

Vancouver Archdiocese embraces 'radical hospitality' for Olympics

VANCOUVER, British Columbia - The Archdiocese of Vancouver is warming up for its own type of Olympic event. However, it won't take place on ice or snow; it will be on the streets of the city.

"(We) have embraced the theme of radical hospitality for our initiatives; that is, to see Jesus as both guest and host at these games," Vancouver Archbishop J. Michael Miller wrote in a letter to athletes and participants of the 2010 Winter Olympics.

In the letter, Archbishop Miller said the city of Vancouver had prepared for the Olympics for years by improving infrastructure and building state-of-the-art sporting facilities. He also recognized the throngs of volunteers donating their time to make the XXI Winter Olympics a success.

Vancouver and Whistler will host the Olympics Feb. 12-28 and the Paralympics March 12-21.

"While you are here, we hope you will consider visiting one of the archdiocese's downtown hospitality centers for athletes," Archbishop Miller wrote, referring to Holy Rosary Cathedral and the archdiocesan offices.

"We think you will find these places to be sanctuaries while you take a break from the rigors of competition," he wrote. "We hope you will find a common language in the love of Jesus Christ."

He also noted the Olympics coincide with one of the most important times of the Christian year, the journey toward Easter. He invited all athletes to attend Ash Wednesday Mass Feb. 17 and to celebrate Sunday Mass while they are in the area. The archdiocesan Web site, www.rcav.org/2010, includes church locations and Mass times as well as other Olympic outreach activities.

"We wish all of you who have come to our beautiful city a satisfying and rewarding competition, but, most of all, we hope you will experience the 'radical hospitality' of

Vancouverites," he said.