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Sports and Spirituality in Jesuit Higher Education

Mark Bandsuch, S.J.

This article looks at the relationship between sports and spirituality within the context of Jesuit higher education. It also introduces an "Athletic Spirituality Program" as one way to assist the spiritual growth of the university athletic community.

Introduction

Crowded into a hotel conference facility, the football team shares in Eucharist before its pre-game meal. Circled around a candle in their locker-room, basketball players pray with music and scripture in gratitude for the blessings of the past season. Huddled on the field before the first pitch, baseball and softball squads invoke the blessing of Mary, the Queen of Victory. Meeting after practice for weeks, men and women soccer players organize a food bank and meal service for Thanksgiving Day. Throughout the season, a chaplain offers pre-game blessings, game-time encouragement, and post-game congratulations to players, coaches and family. At year's end, coaches gather for a seminar on Ignatian Spirituality and Jesuit Education. These activities are a small sampling of the "spirituality" practiced by Jesuit university athletic teams in fostering the university mission to assist the spiritual growth of its students.

The relationship between "spirituality and sports," once viewed as quite tenuous, has been validated by the academic community through much research and study over the last twenty years. Yet the persistent problems among intercollegiate athletics continue to raise concerns about spirituality and sports within the context of education. Jesuit universities, with their sincere and enduring interest in both spirituality and education, provide an appropriate arena for the discussion of these issues. The goals of Jesuit education and the mission of Jesuit universities supply the starting point and framework for a closer look at

the relationship between spirituality and sports at Jesuit universities. This essay then concludes with the presentation of an "Athletic Spirituality Program," as one model for augmenting the athletic community's effort to fulfill the goals and mission of Jesuit higher education.

Jesuit Education

The Society of Jesus has educated people for over four hundred years according to the spiritual and educational experience of its founder, Saint Ignatius Loyola. The Jesuit vision of education, inspired by Ignatius and his *Spiritual Exercises*, guided by Part IV of the Society's *Constitutions*, and codified in the *Ratio Studiorum*, has been articulated for our current culture in the mission statements of the twenty-eight Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States. These various mission statements and the documents that preceded them display a continuity and similarity in their descriptions of the distinctive dimensions of Jesuit education. This paper presumes five essential elements or objectives of Jesuit education, identified as God, Person, Excellence, Leaders and Adaptability.¹

The first and controlling objective of Jesuit education is to direct all towards the discovery and experience of **God**. Most mission statements specify that Jesuit education should help students (and the entire university community) to grow spiritually. Second, Jesuit education includes a concern for and effort to promote the development of the student's **whole person**. The Jesuit university ought to contribute to the balanced and integrated intellectual, emotional, moral, spiritual, social and physical

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formation of its students. The third characteristic of Jesuit education is **excellence**. Every aspect of Jesuit education (e.g., curriculum, facilities, and faculty) should embody and nurture excellence, so that the university community may achieve its highest potential. The fourth dimension of Jesuit education is to prepare **leaders** who will serve the common good of society. The Jesuit understanding of leadership necessarily includes the promotion of justice and the service of those most in need. The final quality of Jesuit education is **adaptability**. Jesuit universities need to adapt (and teach others how to adapt) to the "signs of the times" in order to properly educate a variety of students in a variety of ways to do a variety of things in a variety of cultures over a long period of constantly changing circumstances.

The supporters of intercollegiate athletics claim that sports meet these objectives of Jesuit education because they help to develop character, excellence, and leadership, while cultivating virtues like charity, fairness, patience, loyalty, humility, discipline, cooperation and temperance. The argument continues that sports promote life-skills, social skills, physical fitness, mental alertness, tension release, educational advancement, career mobility, religiosity, and patriotism. At the institutional level, sports supposedly create school spirit and community among students and fans of diverse classes, races, and religions. Athletics also allegedly encourage alumni donations, student interest, public relations, income flow, and television exposure, all while providing entertainment.²

Unfortunately, as some of the previous articles bring to light, not all athletic programs realize this promise. Furthermore, concerns over intercollegiate athletics are almost as numerous as the positive claims. Many argue that college sports detract from the appropriate emphasis on education, causing academic underperformance and dishonesty, denial of admission to more qualified non-athletes, and unequal distribution of resources. The criticism continues that sports engender criminal behavior, racism, sexism (as to gender and orientation), classism, gambling, exploitation, alienation, violence, aggression, stress, recreational and performance-enhancing drug abuse, recruiting violations, preferential treatment and

financial favors from boosters, coaches, professors, administrators, media and other interested parties.

