SPORT at the SERVICE OF HUMANITY

JUNE/JULY 2018

"Challenge yourself in the game of life like you are in the game of sports. Challenge yourself in the quest for good, in both Church and society, without fear, with courage and enthusiasm. Get involved with others and with God; don't settle for a mediocre 'tie', give it your best, spend your life on what really matters and lasts forever."

POPE FRANCIS

SPORT AT THE SERVICE OF HUMANITY: THE IMPORTANCE OF GIVING THE BEST OF YOURSELF

The Vatican's Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life recently released a report entitled: *"Giving the Best of Yourself"* - a document about the Christian perspective on sport and the human person. The report's key messages mirror the values of **SPORT AT THE SERVICE OF HUMANITY**, further highlighting the incredible difference that our global movement's Principles – **COMPASSION, RESPECT, LOVE, BALANCE, ENLIGHTENMENT** and **JOY** - can make to change the world.

In it, Pope Francis says:

"Sport is a meeting place where people of all levels and social conditions come together to reach a common aim. In a culture dominated by individualism ... sport is a privileged area around which people meet without any distinction of race, sex, religion, or ideology, and where we can experience the joy of competing to reach a goal together.

Sports is also a formative vehicle. Perhaps today more than ever, we must fix our gaze on the young, because the earlier the process of formation begins, the easier the person's integral development through sports will be.

We need to deepen the close connection that exists between sport and life, which can enlighten one another, so that the effort to surpass oneself in an athletic discipline also serves as a stimulus to always improve as a person, in all of life's aspects."

The report states that *"giving one's very best is a fundamental theme in sports, as athletes both individually and collectively strive to achieve their goals in the game. When a person gives his very best, he experiences satisfaction and the joy of accomplishment. The same is true in human life in general and in living out the Christian faith."*

"Giving one's very best" is at the heart of Sport at the Service of Humanity. At the recently concluded Sport at the Service of Humanity Second Regional Conference held at Loyola Marymount University many important issues were shared and discussed, within the context of SSH's 6 Principles and 3 Pillars of Inspiration, Inclusion and Involvement.

SSH SECOND REGIONAL CONFERENCE JUNE 20 – 21, 2018 LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

LMU President Timothy Law Snyder, Ph.D. welcomed the 270 delegates to the SSH Second Regional Conference and the **SPORT AT THE SERVICE OF HUMANITY** global movement to Los Angeles, the City of Angels - a fitting venue to host a discussion on the role of faith and sport to cultivate a better world, given LMU's mission of *"fostering community through sport, based on a belief that Sport is a rehearsal for life."*

TIMOTHY LAW SNYDER
LMU President

Co-sponsored by the LA84 Foundation and the West Coast Conference, the two-day conference brought together over 50 presenters from diverse industries and faith traditions. Leaders and practitioners from the world of faith, sport, academia and business shared their stories, experiences and insights that provided the **INSPIRATION** for soul-searching and thinking, stimulated engaging discussions and served as the catalyst for collaboration and action.

"Sport is a training ground for the body and soul."

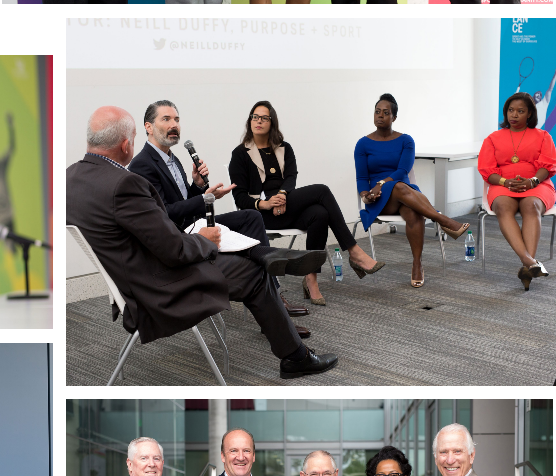
THE MOST REVEREND JOSÉ GOMEZ,
the Archbishop of Los Angeles

