



29 July 2024

## **STATEMENT FROM BISHOP ANTHONY RANDAZZO**

### **PARIS OLYMPIC GAMES OPENING CEREMONY A MISSTEP INCLUDING OFFENSIVE SCENES**

The 2024 Paris Olympic Games should have been a celebration of global unity, excellence, and the Olympic spirit. However, the opening ceremony has left many deeply disappointed and offended, particularly within the Catholic Christian community. The choice by the organizers to use a scene with unabashed references to the well-known Last Supper depiction of Jesus and His Disciples was a profound misstep. This scene, laden with blasphemous undertones, coincided with the beginning of the Catholic Church's liturgical reading of Chapter 6 from the Gospel of John – the Bread of Life Discourse.

Political correctness and woke ideologies often purport to uphold respect, dignity, and inclusion for all people. Yet, this event starkly highlighted how superficial these values can be when genuine respect and understanding are lacking. The Eucharistic life of Christians, and especially Catholics, is deeply rooted in John 6, which is central to our faith. This passage holds the profound truth that Jesus Christ gave Himself to the world as bread for our journey through life, to nourish and strengthen us spiritually, so that we might attain eternal life.

The portrayal in Paris, rather than fostering inclusion and respect, did the opposite. It disrespected a fundamental aspect of Christian belief and worship. True respect and inclusion start with an authentic understanding and reverence for others' beliefs and values. This offensive representation was a glaring example of hypocrisy and a false sense of tolerance.

To call out such hypocrisy is crucial. We must be credible in our Christian faith, believe in what we read in the Gospel, teach it authentically, and practice what we preach. Only then can we stand firm against such misrepresentations and advocate for genuine respect and inclusion, which are first and foremost Gospel values.

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While this episode is regrettable and demands to be called out as false, we must not lose sight of the noble objectives of the Olympic Games. These Games aim to foster fraternity among all peoples of the world, promote excellence in fair competition, offer genuine respect among brothers and sisters in the human family, and pave the pathway for peace in our time.

Let us call out the lie and promote the truth. Let us work towards a world where genuine respect, dignity, and inclusion are not mere buzzwords but lived realities. The Olympic spirit deserves no less.

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