

# Pope Talks to Pro Ball Players

Following are excerpts from an address given by Pope John Paul II to members of the Luciano Re Cecconi Foundation, a group whose aim is to make a contribution against every form of violence, in the spirit of human solidarity and social justice.

I thank you for this visit of yours, whereby you wished to assure me of your sentiments both as Christians and as members of this beneficent foundation, recently established in memory of the well-known young football player.



I am happy that its purpose is to contribute "to the elimination of any form of violence — physical and ideological — and to work for the development of conscience in the affirmation of the principles of freedom, brotherhood and social justice," as is so well stated in your statement of foundation.

I praise this program of commitment, the human and Christian value of which wins the respect of all those concerned about the real good of men and the tranquility of their civilized social life. Certainly I cannot, now go into a detailed analysis of all the elements that constitute the sad phenomenon of violence in general and of that violence in particular, which is exercised in sports events; I do not wish, however to omit to address a recommendation to you. It is this: put into practice the purposes of your association, let yourselves always be guided by the teachings of the Magisterium of the Church as a basic orientation.

Make sure that you know the directives of the Second Vatican Council and the indications of the Encyclicals and of the pontifical addresses, which help you to understand, evaluate and prevent so many obscure phenomena which bring bloodshed even to the sports fields of this society of ours, which is living today in the nightmare of violence.

It is too often forgotten, that all human activity, and sports in particular, cannot disregard a moral order. Far from mortifying or impoverishing sports activity, on the contrary, it makes it grow and enriches it with incomparably prestigious performances.

Sport in fact has as its purpose man, the whole man, in his physical and spiritual dimension. The competitive spirit is important precisely because it represents a moment of liberation from the burden of the day, from nervewracking or boring work, from the occupations and concerns of life, and at the same time it is a moment of recreation and self-fulfillment in the way that corresponds best to the capacities and aspirations of each one.

These aims, essential for all sports, must equally animate professional sport, which, taking place not so much for the players entertainment as to entertain the spectators, becomes a show and is more exposed to the temptations of violence. Unfortunately it is precisely in these shows that the meaning of sport is distorted in the direction of purposes that are extraneous or even contrary to its very nature. It is then exploited for other purposes and, what is worse, people sometimes take advantage of these events to give vent to the ignoble passions of hatred, rivalry, and vendetta, thus changing places and moments of entertainment, joy and serenity into places and moments of dread, terror and bereavement.

Let us remember that violence is always an offense, an insult to man with regard to the one who perpetrates it and to the one who suffers it. But it is nonsense, a monstrous absurdity when it is exerted on the occasion of sports events, in the stadiums or elsewhere, because sports aims at joy not terror, entertainment not fear, solidarity and not hatred, brotherhood and not division.

Violence is an offense against man, but it is an offense above all against the Christian, because the Christian always recognizes in all men, brothers and never enemies. For the Christian, all places and all times are propitious moments to express his own sentiments of brotherhood and solidarity towards others. But this holds good in particular for moments and places in which sporting activity is being exercised, because the latter is already in itself intended to promote sentiments of solidarity, brotherhood, love, joy and peace.

Dear brothers, may this meeting with the pope really be for you a providential opportunity to give a decidedly Christian orientation to your life and work. May it serve to put back in their rightful perspective those values which, alone, give a meaning, a dignity and a purpose to our existence: Love of God above all, and then generous and active love for brothers, especially the poorest. In this connection I congratulate you on the act of solidarity that you have carried out with regard to Cambodian refugees.

I pray to the Lord that this moment of grace may produce lasting fruits for your souls and for the activity of the association to which you belong.

I willingly extend my cordial greeting and my appreciation for their presence to the managers and players of the two football teams of Rome, Roma and Lazio. I willingly impart my blessing to all.



**ST. PATRICK'S DAY SMORGASBORD** — At St. Bridget's, East Bloomfield, Sunday, March 16, noon-4 p.m.; annual joint endeavor of St. Bridget's and St. Joseph's, West Bloomfield.

**44th ROCHESTER INTERNATIONAL SALON OF PHOTOGRAPHY** — Showing 200 winning prints March 17-April 12, Plaza Gallery, Lincoln First Tower. Also, at Memorial Art Gallery, winning slides, March 22, 23, continuously, 1-5 p.m.

**MIME WORKSHOP** — Presenting guest artists-in-residence, The United Mime Workers, at 8 p.m. March 14, 15; special children's show at 2 p.m. Sunday, March 16. At 50 Chestnut Plaza.

**SPAGHETTI DINNER** — Saturday, March 15, 5-8 p.m., at Street Academy, 314 Bay St.; sponsored by North East Block Club Alliance.

**OLIVER!** — Popular musical presented by Nazareth Academy, 8 p.m. March 14, 15.

**ST. STANISLAUS GOLDEN AGE CLUB** — St. Patrick/St. Joseph celebration March 19.

**SENIOR CITIZENS MATINEE** — At Dryden Theatre, Eastman House, 1:30 p.m. tomorrow: Little Women (1933).

**TRAVEL MOVIES** — Rochester Museum series in Eisenhart Auditorium of films made in various cities by famous natives and residents; 8 p.m. Mondays. March 17: R.D. Laing's Glasgow; Living Arts of Japan.

**GISELLE** — Romantic ballet starring Cynthia Harvey, Charles Maple of American Ballet Theatre,

supported by students of Enid Knapp Botsford School of Dance, at the school, 3646 East Ave. (hilltop), on March 28, 29, 30, 7:30 p.m. Reservations, information: 586-4605.

**EASTMAN PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE** — With Gordon Stout, marimba, 8 p.m. March 19, Eastman Theatre. Free.

**JAZZ CONCERT** — Dave Remington and the Seven Survivors, 3 p.m. Sunday, March 16, Memorial Art Gallery. Free.

**PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION** — From Rhode Island School of Design graduate school at Visual Studies Workshop, 31 Prince, through March 26. Free. Gallery open Monday-Friday, 10-5.

**ISSUES AND ANSWERS** — Information session on justice, human rights problems with speakers from concerned organizations, 1-3 p.m. Saturday, March 15, in St. Augustine's School Hall, 420 Chili; sponsored by Southwest Human Development Committee.

**FAMILY WORKSHOP FOR PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED** — Sponsored by Greater Rochester Spinal Bifida Association, 9:30-3 Saturday, March 15 at St.

Joseph's School, Gebhardt Road, Penfield; public, free. Registration, information: 377-7526.

**HEALTH FAIR** — Sixth annual sponsored by Jewish Community Center, at 1200 Edgewood; information booths, films, speakers, diagnostic tests, Sunday, March 16, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Free. Childcare service may be reserved: 461-2000, ext. 268.

**ALUMNAE OF THE SACRED HEART** — Day of Recollection March 15, 10 a.m., at McQuaid Jesuit High School, with Father Albert Bartlett, SJ, former rector. Reservations: Mrs. Arthur Tierney, 244-1678.

**SPIRITUAL SINGLES** — Bowling party March 15, 9 p.m., North Park Lanes. Information: Patty Genco, 663-3990; Patty Lipa, 254-4286.

**"HUNGER: OUR DILEMMA"** — Talk by Lourdes Perez Albuérne, diocesan coordinator, International Justice and Peace Commission, 7:30 p.m. March 18, at St. Margaret Mary school hall, 400 Rogers Pkwy.

**CHARISMATIC MASS** — Monday, March 24, 8:15 p.m., at Holy Spirit Church, Plank and Hatch Roads, Penfield.

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