



Pope Francis posing for a selfie during a visit to the Castelnuovo di Porto refugee center, Rome. Photo | EPA/OSSERVATORE ROMANO

POPE FRANCIS | SPORTS | OLYMPICS

Vatican athletics team 'adopts' two African migrants

By  ANSA | Latest update : 2018/03/07

The Vatican's athletics team has decided to include two young African migrants as members - an act of solidarity aimed at promoting integration through sport.

The team *Athletica Vaticana* has grown to include two young African migrants hosted by the "Auxilium" cooperative in Castelnuovo di Porto near Rome, a facility visited by Pope Francis on Holy Thursday in 2016 to meet with young refugees. On Friday, Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, the president of the Pontifical Council for Culture, which oversees *Athletica Vaticana*, will give the team's jerseys to the two young migrants in a symbolic ceremony.

A gesture to welcome migrants

The initiative's promoters said the invitation to the two new members is aimed at promoting solidarity and the concrete integration of migrants through sport, after calls made by Pope Francis and the International Olympic Committee's decision to create a team of athletes who are refugees.

Meanwhile, a team of German marathon runners from Wittenberg, Martin Luther's town, will be in Rome for a "twinning" event with *Athletica Vaticana*.