Although intercollegiate athletics has the ability to advance all five characteristics of Jesuit education, certain imperfections do exist. Refocusing athletic programs on the Jesuit Mission and implementing activities to further the related objectives are ways to help college sports meet their potential and avoid their pitfalls. Some schools have instituted Athletic Spirituality Programs with the hope of providing activities that assist athletic departments with their promotion of Jesuit objectives, particularly spiritual growth. If sports (with the help of such programs) support spiritual growth, then they provide a learning experience that satisfies in part the first and second objectives of Jesuit education and a critical component of most Jesuit mission statements. Before taking a closer look at an Athletic Spirituality Program, I want to examine the synergy between sports and spirituality because it is a significant reason that athletics has the incredible capability to satisfy the objectives of Jesuit higher education.

Spirituality and Sports

Sports most likely began as a religious and spiritual activity as "primitive societies frequently incorporated running, jumping, throwing, wrestling and even ball playing into their religious rituals and ceremonies."³ Certain Apache tribes used relay races as part of their fertility rites, while the Mayans and Aztecs played a life and death game of soccer in support of their sun-moon myth of creation. The Olympic games of the ancient Greeks were sacred festivals in honor of deities and included days devoted solely to religious ceremonies.⁴ The presence of a religious altar and chapel within the center of each gymnasium further reflects the intimate connection between sports and spirituality in Hellenic life.⁵

Conversely, Roman sports inherited a secularism from their society, displayed in gladiatorial contests that emphasized the skills of warfare. This secular trend, coupled with the developing Christian negativity toward the body, saw religion disassociate itself from sports during medieval times.⁶ The Puritan ethic

emphasizing work and disapproving of pleasure led to laws in England and the American colonies prohibiting any play or sport on the Sabbath.⁷

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, industrialization and social reforms combined to create a concern over the physical health of Americans, leading religion to return to a more accepting attitude towards sports since exercise presented a solution to a national problem.⁸ This era of modern sports initially retained some of its anti-spiritual sentiment in its characteristics of secularism, equality, specialization, rationalization, bureaucracy, quantification and records, before rediscovering and reintegrating its spiritual heritage.⁹ This reversal reveals itself in the modern critique of athletics that declares that sports embody and extol the very values of the Protestant Ethic that they were earlier said to lack and contravene.¹⁰

More recently, sports and spirituality have forged a somewhat symbiotic relationship. Religious organizations have used sports for social service (playgrounds for youth), community-building (leagues for members), and evangelization (the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and Athletes in Action, part of a movement collectively called "Sportianity," "Jocks for Jesus," or "Muscular Christianity"). Even Jesuit universities have used intercollegiate athletics to publicize their schools and mission, to nurture ties with alumni and politicians, and to attract students and funding. Likewise, sports have used religion and spirituality to gain financial and personal support, to cope with stress and to assist the goal of athletic success.

The similarities between sports and spirituality seem to make sports a natural avenue for spiritual development. An extreme comparison of sports and spirituality reads:¹¹

"Sport has a body of formally stated **beliefs**, accepted on faith by great masses of people...Sport also has its "**saints**" [**heroes**] - those departed souls who in their lives exemplified and made manifest the prescriptions of the dogma of sport...Sport also has its **ruling patriarchs** [**highpriests**], a prestigious group of coaches, managers and sportsmen

who exercise controlling influence over national sports organizations ...Sport has its **"gods" [prophets]** -- star and superstar athletes who, though powerless to alter their own situations, wield great influence and charisma over the masses of fans... Sport has its **shrines** -- the national halls of fame and thousands of trophy rooms and cases...Sport also has its **"houses of worship"** spread across the land where millions congregate to bear witness to the manifestations." (bold added)¹²

Sports and spirituality also have **seekers** of the kingdom (**disciple**-like sport fans who religiously follow their sport saints and comprise the congregation in the houses of worship like Yankee Stadium and Lambeau Field), **high councils** (like the NCAA and IOC who make and interpret rules) and their **tradition** and **history** maintained primarily by **male scribes** (sportswriters).¹³ Sports similarly have **rituals** designated by **sacred time, space, roles** and **symbols** that facilitate participation in a sacred reality beyond the event itself. Professional football games occur on the Sabbath in the sacred stadium or houses of worship between teams outfitted with colorful uniforms and logos. All sports have players, referees, coaches, fans, and owners performing their spiritual roles and rites. Seasonal rituals include baseball's spring training, Olympic summers, Super Bowl Sunday, and "the fall classic" (i.e., World Series).

