



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

TO THE ATHLETES OF THE AUSTRIAN SKI FEDERATION *Room adjacent to Paul VI Audience Hall*

Wednesday, 20 April 2016 [\[Multimedia\]](#)

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to welcome you to the Vatican today.

When I think of Austria and the Alps, winter sports also come to mind. Skiing has great importance and tradition in your country, and the entire population participates in the excitement when you host challenging competitions. You are models, above all, for many young people. But you are also models of integration, not just in athletic performance but also for the virtues and values represented by sports: commitment, perseverance, determination, fair play, solidarity and team spirit. Through your example, you contribute to the formation of society. May you ever be messengers of the uniting power of sports and of welcome! And, returning to the natural wealth of your Country, may you be messengers of safeguarding the environment and the beauty of God's creation. Thank you for your visit! May the Lord bless you all!