20th June, 2014.

Dear Friends,

A Crown for Australia
Striving for the best in our sporting nation

Social Justice Sunday will be celebrated this year on 28 September. I am writing to inform you about the Catholic Bishops’ Social Justice Statement and how parishes can access this document.

The title of the 2014–2015 Statement is A Crown for Australia: Striving for the best in our sporting nation. It refers to Saint Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 9:24–27), where Paul compares the ‘wreath that will wither’, for which the athletes of the time competed, with the imperishable crown that we aspire to as followers of Christ.

In this Social Justice Statement, Australia’s Bishops celebrate the many blessings that sport offers us as individuals and as a community: personal development, friendship and solidarity, a contribution to our own health and that of our nation, and the sheer joy of movement and skill. Against these blessings, we have to acknowledge a darker side, which too often reveals violence on and off the field, abuse of drugs and alcohol, racism, sexism and commercial exploitation.

This Social Justice Statement challenges us to look at the place of sport in our lives. How can we ensure that sport can thrive and in return nourish our society, and how can we confront the influences that undermine or distort its ideals?

Most importantly, how can we work to realise sport’s potential to unite communities, overcome differences and be a force for social justice and reconciliation?

The Statement will be launched on 17th September. Copies of the Statement can be ordered now from the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council by using the attached order form. Additionally, the Statement will be available for download on the websites of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (www.catholic.org.au) and the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council (www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au) from the week of the launch. In the attached summary sheet there is a suggested entry that can be used in your parish newsletter as Social Justice Sunday approaches.

I commend this Statement to you and your contacts and would welcome your part in its promotion.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

+ Denis J. Hart
Archbishop
President, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.

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