

Press Release (Vatican, 23 June)

Presentation of the St Peter's Cricket Club Tour to England and the charity match against an Anglican XI at Canterbury under the Patronage of the Pontifical Council for Culture

On Monday 23 June at 11am the St Peter's Cricket Club's "Light of Faith Tour" was presented in the Library of the Pontifical Council for Culture. The tour culminates in the big charity match between the club and an Anglican XI which follows a challenge laid down by the Club's Honorary President Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi to Archbishop Justin Welby.

The Twenty20 match will take place at Kent County Cricket Club's ground in the shadow of Canterbury Cathedral on 19 September at 4pm. In case of rain the pitch has also been reserved for the morning of 20 September.

The St Peter's Team consists of the following: two priests, four deacons and seven seminarians, all men involved in formation for the priesthood in Rome; eight Indians, two Sri Lankans, one each from Pakistan, England and Ireland, the majority are from the international Pontifical Colleges Maria Mater Ecclesiae and Collegio Urbano.

The Anglican team, mostly students at theological colleges, is still in formation and is due to have trials at Lord's on 7 July.

Being a moment of ecumenical encounter, a number of liturgical moments are planned, including a special prayer before the match, attendance at evensong on the evening of Thursday 18 September, and a daily hour of Eucharistic devotion for the Catholic men during the tour.

Entrance to the match will be free and there will be a bucket collection. After the match there will be a gala dinner. Proceeds from both will go to the Global Freedom Network, the joint Anglican-Roman Catholic anti-trafficking charity (www.gfn2020.org).

The tour party leaves for England on 12 September and will have a series of warm up matches against the Edinburgh Divines (in Rome on 10 and 11 September), St Peter's Brighton on 14 September, the Authors' XI (at Ascott House, on 15 September), and on 17 September in London against the Royal Household.

Among the match sponsors are Kent County Cricket Club, founded in 1842, and The Church Times, which has co-ordinated clergy cricket in the UK since 1951. Thanks also to a number of private benefactors and, for materials to Dr. M.V. Sridhar, Mr. P.R. Mansingh and Mr Alfonso Jayarajah.

At the press conference under the moderation of Philippa Hitchen and after a brief introduction by Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, President of the Pontifical Council for Culture, the following spoke: Archbishop Sir David Moxon, the Archbishop of Canterbury's Representative to the Holy See. He illustrated the improving ecumenical relations with the Anglican Communion, particularly on the cultural plane.

Monsignor Melchor Sanchez de Toca, Undersecretary of the Pontifical Council for Culture. He spoke of the importance of sport in the pastoral life of the Church, appealing to not to forget this fundamental aspect of human culture where so much time is spent, as a space of play and of learning and communion.

Fr. Eamonn O'Higgins, LC, Team Manager. Together with the match and tour details, he compared sport to the formation of men to the priesthood, as a sphere of spiritual battle, where teamwork, trust, commitment and perseverance are daily trials, and also the joy and friendship that comes from opening up to others through such encounters.

Authorities have said:

“If you want to arrive first, run alone. If you want to go far, walk together.” For this sporting initiative I recall this Kenyan Proverb, as it states so simply our need for teamwork, and with clear reference to the charitable aspect chosen, namely the issue of human trafficking, a plague which hurts most those who are left alone and abandoned. In our culture of massive movement of peoples, sport challenges us to examine not just how hospitable we are, as individual athletes, but also how similar we are, for as Jean Giraudoux affirms, “sport is the real esperanto of the peoples”. Look at the great success of the World Cup in Brazil! We do well to recall this in our pastoral work!

Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi

President of the Pontifical Council for Culture

“I was delighted to meet members of the St Peter’s Cricket Club during a recent visit to Rome, and am greatly looking forward to welcoming them to Canterbury in September for what will be an historic occasion. I would like to express particular thanks to Kent County Cricket Club for so generously offering the use of their ground, and to those who are working hard to ensure the St Peter’s team enjoy a memorable tour. I also pray that the match will draw attention to the very serious problem of modern slavery and human trafficking, which our two churches are working closely together to combat through the work of the Global Freedom Network.”

