



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER
TO THE ITALIAN FEDERATION OF THE BALL-GAME "BOCCE"**

*Clementine Hall
Friday, 20 December 2024*

[Multimedia]

Ladies and Gentlemen, good morning and welcome!

It gives me great pleasure to meet you, representatives of the Italian Bowling Federation, together with the international president and various civil authorities, whom I thank for their presence. I admit that I am fond of the game of bowls, for two reasons: the first, because it is a “poor” sport, compared to those of the “stars” with billionaire contracts, who always fill the media. I think that bowling champions are people who work as clerks, or teachers, or plumbers... In short, normal people who have a passion for this game that is perhaps a little unfashionable, but so rich in humanity.

And here I come to the second reason for my fondness for bowls: it is a sport that I associate with a certain type of sociality, of social friendship... It used to be very widespread in villages, in the rural world. There were bowling greens everywhere, even in the parishes. It was a way of being together, of passing the time in company, a healthy and calm entertainment. Society has changed, and so has the sport of bowls: women and young people also play it; many people with disabilities practise it, and I congratulate you on all this.

Dear friends, I applaud you for the results you have achieved as a federation at competitive level; and above all because you carry on this alternative sport compared to the big sports business machine, an inclusive sport, which still has the flavour of “play” and good company.

I bless all of you and your activity from my heart. And please, do not forget to pray for me. Thank

you.

Holy See Press Office Bulletin, 20 December 2024

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