



HELLO FROM VIDY

This “Hello” will, as once in a while does no harm, be a children’s one. It brings you a joyful greeting from around 7,000 schoolchildren who, on 7th May 1988, as part of the Lausanne 20 km mass run, put all their heart into completing a four kilometre course along the shores of Lake Geneva. Starting and finishing at the Pierre de Coubertin stadium, the course took them around Olympic House and the Chateau de Vidy, the headquarters of the IOC.

But why lay so much emphasis on this race when there are so many others like it taking place all over the world? For the same reason that I felt led, in a recent “Hello”, to pay tribute to all the volunteers in Calgary through the figures of Virginia and Ron, the two whom I knew best. Is Vidy not a privileged location in the Olympic world? A site where Pierre de Coubertin himself walked on many occasions, enjoying the prestigious and peaceful surroundings, so propitious to his reflections, a source of energy for this indefatigable pilgrim of Olympism.

Had he been amongst us on that Saturday in May — perhaps he might have been? — what comfort the founder of modern Olympism would have drawn from seeing that, despite countless obstacles, his work had confounded all the prophets of doom and was on the road to success! To launch the young people of the world in search of the benefits to be derived from practising sport; to show them the value and appeal of

honest competition; to bring them all together in one common effort, one shared hope, to slake their thirst at the source of Olympism; what a programme!

And all that is just empty talk, out of date, old-fashioned? Far from it!

At Vidy on 7th May, as I have already made clear, Olympism was an omnipresent reality. Entries for the race were collected at the Olympic Museum, the President of the IOC himself gave the signal to start and a representative of the IOC played a part in awarding the medals.

And now we see the triumphant approach of the second Olympic Day run, organized for the first time in 1987 under the aegis of the IOC, and which, when Olympic Day is celebrated in June 1988, will see 28 NOCs from Africa, 19 from America, 23 from Asia, 19 from Europe and 8 from Oceania launching an immense crowd of participants of all ages on a course of around 10 kilometres, and where the first thousand competitors to cross the finishing line in each of the events will receive a certificate signed by the President of the IOC.

These mass runs of 1988, coming as they do between the exploits performed by the world’s greatest Olympic athletes in Calgary and Seoul, will indisputably further the advancement of the Olympic ideal. They provide irrefutable evidence that, benefiting from the immense impact of the Olympic Games, and contested, like the Games, under the sign of the five rings, sport practised at all levels is gaining ground, making the Olympic flame the symbol of hope.

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