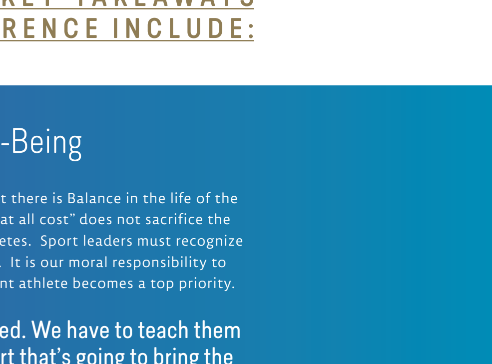
"I encourage you to open your mind, so learning can flourish in head, heart and hand."

MICHAEL GALLIGAN-STIERLE,
President, Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities

"Play is a human right. The dreams of our youth should not be limited by their ZIP code."

RENATA SIMRIL,
President & CEO, LA84 Foundation





SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS AND KEY TAKEAWAYS THAT EMERGED FROM THE CONFERENCE INCLUDE:

Balance: Winning vs. Well-Being

It is our responsibility as educators, coaches and parents to ensure that there is Balance in the life of the student athlete. Importantly, we must ensure that the desire to "Win at all cost" does not sacrifice the "Well-Being" of our youth. Mental health is a key issue that besets athletes. Sport leaders must recognize that athletes who are not fit mentally cannot be their best physically. It is our moral responsibility to make sure that the physical, mental and emotional health of the student athlete becomes a top priority.

"Sport is a safe place where kids can try and not succeed. We have to teach them that it is not the winning that matters, but it is the effort that's going to bring the results. The kids should leave with a memory and not a nightmare"

KEITH JOHNSON, Falcon Youth and Family Services

Enlightenment: Building Athletes to be Life-Ready

Instilling strong values, building character, encouraging spirituality and promoting a healthy perspective in sport and in life are key to building better athletes, better people. One of the ideas that emerged included developing a character development toolkit for coaches and educators that focuses on Principles and Values.

"When you make it about character and values, the athletes win in life."

- **MARV DUNPHY**, Volleyball Coach Emeritus, Pepperdine University

"You win or you learn, but you never lose."

- **KENNETH SHROPSHIRE**

reminded us of his favourite quote from tennis player Sloan Stevens, as an example of a healthy perspective in losing

"You may live in the hood but the hood does not live in you."

- **CAYLIN MOORE**, Division One Football Player, Rhodes Scholar and Oxford University student.

spoke to attendees about the role that sport played in his life and the power of his mother's words to remind him that where he lived was not who he was.

Compassion: Encouraging "Service and Involvement" in young people

"Service" is the key operative word in Sport at the Service of Humanity. The idea of fostering Compassion among young people, encouraging them to do Community Service gives them a better perspective in life, instills empathy, and helps develop leadership skills. In one of the breakout sessions, the idea of creating an app that allows high school students to log and submit their community service as part of their college applications was suggested.

"We don't go to the margins to make a difference, we go there so that those at the margins may touch us and make us different."

- **FR. GREG BOYLE**, Founder, Homeboy Industries

"In today's world where we are confronted with intolerance, disrespect and hate, we have to remind ourselves of our obligation to bring out the best in people. To serve humanity, to make a difference, maybe it's enough to be considerate and kind."

- **VAL ACKERMAN**, Commissioner, Big East Conference

Joy: Gratuita

Gratuita is an Italian word that means free. When Pope Francis spoke about Sport and Gratuita, he was referring to "the freedom to play sport for the pure joy it brings." Val Ackerman reminded everyone of this, emphasizing the restorative benefit of unrestricted play and suggested that perhaps, the concept of Gratuita should be added to every college sports play book.

"What makes it powerful is that there is an emotional connection that happens when people watch and play that's unparalleled."

- **SHERRIE DEANS**, National Basketball Players Association Foundation

Inclusion: Promoting **Respect** and **Love**, Fostering Supportive Environments

Inclusion and the importance of developing supportive environments where everyone - regardless of gender, race, faith, status, sexual orientation and ability - is welcomed and celebrated were highlighted. We need to educate our kids from the start on tolerance, respect and acceptance. We need training for educators, coaches and administrators so they have the right skills and tools to deal with issues.

