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Communiqué of the Ecumenical Patriarchate on the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games in Paris

The Olympic Games constitute a supreme athletic event, which draws the interest of millions of our brothers and sisters from every corner of the planet, and the opening ceremony is of solemn importance inasmuch as it provides an occasion for the host nation to highlight its history and civilization, while transmitting positive messages on a universal level.

It is with great sorrow that, during the opening ceremony in Paris, we witnessed the promulgation of offensive scenes for Christianity and the sacred Gospel, but also for every civilized person who recognizes the right to faith and the respect for religious symbols.

Not only did these images fail to enrich the ceremony; they actually impoverished it. Blasphemy against God is not progress; nor is the insult of people’s religious conviction a right. We expect that the spontaneous expression of repulsion and

rejection on the part of so many has conveyed a sufficiently strong message to those responsible and will serve as a source of hope for the prevention of similar behavior in the future.

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