DICASTERIUM
DE CULTURA ET EDUCATIONE

UCI

PRESS RELEASE

The Holy Father meets the World of Cycling

The Holy Father will meet with representatives of the world of cycling at the Vatican, on the occasion of an event promoted by the Dicastery for Culture and Education in collaboration with the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) on the morning of 23 November 2026.

A representative group of 100 distinguished guests will attend, including legendary figures and current champions of men's and women's cycling, including para cycling, as well as institutional figures from various Federations and organisers of the three men's and women's Grand Tours (*Tour de France, Giro d'Italia* and *La Vuelta Ciclista a España*), together with organisers of other races held across all five continents.

Among the prominent former and current cyclists attending will be:

- **Eddy Merckx (BEL),** winner of five Tour de France titles, five Giro d'Italia titles, one Vuelta a España title and three UCI Road World Championship titles;
- **Demi Vollering (NED),** winner of all three Grand Tours, reigning UCI World Champion and ranked number one in the UCI World Rankings;
- **Bernard Hinault (FRA),** winner of multiple editions of the three Grand Tours, including five Tour de France titles, and 1980 UCI Road World Champion;
- **Paul Seixas (FRA),** a 20-year-old French cyclist considered one of the most promising talents in international cycling;
- **Jeannie Longo (FRA),** five-time UCI Road World Champion and Olympic gold medallist in 1996;
- **Greg LeMond (USA),** two-time UCI Road World Champion and the first American to win the Tour de France, which he won three times;
- **Annemiek van Vleuten (NED),** winner of all three Grand Tours, four-time UCI World Champion in the individual time trial and road race disciplines, and Olympic time trial champion in 2020;
- **Ricardo Ten Argilés (ESP),** multiple UCI Para-cycling World Champion and Paralympic Champion;
- **Vincenzo Nibali (ITA),** winner of all three Grand Tours;
- **Mark Cavendish (GBR),** record holder for the most Tour de France stage victories (35) and 2011 UCI Road World Champion;
- **Francesco Moser (ITA),** 1977 UCI Road World Champion;
- **Christopher Froome (GBR),** winner of all three Grand Tours;

- **Miguel Indurain (ESP),** record holder for five consecutive Tour de France victories, 1995 UCI World Champion in the individual time trial and 1996 Olympic Champion;
- **Elisa Longo Borghini (ITA),** fifteen-time Italian Champion, reigning national champion in both the road race and individual time trial disciplines, and two-time winner of the Giro d'Italia;
- **Anna Kolyzhuk (UKR),** a rider with the UCI Women's Continental WCC Team, who suffered a severe spinal injury following a crash in Italy in the summer of 2026;
- **Mariana Pajón (COL),** two-time Olympic Champion in BMX Racing and multiple UCI World Champion.

In view of the event, UCI President, David Lappartient, has highlighted the longstanding historical roots between cycling and the Catholic Church, from races organised by parish communities and cycling teams inspired by Gospel values, to the various meetings with Popes throughout the twentieth century and the recent passage of the *Giro d'Italia* through the Vatican during the 2025 Jubilee. President Lappartient described the meeting as an opportunity to strengthen cycling's commitment, as a sport, to promoting peace and intercultural dialogue among peoples.

Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonça, Prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and Education, noted that this meeting follows in the footsteps of Pope Leo XIV's recent message on sport, contained in the letter "Life in Abundance" (*La vita in abbondanza*). Cycling, the Cardinal emphasised, today represents a cultural experience within our society and a genuine school of values at the service of humanity.

At the conclusion of the audience, a brief ceremony will take place, during which the UCI will symbolically donate a number of bicycles to Caritas Rome. This initiative has been organised by Athletica Vaticana, the Vatican's multi-sport association, which is also a member of the UCI.

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In collaboration with

ATHLETICA VATICANA

Press contacts:
Dicastery for Culture and Education: Asia Fiorentino – tirocinante@dce.va / + 39 328 8764424
Dicastery for Communication: Giampaolo Mattei – giampaolo.mattei@spc.va / + 39 339 1651956