
Romania: Polish priests won European five-a-side football championship. Pope Francis, “reaffirming the value of priestly fraternity”

After several matches played over two days, the Polish team won the 15th European five-a-side football championship for Catholic priests, held in Timișoara, Romania, from 13 to 16 February. The event was “intended to reaffirm the value of the encounter and priestly fraternity”, as Pope Francis called it, in a message addressed to the participants. The Pope also expressed the hope that the initiative will contribute to “fostering mutual cooperation between people of various backgrounds, as well as to promoting hospitality that overcomes any marginalization”; that “it will contribute to strengthening feelings of authentic friendship and to a fruitful sharing of experiences of closeness to the people to whom you have been sent as messengers of God’s tenderness and love”. “Be team players”, he added, for “this is essential not only for sports achievements, but also for us to walk together as a Church”. The winners received the prizes from the hands of Bishop Iosif Csaba Pál of Timișoara. Portugal attained the second place, and Bosnia and Herzegovina the third place. The top scorer was Fr André Meireles (Portugal) with eight goals, the best goalkeeper was Fr Damian Stala (Poland), the best technical player was Fr Josip Papak (Bosnia and Herzegovina), and the Czech team was awarded the Fair Play prize. The next edition will be held in Scutari, Albania, on 5-9 February 2024.

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