"Unconscious bias exists. The best way to move beyond it is to spend time with people who are not like you and try to discover how you can be an ally in bringing people forward."

- **ANNE LIEBERMAN**, Athlete Ally

"Inclusive language is important in creating supportive environments regardless of sexual orientation, gender or race."

- **RILEY TINDOL**, former defensive lineman, Vanderbilt University

"Participating in sport, especially for girls, sets them up for life. We should tell women that they can have both – sport and education. We need to show them the pipeline of possibility."

- **AMY ELAINE WAKELAND**, First Lady of Los Angeles

"Play Unified. The real purpose of the games was to change the hearts and minds, so we will change."

- **DUSTIN PLUNKETT**, Special Olympian

"Inclusion is great but I want Cohesion. We don't want to have just a seat at the table, we want to be fully involved."

- **CANDACE CABLE**, 9-Time Paralympian

Involvement: Social Responsibility and using Sport for Good

Excellent examples of the Sport at the Service of Humanity Principles in action were shared at the conference as representatives from LA 2028 Olympic Games and some professional sport teams talked about their various "sport for good" initiatives, noting that they view sport as a vehicle to be a positive force in the community and make it a better place to live in.

"We want to use the Games to unite and celebrate diversity. We are investing in youth sports programs in the community now, not waiting until after the Games to leave our legacy."

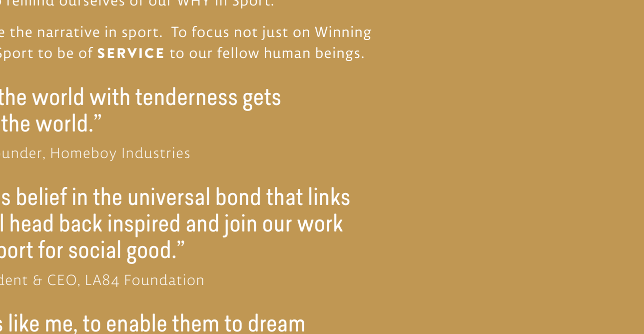
- **GENE SYKES**, CEO, LA 2028

"Our goal is not to develop the next major league player. We do this because otherwise the kids will not get a chance to play. We use sport as the hook and bring others to help us deliver."

- **NICHOL WHITEMAN**, Executive Director, LA Dodgers Foundation

"We make sure we are doing something every day to make our community a better place."

- **JEFFREY POLLACK**, Chief Marketing and Strategy Officer, LA Chargers



Call to Action

Delegates left the conference inspired to transform lives through the power of sports as we educate, inspire and engage. It is important to remind ourselves of our WHY in Sport.

Sport at the Service of Humanity's WHY is to change the narrative in sport. To focus not just on Winning in Sport, but Winning in Life. To use the power of Sport to be of **SERVICE** to our fellow human beings.

"Only the soul that ventilates the world with tenderness gets to change the world."

- **FR. GREG BOYLE**, Founder, Homeboy Industries

"Ubuntu is an African word that means belief in the universal bond that links Humanity. It is my hope that you will head back inspired and join our work to continue using sport for social good."

- **RENATA SIMRIL**, President & CEO, LA84 Foundation

"Be the people to help those kids like me, to enable them to dream dreams that are too big."

- **CAYLIN MOORE**, South LA baller to Rhodes Scholar

As we continue on this journey together, it is of the utmost importance that individuals, organizations and companies embrace the SSH Principles and do their very best to bring them to life in order to spread and grow the SSH global movement. Look for opportunities in your daily life to make a difference and lead by example. Harness the passion and joy you feel when you are part of a team or playing a sport that you love, and bring it into your everyday, share it with those around you. If we all give the best of ourselves, together we can make the world a better place.

If you know of individuals, corporations or organizations who are embracing the SSH Principles to Win in Sport and Win in Life, we want to hear from you!

Please share your stories and photos with us at:

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