



DICASTERIUM  
DE CULTURA ET EDUCATIONE

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**Suggestions for the pastoral application of the Letter  
'Life in Abundance'**

The Letter 'Life in Abundance' lends itself to numerous practical applications in the life of the Church. The suggestions that follow do not constitute an exhaustive list or a binding programme, but rather a guide: for each theme, a number of examples are offered, ranging from practical initiatives to theoretical and theological reflections. They can be adopted, adapted and developed according to different contexts — parish, diocesan, academic and institutional — and in line with the sensibilities of those working in the world of sport. Rather than instructions to be followed, they are intended as a stimulus for pastoral creativity and discernment, so that sport may increasingly become a place of encounter, human growth and spiritual experience.

**1. Sport and the building of peace**

- To forge relationships and institutional partnerships with local sports federations, in order to raise awareness of the Church's vision on sport and its underlying themes: peace, inclusion and human fraternity.
- To promote the concept of the 'Olympic Truce' amongst government and international institutions.
- To ensure a presence, whether direct or indirect, at major sporting events, as a visible sign of the Church's presence in the world of sport.
- To promote the presence of the Holy See's 'Cross of Sport' at major international events, accompanying it with pastoral initiatives designed to offer a spiritual experience to athletes, supporters and tourists.
- To offer institutional patronage to sporting activities inspired by the Christian spirit.

**2. The formative value of sport**

- To promote the holistic and spiritual dimension of the person (body – soul – mind).
- To explore in greater depth the specific nature of a Christian theology and anthropology of sport.
- To encourage Catholic universities and schools to study the phenomenon of sport and to promote dedicated research and training programmes.
- To disseminate the Church's teachings on sport, such as "Giving the best of yourself" and "Life in Abundance".
- To reflect on the intersection between the message of salvation and the world of sport.

- To encourage in-depth reflection on the anthropology of the body.
- To organise dialogues, conferences and congresses on the theme of “faith and sport”.
- To promote healthy, balanced and active lifestyles, accessible to all — such as walking, games and informal activities — which teach care for oneself and for others.

### **3. Sport, a school of life and contemporary forum**

- To promote athletes’ public role models (“the biography beyond the podium”), highlighting the person behind the sporting performance and providing positive role models.
- Use digital platforms and the media to promote an authentic humanistic approach to sport.
- In juvenile detention centres, offer ‘coaching courses’ as an opportunity for training and professional reintegration following detention.
- To promote the link between sport and culture through screenings of sports films, exhibitions on ‘art and sport’, photography competitions and similar initiatives.

### **4. Sport and personal development**

- To offer inclusive and educational experiences that bring together people of different ages, abilities and backgrounds, transcending any notion of exclusion or cut-throat competition.
- To provide the means and resources to support, in a spirit of solidarity, sporting activities for the most disadvantaged families.
- To promote the role of the sports chaplain, whose closeness to athletes can be summed up in six verbs: being with the athletes, talking to them, visiting them, praying with them, supporting them and challenging them to become role models in life beyond sport.

### **5. Risks that threaten sporting values**

- To raise awareness of the risks that threaten the integrity of sport: corruption, doping, excessive financial interests and similar abuses.
- • To propose that a portion of the financial penalties imposed in sport be allocated to disadvantaged sports clubs and organisations committed to social inclusion.
- • Call on sporting bodies to publish their own ‘Sports Manifesto’, setting out the values that inspire their activities.

### **6. Competition and the culture of encounter**

- Take part in a sporting event with a ‘Fratelli Tutti’ team, made up of society’s most vulnerable members: people with disabilities, migrants, the homeless, and members of groups facing discrimination.
- Organise sporting events that encourage people from different backgrounds and cultures to come together.
- Create permanent spaces for people to meet and feel a sense of belonging, fostering meaningful relationships between children, young people, adults and families, and strengthening community ties.

### **7. Sport, relationships and discernment**

- In a sporting competition, propose to the organisers the introduction of a ‘last-placed prize’ and a ‘fair play prize’, to promote respect for the most vulnerable and for the rules of the game.
- Report the manipulation of matches and online betting linked to sporting events.

## **8. A pastoral approach to sport for life in abundance**

- To explore the specific nature of pastoral care in sport, so that its autonomy in terms of methods, venues, staff and objectives may be recognised.
- To encourage young people to take the lead, involving them in the organisation and running of initiatives as opportunities for learning, service and taking on responsibility.
- In collaboration with the management of local sports teams, appoint a chaplain to provide pastoral and spiritual support to athletes, taking the time to listen to their questions and aspirations.
- Organise a parish or diocesan sports day, featuring games and tournaments.
- Make the most of the churchyard and parish grounds as places for play and socialising.
- Include sports activities in parish festivals (such as walks and community trails).
- Appoint a coordinator (layperson or clergy) for sports ministry within the parish, diocese or bishops' conference, liaising with the Dicastery for Culture and Education and facilitating links with the international sports ministry network.
- Provide theological and pastoral training for those involved in sports ministry.
- To introduce athletes — whether professional or amateur — to pastoral care in sport and the possibility of spiritual guidance, because behind every athlete there is a person open to the transcendent.
- To raise awareness of the figures of the 'saints of sport', such as Pier Giorgio Frassati and Giovanni Bosco, and to promote devotion to them.