untereinander vertiefen und der Förderung des internationalen Friedens dienen, sondern möge gleichzeitig euren Blick nach oben lenken, zu den eigentlichen Werten des Geistes und der Seele, damit ein jeder den «Kampfpreis» des ewigen Lebens gewinne (vgl. I Kor 9,24).

15th May 1975

15th May 1975 - Paul VI, between Lord Killanin (left), President of the IOC, and Mr. G. Onesti (right), IOC member for Italy and President of the CONI, welcomes to the Vatican all the participants in the Olympic meetings in Rome.

