



# The Holy See

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## **ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER TO THE ITALIAN FEDERATION OF THE BALL-GAME "BOCCE"**

*Clementine Hall  
Friday, 20 December 2024*

**[Multimedia]**

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*Ladies and Gentlemen, good morning and welcome!*

It gives me great pleasure to meet you, representatives of the Italian Bowling Federation, together with the international president and various civil authorities, whom I thank for their presence. I admit that I am fond of the game of bowls, for two reasons: the first, because it is a “poor” sport, compared to those of the “stars” with billionaire contracts, who always fill the media. I think that bowling champions are people who work as clerks, or teachers, or plumbers... In short, normal people who have a passion for this game that is perhaps a little unfashionable, but so rich in humanity.

And here I come to the second reason for my fondness for bowls: it is a sport that I associate with a certain type of sociality, of social friendship... It used to be very widespread in villages, in the rural world. There were bowling greens everywhere, even in the parishes. It was a way of being together, of passing the time in company, a healthy and calm entertainment. Society has changed, and so has the sport of bowls: women and young people also play it; many people with disabilities practise it, and I congratulate you on all this.

Dear friends, I applaud you for the results you have achieved as a federation at competitive level; and above all because you carry on this alternative sport compared to the big sports business machine, an inclusive sport, which still has the flavour of “play” and good company.

I bless all of you and your activity from my heart. And please, do not forget to pray for me. Thank

you.

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