Sports further mirrors spirituality with its **personal piety** (making the sign of the cross before shooting a free throw), **asceticism** (fasting from certain foods or sex just like the desert Fathers), **prayer** (boxers privately before fights and football players publicly in end-zones) and **community worship** by teams and players (Baseball Chapel, where pro players gather before games on worship days). Both spirituality and sport use **myth** to relate paradigmatic events and beliefs (Odysseus prayed for help in his footrace against Ajax, and Babe Ruth pointed to the fence in the World Series). The sport stories of heroes and heroic events, whether from the past centuries or past day, allow our deepest human desires, needs and potential to be realized. In this way, sports exercise their transformative

power. Sports are essentially an actualized myth, or experiential narrative, that people can enter into to give their lives order and meaning.¹⁴

Most importantly, sport seems to share with religion and spirituality the potential for experiencing **the transcendent and holy**. This occurrence is often referred to as "peak experience," "flow" or being in "the zone" and is scientifically detailed with characteristics such as an altered state of consciousness, increased sense perception, elongated time, focused awareness, control of self and environment, concentration, calmness, confidence, effortless movement, emotional high and transcendence of self.¹⁵ Some consider these experiences to be true religious experience; others see them simply as psychological or physiological phenomena. Regardless of how such experiences are classified, sports offer concrete and accessible opportunities for insight and understanding into spiritual experience. And even without the experience itself, sports model enough about beliefs, morality, ritual and community to provide the student-athlete with an essential learning experience and a wonderful practicum for spiritual development.¹⁶

Jesuit spirituality believes that one can "find God in all things," including sports, since God manifests or reveals the sacred in our midst. The sacred and the profane, the holy and the ordinary, God and humanity all come together in sports, providing a lived experience in which one's spirituality, whatever it is, can be modeled, accessed and nurtured. As a lived metaphor analogous to but not a substitute for traditional spirituality and formal religion, sports offer insights into the experience of the transcendent, the excellence of human ability, the impact of beliefs on actions and morality, the benefits and responsibilities of community, the role of ritual, the importance of language, the sacredness of houses of worship, the importance of history and tradition, and the dynamics of discipleship. Providing activities and reflection that enable athletes to use their sports experiences to develop their spiritual lives becomes the challenge and the hope. If Jesuit universities can use sports to enrich the spiritual lives of all their "participants" (including fans, parents, coaches and alumni), then they will significantly help to satisfy the mandates of Jesuit

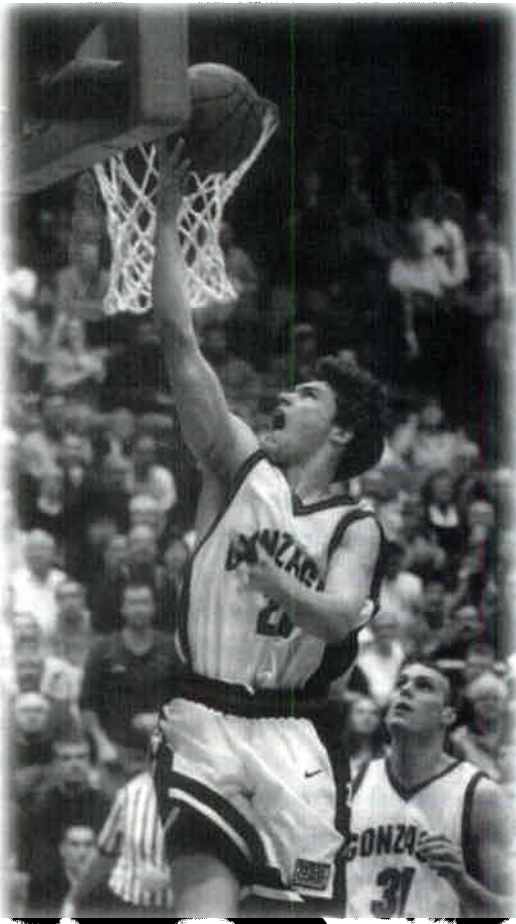


Photo Courtesy of Gonzaga University

education. This is precisely what an Athletic Spirituality Program hopes to facilitate.

