Opening Welcome

Dr. Barbara Wall
Vice President for Mission and Ministry, Villanova University

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Good morning and welcome to Villanova University. My name is Barbara Wall and I am the Vice President for Mission and Ministry. Thanks so much for being with us.

Today, it’s our pleasure to join with the BIG EAST Conference and the Vatican’s Pontifical Council for Culture to offer this opportunity for us to reflect on the work of the “First Global Conference on Faith and Sport,” which took place at the Vatican in October of 2016. The product of that gathering may well become a world-wide movement that places “sport at the service of humanity,” —that seeks to harness the transformational power of sport for the common good.

Over these next two days, our goals will be slightly more modest. We do hope to:

- Promote broader dissemination of the Vatican’s Declaration of Principles, which is enclosed in your folders;
- We hope to identify advocates for faith, spirituality and sports among those working in higher education;
- Provide a platform for building stronger relationships between athletic departments, campus ministry and chaplaincy personnel;
- Encourage assessment of policies, procedures and practices through the lens of the Declaration and the broader goals of involvement, inclusion and inspiration;
- We hope to inspire adoption of the “Sport at the Service of Humanity” Movement as an organizing framework for collegiate sports; and
- Support and extend the work already being done in the field of faith, spirituality and sports at colleges and universities in the United States and beyond.

Among the many who share these aspirations and who want to express personal support for this undertaking are:
• Fr. Peter Donohue, who has served for the past 11 years as Villanova University’s 32nd president;
• Msgr. Melchor Sánchez de Toca y Alameda, Undersecretary of Pontifical Council for Culture, who continues to provide critical leadership for the Vatican’s “Sports for Humanity” project; and
• Michael Galligan-Stierle, President of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, who is himself well-versed on the topic of sports and spirituality.

I’d like to welcome each of them and ask that make their brief remarks in turn. Father Peter would you like to begin ...