



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PLAYERS, TRAINERS AND DIRECTORS
OF REAL MADRID,
THE CHAMPION SOCCER CLUB OF EUROPE**

Monday, 16 September 2002

*Mr President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I am pleased to receive the members of the Committee of Directors, trainers and players of the *Fútbol Club Real Madrid*, and the fans who have accompanied them. I am grateful to the President of the Club for the cordial words he used to present your sentiments.

As I pointed out during the *Jubilee of the World of Sport*, the Church considers sports as an instrument of education when they foster high human and spiritual ideals and when they form young people in an integral way to develop in such values as loyalty, perseverance, friendship, solidarity and peace. Because they jump over cultural differences and ideologies, sports can be a good opportunity for dialogue and understanding among peoples to build the desired civilization of love (cf. *Address to Convention held during the Jubilee for the World of Sport*, 28 October; *ORE*, 15 November 2000, p. 9; cf. *Mass for the Jubilee for the World of Sport*, 29 October; *ORE*, 1 November 2000, p.1).

I therefore invite you to practice these values, that correspond to the high dignity of the human person, when you face possible interests that can tarnish the nobility of your sport.

May Our Lady, the Virgin of the Almudena, Patroness of Madrid, accompany you! As I thank you once again for your visit, with affection I impart to you my Apostolic Blessing and extend it to your families.

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