

An Open Letter from Catholic Bishops to the International Olympic Committee

“If then my people, upon whom my name has been pronounced, humble themselves and pray, and seek my face and turn from their evil ways, I will hear them from heaven and pardon their sins and heal their land.”

(2 Chr 7:14)

With shock the world watched as the summer Olympics in Paris opened with a grotesque and blasphemous depiction of the Last Supper. It is hard to understand how the faith of over 2 billion people can be so casually and intentionally blasphemed.

We, Catholic bishops from around the world, on behalf of Christians everywhere, demand that the Olympic Committee repudiate this blasphemous action and apologize to all people of faith. While it is hard to believe that such an intentionally hateful mockery of any other religion would be displayed on the world stage, this despicable action nonetheless threatens people of all faiths and of none, as it opens the door to those with power doing whatever they wish to people they do not like.

In obedience to God’s call to humble ourselves in prayer and turn away from evil, we the undersigned commit to a day of prayer and fasting in reparation for this blasphemy. As part of our prayer, each of us will offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, in which Christ’s Passion, death and Resurrection are made present to us by our obedience to the commandment he gave us at the Last Supper, “do this in memory of me.”

The Last Supper was the meal that Jesus of Nazareth shared with his closest friends the night before he died for them, and for us. We pray that those who seek to harm others with their power, and those harmed, will imitate his self-sacrificial love, so that peace, decency and mutual respect may be restored in the world.

Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke (La Crosse, USA)
Wilfrid Fox Cardinal Napier, O.F.M. (Durban, South Africa)
Berhaneyesus Demerew Cardinal Souraphiel, C.M. (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)
Archbishop Emeritus Héctor Rubén Aguer (La Plata, Argentina)
Archbishop Samuel Joseph Aquila (Denver, USA)
Archbishop Emeritus Charles Joseph Chaput, O.F.M. Cap. (Philadelphia, USA)
Archbishop Paul Stagg Coakley (Oklahoma City, USA)
Archbishop Salvatore Joseph Cordileone (San Francisco, USA)
Archbishop Ignatius Ayau Kaigama (Abuja, Nigeria)
Archbishop Joseph Fred Naumann (Kansas City in Kansas, USA)
Archbishop Gabriel Charles Palmer-Buckle (Cape Coast, Ghana)
Archbishop Hanna Rahme (Baalbek-Deir El-Ahmar, Lebanon)
Archbishop Emeritus Juan Antonio Ugarte Pérez (Cuzco, Peru)
Bishop Michael Charles Barber, SJ (Oakland, USA)
Bishop Michael Burbidge (Arlington, USA)
Bishop Edward James Burns (Dallas, USA)

Bishop Liam Stephen Cary (Baker, USA)
Bishop James Douglas Conley (Lincoln, USA)
Bishop Andrew Harmon Cozzens (Crookston, USA)
Bishop Philip Anthony Egan (Portsmouth, England)
Bishop Hyacinth Oroko Egbebo, MSP (Bomadi, Nigeria)
Bishop Emeritus Jaime Fuentes (Minas, Uruguay)
Bishop Jean Clément Marie Gérard Laffitte (Entrevaux)
Bishop Emeritus Paul Loverde (Arlington, USA)
Bishop Robert Dwayne Gruss (Saginaw, USA)
Bishop Gregory John Mansour (Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn, USA)
Bishop Nestor-Désiré Nongo-Aziagbia, S.M.A. (Bossangoa, Central African Republic)
Bishop Thomas John Joseph Paprocki (Springfield in Illinois, USA)
Bishop David Laurin Ricken (Green Bay, USA)
Bishop Athanasius Schneider, O.R.C. (Maria Santissima in Astana, Kazakhstan)
Bishop Emeritus Joseph Edward Strickland (Tyler, USA)
Bishop Daniel Edward Thomas (Toledo, USA)
Bishop David Arthur Waller (Our Lady of Walsingham, England)
Bishop Oleksandr Yazlovetskiy (Kyiv-Zhytomyr, Ukraine)