Athletic Spirituality Program

The Athletic Spirituality Program (ASP) probably began in one sense during ancient times when an interested religious person officially offered his or her prayers, support and guidance to a favorite athletic team. The more recent precursors to the ASP are the many chaplaincy programs supporting high school, college and professional teams. But the current model of the Athletic Spirituality Program originated around 1990 when the president of Xavier University commissioned an investigation into how the university, the Jesuit community and campus ministry could assist the spiritual (and overall) development of the athletic community. This study led to a final report whose ideas were further researched (in the form of a social

analysis of intercollegiate athletics and their relationship to Jesuit education), implemented and developed over the next couple of years at Loyola University Chicago. Subsequently, a more elaborate and systematic program was put into practice at John Carroll University and the University of Detroit Mercy under the name "Athletic Spirituality Program."

So what exactly is an Athletic Spirituality Program? Informally, it is an enhanced chaplaincy program that adapts and applies some of the principles and processes of Jesuit formation, education and spirituality to the athletic community. Formally and officially, "it is a combination of activities, services and support that, in accordance with each university's mission and the tradition of Jesuit education, assists the intellectual, spiritual, ethical and social development of the entire athletic community, with particular focus on the student-athlete." The ASP, guided by the objectives of Jesuit education, tries to help the student-athlete cultivate his or her self-discovery, personal excellence, holistic development, leadership, service to others, adaptability and relationship with God. This includes exposing the athletic community to Jesuit concepts like "finding God in all things," "examination of conscience," *"cura personalis,"* "discernment," the "magis," "peace and justice," "men and women for others," "our way of proceeding," *"The Spiritual Exercises,"* and *"Ad Majoriem Dei Gloriam."*

The broad range of activities and services that comprise the ASP include, but are not limited to, the assignment of a support person or chaplain to each team, formal and less formal pre-season and post-season reflection services, pre-game and post-game prayer, service projects, retreats, Missioning Service, coaches' seminar and retreat addressing Jesuit education, individual counseling, parents and alumni celebrations, ASP handbook, web-page, newsletter and info board (all with prayers, pictures, and value-laden sports stories), orientation activities, spiritual direction and a spirituality assessment/inventory.¹⁷

Other activities and support suggested by the various ASP constituencies include memorial services, guest speakers, classes on spirituality and sport, prayer groups, issue groups, assistance with recruitment and

public relations, national seminars, surveys and evaluations, help with other university services, support of broader university and community functions, student-athlete masses, film series, Spirituality Award, program endowment, an advisory board, educational trips to Ignatian sites, religious art (a statue of Ignatius), dorm chaplains and alumni mentoring. The following are some of the more successful and established activities.

Pre-season and post-season reflection services:

These prayer services can be held in the school or community chapel, team locker-room, classroom or any place conducive to sacred space. It is easier than one might think to turn a locker-room into a gathering spot and even easier to explain how the place where they share so much of their lives is sacred. Circled chairs, proper lighting, and a candle surrounded by a team picture or sport item (e.g., a ball and glove for the baseball team) does wonders. The service itself is straightforward and simple: welcome, introductory prayer, scripture reading, music, very brief "homily," open sharing, ritual blessing, and a concluding prayer. Coordinating a team song with scripture is a good place to begin. In the Ignatian tradition, pre-season reflection usually focuses on asking for graces and post-season prayer on expressing gratitude for blessings. People usually share graces and blessings as to the school, the team and life. Sometimes, the depth and intimacy of the sharing is overwhelming (and thus needs to be protected with confidentiality), while other times it is more mundane. The ritual blessing usually utilizes some gesture like pouring water over the players' hands one by one (they can do this to each other) with some words like "have a great year" (if they choose), while soft music is playing in the background. After concluding with the final prayer, a social of some sort is always helpful (it is amazing how little time some of these players have to just relax and talk with each other). Obviously, college students love pizza, but tastes vary from team to team (e.g., swimmers and runners seem to love pasta, fruit and salad).¹⁸

Service Projects: Service projects include team service, individual opportunities and entire athletic department projects. Athletes have visited children in hospitals, run sport clinics for youth, organized special

Olympics for the disabled, hosted underprivileged kids on campus, tutored at schools, helped at soup kitchens and more. Efficient organization is important here. The use of the larger university's service department (if it has one) may prove helpful. Plugging into already organized activities at the university or in the local community also works. In addition, some sort of journal writing and guided sharing/reflection after the fact usually deepens the experience further.

