PRESS RELEASE

Pope Francis is introduced to Frisbee!

Pope Francis is introduced to Frisbee! Andrew Hochstedler, an American expat who plays with the Turkish Ultimate Team “Türk Kasi,” recently met the Pope in connection with the 2015 Assisi Youth Conference in Rome and presented a disc to him. The artwork on the disc presented shows the name of the team which was founded and led by Brother Hochstedler.

The Pope asked “What is it?” When Andrew responded “a Frisbee,” the Pope looked at him blankly. When Andrew explained “two people throw it back and forth to share the joy with each other,” the Pope broke out in a broad smile and said “Well, that's great!” (“Bello! Bello!”). Andrew then went on to explain all about the “Spirit of the Game.”

Brother Hochstedler admitted that mentally he was “totally empty” when talking to the Holy Father, but was sure that he had touched deeply his own motivation to play this sport. In Turkey there now are 14 clubs in cities including Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, and Antalya - tremendous growth since Türk Kasi was founded several years ago.

In 2013 the Turkish Federation Oyunun Ruhu Derneği (ORD) was approved by WFDF as the national member association in Turkey. The name of the association translates as “Spirit of the Game” - the principle in Ultimate to which brother Hochstedler devoted his brief meeting with Francis.

Robert “Nob” Rauch, WFDF President, commented “it is always great to see Ultimate players serving as disc missionaries, whether to disadvantaged youngsters in developing countries or to someone in a position of great power such as the Pope. We can imagine that Pope Francis would have appreciated Brother Andrew’s enthusiasm in highlighting how “spirit of the game” helps him live out his faith.”

The picture above shows Pope Francis with the disc that was presented (photo by Joel Perera).

About WFDF:

The World Flying Disc Federation (“WFDF”) serves as the international sports federation responsible for world governance of flying disc (Frisbee™) sports, including Ultimate, Disc Golf, Beach Ultimate, Freestyle, Guts, and Individual (Overall) Events. WFDF is made up of the National Associations (“Members”) that govern their respective disc sports, and there are currently 60 Members representing athletes in 56 countries. WFDF is an International Federation recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), an ARISF member and a member of SportAccord and the International World Games Association. WFDF is recognized as a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) registered corporation in the State of Colorado, USA, and it is a signatory of the World Anti-Doping Agency code.

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