Archbishop Justin Welby

Archbishop of Canterbury and Primate of all England

“I am delighted and intrigued at the initiative of a cricket club, with the remarkable title of *St Peter’s Cricket Club* visiting this country to compete with, among others, a cricket team gathered together by the Church of England. This must surely be an historic first!

When I was a student in Rome there was a regular series of cricket matches between the various Colleges but we never thought of going on tour!

I hope this visit is a great success and does much to strengthen friendships between us all.”

Cardinal Vincent Nichols

Archbishop of Westminster

President of the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales

“George Bernard Shaw said that “The English are not very spiritual people, so they invented cricket to give them some idea of eternity.” I’m sure that the forthcoming Anglican/Catholic cricket match in Canterbury will overturn Shaw’s idea of the English people and the game of cricket. Congratulations to all for this sporting ecumenical venture. May the best team win!”

Archbishop Peter Smith

Archdiocese of Southwark

Press notes:

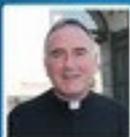
On Tuesday 24 June there is a practice due to take place at 3 pm at the Collegio Mater Ecclesiae, Via Aurelia 737, Roma – 00165. On Wednesday 25 June a match at Roma Capannelle Cricket Ground, (in front of the station at via delle Capannelle) at 3pm.

Team list attached.

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TEAM OFFICIALS

FR. EAMONN O'HIGGINS LC
Manager
Nationality: EIRE



BRO. JOSEPH KARIIMPANIL
Coach
Nationality: INDIAN



Contact details:-

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ST. PETER'S CRICKET TEAM IN FRONT OF THE FLAMINIAN GATE, ROME



The Light of Faith Tour



St. Peter's Team
@ England 2014

September 12 - 20

The St. Peter's Cricket Club consists of priests, seminarians and supporters whose lives are centred on the Vatican and who wish to bring all that this sport represents to the heart of the Roman Catholic Church and ensure that the Church's voice finds an echo in this particular contemporary culture.

The club engages in intercultural and ecumenical occasions and charitable initiatives through the vector of this sport which is the second most followed sport in the world. Maintaining strong links with the English speaking community based in Rome, it seeks to be a mechanism promoting the integration of the cherished cultural values proper to the cricketing way of life.



St. Peter's Cricket Club
With the patronage of the
Pontifical Council for Culture

The Light of Faith Tour - St. Peter's Team @ England 2014

FR. TONY CURRER
(Captain)

Age: 41
Right hand batsman
Nationality: English
Motto:
Quid quæritis viventem cum mortuis?



JOMCY MATHEW

Age: 24
Right arm fast bowler
Nationality: Indian
Motto: Ad maiorem Dei gloriam



DAVIDSON JESTUS

Age: 25
Right arm fast bowler
Nationality: Indian
Motto: Preach the Word



ANTONY SHEHAN
(Vice Captain)

Age: 26
Right hand batsman
Nationality: Sri Lankan
Motto: Piety always wins



AJEESH GEORGE

Age: 30
Right arm medium fast
Nationality: Indian
Motto: Nothing is impossible with God



BENEDICT

Age: 28
Right arm fast bowler
Nationality: Indian
Motto: Joy in Service



AAMIR BHATTI

Age: 28
Wicket keeper
Right Hand Batsman
Nationality: Pakistan
Motto: Proclaim the love of God



DEEPAK ANTO

Age: 28
Right hand batsman
Nationality: Indian
Motto: To receive God and to give God



PAULSON

Age: 30
Right hand batsman
Nationality: Indian
Motto: Caritas Christi urget nos



SHYINISH BOSCO

Age: 28
Right hand batsman
Nationality: Indian
Motto: The Power of Prayer



RUWAN THARAKA

Age: 25
Left hand batsman
Nationality: Sri Lankan
Motto: The Lord is my Shepherd



PRATHEESH THOMAS
(Communication in-charge)

Age: 26
Nationality: Indian
Motto: Ad maiorem Dei gloriam
Twitter: Pratheesh @ saintw2b

