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Audience with the International Skating Union

At 12.10 today, in the Clementine Hall of the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the members of the International Skating Union.

The following is the Pope's greeting to those present:

Greeting of the Holy Father

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to welcome the members of the Council of the International Skating Union, and I thank the President for his kind words of greeting in your name.

The aim of your Union is not only to promote ice skating worldwide, but above all to allow more and more people to experience the beauty of this sport. All sports are in fact a cause and an expression of joy: "the joy of exercising, of being together, of being alive and rejoicing in the gifts the Creator gives us each day" (cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit*, 227). And this is true in a particular way for those who skate. Skating offers an exhilarating experience of life and freedom of movement, together with a training in discipline, team work and the pursuit of personal excellence.

Traditionally, skating has also been an inclusive sport, erasing social barriers and open to people of every age. I would encourage your efforts to ensure that the joy of skating will also mark even highly competitive events. As you strive to introduce more and more young people to the sport, I trust that your guidance will help them, through athletics, to mature as productive members of the larger community. The values of respect, courage, altruism, balance and self-control learned in sport are a precious preparation for success in running the race of life. Sport, in a word, is always meant to be at the service of humanity.

With these sentiments, I offer my prayerful good wishes to you and your families, together with all the members of the International Skating Union. May God bless you and your work! And I bless you, each one of you, with God's blessing. Amen.
