



*To Those Taking Part in the Conference on
Sport at the Service of Humanity
Georgetown University*

I offer cordial greetings to the organizers and participants in the Conference on *Sport at the Service of Humanity* taking place at Georgetown University. I thank President John DiGioia and Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi for making this gathering possible.

Your Conference, dear friends, provides an opportunity to reflect on sport as a means of personal development and achievement, challenging men and women to make the most of their God-given gifts. In this sense, it is not only about winning competitions, striving for medals, earning fame or money. Rather sport, placed at the service of humanity, can lead to the overcoming of prejudices and the promotion of the Gospel values of peace and fraternal solidarity. In today's world, torn apart by so many divisions, sport remains an area where people are able to meet without barriers of race, sex, religion, ideology or physical condition; where we can experience the pure joy of playing and competing together to reach a goal; where success can be shared and defeat overcome.

I encourage you always to uphold the dignity and beauty of the human person through the pursuit of athletic excellence. In this way you will be able to promote the positive values of sport, both on and off the playing field. With the assurance of my prayers that your Conference will bear good fruit, I willingly invoke upon all of you the abundant blessings of Almighty God.

Francis

From the Vatican, 21 October 2019