



Conferentia
Episcoporum
Catholicorum
Turciae

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Conférence des évêques de France
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Archevêque de Reims
Président
58, avenue de Breteuil
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30th July, 2024

Your Excellences, brothers and sisters,

On behalf of the Bishop's Conference of Turkey, I wish to extend my pastoral concern, spiritual courage and fortification in faith to Christians all over the world, in particular the bishops and faithful in France who are deeply hurt, shocked and disappointed by a segment of the Paris Olympics opening ceremony on Friday, 26th July, 2024.

Since 1896, Olympic Games, a universal sports festival has been the manifestation of the unity of all nations of the world. The Olympic Games aim to bring people together in love, respect and cooperation. However, the opening ceremony of the Paris Olympic 2024 left Catholics and devotees of Jesus Christ around the world dismayed, as the French Bishop's Conference underlines, "included scenes of derision and mockery of Christianity, which we deeply deplore." At the forefront of the criticism across was a reenactment of Leonardo da Vinci's iconic wall painting in Milan's Dominican convent of the Last Supper by ten men in drag.

We the bishops and faithful of Turkey are in solidarity with the French nation and Church who straight away disassociated and protested against the imposition of a sort of liberal ideology by few people who disrespect the religious sentiments of a great number of people.

The Christian teaching and values are ingrained in the hearts and spirit of French people. The Cathedrals, Churches, Shrines and Monasteries continue to give everyone who visit France a unique spiritual and religious experiences. It is a place of saints, mystics and martyrs, who nurtured gospel values in and beyond France and continue to inspire the lives of many people. Numerous witnessed and still give testimony of their faith by caring for the poor and the suffering humanity bringing relieve and comfort to their lives. The Church worked towards egalitarian society through building educational and health systems for all sectors of the society. Thus building a more humane society based on justice and equality. As a result, today France as a country respects all nationalities and religions, such offensive behavior towards religious feelings is unacceptable.

As Olympics opening ceremony is an international event globally broadcasted, we hoped that the organizing committee would have understood that Olympic celebration extends beyond the ideological biases of a few artists or individuals. Further, the certain trends in a particular area cannot be projected as universal. As a result, this scandalous and outrage provocation and damage to the spirit of sports could have been avoided

The worldwide condemnation by prominent religious figures, politicians and celebrities from various parts of the world and communities has been encouraging and is a positive sign of enlighten mind. This along with potential actions by Olympic sponsors forced the organizing committee to apologize. However, their apology fails to acknowledge a grave mistake made by them and remorse for distorting religious beliefs of people and damaging the fraternal spirit of the Olympic games. This would have assured that such horrendous act would not reoccur in future and the values disseminated by sport must contribute to the need for unity and fraternity our world so desperately needs today.

Whatever, the intentions may be of the people concerned for triggering this sad incident of causing pain to a great multitude of Christians all over the world. The Church will continue its prophetic mission of protecting, defending and promoting life with dignity and respect for all God's people. Church will continue making effort for God's Kingdom based on Jesus' life giving and loving presence.

May God bless all the Olympic Organizers and help them to fulfill their responsibilities with wisdom and understanding.

In solidarity,



+ Martin Kmetec

Archbishop Martin KMETEC, OFM Conv
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To:

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