



## HELLO FROM VIDY

**E**ditorial obligations are absolute. They lead me to write this first “Hello” of 1987, not in the wintry setting of Vidy but on the sun-drenched banks of the Upper Nile, where I am sojourning after a year replete with ups and downs, both personal and Olympic.

The monuments of Upper Egypt, in their architectural magnificence and in the symbolic and fascinating repetition of hieroglyphs which cover them, are bearers of a message which millenia have done nothing to diminish. Their grandeur and majesty urge men to aspire to perfection on the road to meet their gods.

Certainly, one must refrain from any sacrilegious, or simply hasty, comparison. And yet, listening to the language of these colossal, finely chiseled stones, I am inclined to hear that of Coubertin. He too raised a monument to the glory of what he called “the springtime of man”. He too sought to make shine forth, from the stadium in which the Olympic Games are held, a message of perfection, harmony and hope. He too had inscribed at the entrance to the Olympic stadia the names of the victors, to perpetuate their memory.

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No one, I repeat, no one, can claim to be the authentic interpreter of a man whose voice ceased to be heard half a century before, and whose writings are so overflowing with ideas that they sometimes contradict themselves. But it is not presumptuous to assert that the impassioned call to transcendence of self, marked by mutual respect, loyalty and fair play, which Coubertin wished to hear burst forth from the stadia for the enrichment of men's daily lives, is the essential message of this man of genius, whose passion was to open up for his contemporaries the way to a new morality. That is why the position, unanimously adopted by the Athlete's Commission of the IOC in Lausanne in December 1986, seems to me to be a major and significant one, as it is an embodiment of continuity and a bearer of the same message. Winnowing away superannuated criteria, this team of Olympic medallists, on behalf of the athletes, made Coubertin's call their own, putting at the forefront of the eligibility requirements for the Olympic Games — alongside sporting abilities — respect for one's opponent and the rules of the game and loyalty, which can be summed up in the famous expression "fair play".

Pious hopes, a declaration without a future, an empty windmill turning in vain? No, not if we make this message our own, whatever position we occupy within the Olympic Movement; not if we succeed in stifling in ourselves the unconfessed reasons all of us have for shrugging our shoulders and throwing in the sponge. What goes for the athletes must also go for every one of us, as the example set by oneself remains the most powerful force of education and persuasion. That is what I said to the staff of the IOC secretariat at the recent end-of-year celebration in the presence of the President of the IOC. I say it again here, with friendly insistence, to all the members of the Olympic family, and remind them that, according to Chinese wisdom, "even the longest journey begins with the first step". Let us not leave to the "others" the privilege of taking this first step alone !

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