Missioning Service: Near the end of the academic year (a sacred time), maybe in connection with the athletic department's sports banquet, a Missioning Service occurs. The Missioning Service, modeled after the Jesuit tradition of sending its members off with prayers and a blessing, gathers the entire athletic community (in the larger chapel or the gym) to "mission" its senior athletes. The senior athletes, accompanied by music provided by the pep band, process in with the school banner and are seated in a place of honor. The presider welcomes the community and offers the opening prayer. Scripture is read (e.g., Luke 10:1-9 -- the missioning of the seventy-two) followed by a brief homily explaining the tradition of "missioning" and how our seniors will be "sent forth" as the athletic community's representatives to share the good news of their school and its beliefs. Then two senior athletes, a young woman and a young man, share their reflections with the community about what they will take with them from their four years of participation in intercollegiate athletics at a Jesuit university, and what they will give to others. The profundity, humor, goodness and grace that pour forth from these young people are nothing less than amazing.

Next, medals, to be given as a gift to the seniors, are brought forth to be blessed with incense and water. Another popular item has been a clear acrylic paperweight with graphic designs depicting the school logo, team emblems, (like a soccer ball, crossed bats, golf clubs, etc.), and a saying like, "The Spirit and Excellence of Santa Clara University Athletics." The graduates can place the gifts proudly in their rooms or offices as reminders to self and as a symbol to others of the "spirit" and "excellence" of their intercollegiate athletic experience at a Jesuit university. And of course a cookout follows the missioning, because everything

goes better with food.

The above are only three small examples of the many things that can be done to acknowledge the goodness so present in the athletic community. The constant feature in most of these ASP activities is the opportunity to reflect on one's experience, which is very much part of the Jesuit way of proceeding. The ASP simply tries to help others recognize, appreciate and deepen that ever-graced experience, which is encountered in both sports and in life. In so doing, the Athletic Spirituality Program advances the mission and objectives of Jesuit education.

Conclusion

What are the pros and cons of intercollegiate athletics for Jesuit education? That question is implicit in the pages of this issue of *Conversations* and mirrors this nation's general inquiry into the role of college sports in higher education as a whole. At their best, intercollegiate athletics educate and develop all dimensions of the student-athlete. But as they exist now, college sports are imperfect in their effort to meet their educational objectives. Fortunately, the natural connection between spirituality and sports allows an Athletic Spirituality Program to help the athletic experience become a life experience through which the athletic community grows in its relationship with God, develops the entire person, nurtures excellence, and learns leadership and adaptability. When this happens, intercollegiate athletics significantly help fulfill and further the Jesuit mission in higher education.

ENDNOTES

¹Numerous lists of the characteristics of Jesuit education exist. Some of the more helpful and interesting studies can be found in: 1) Arthur F. McGovern, S.J., "Jesuit Education and Jesuit Spirituality," in *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* 20/4 (September 1988); 2) George E. Ganss, S.J., *Saint Ignatius' Idea of a Jesuit University*, (Milwaukee: The Marquette University Press, 1954), pp. 185-199 and *The Jesuit Educational Tradition and Saint Louis University*, (Saint Louis: The Sesquicentennial

Committee of Saint Louis University, 1969), pp. 19-23; 3) *The Characteristics of Jesuit Education* by the International Commission on the Apostolate of Jesuit Education (Washington, D.C.: Jesuit Secondary Education Association); 4) "Analysis of Mission Statements of Similar Documents of Jesuit Universities and Higher Education Institutions" at <http://www.info.fundp.ac.be/~jbl/mis-stat/> and 5) "The Jesuit University in the Light of the Ignatian Charism," address of Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach to the International Meeting of Jesuit Higher Education (May, 27, 2001).

²Barry D. McPherson, James E. Curtis and John W. Loy, *The Social Significance of Sport: An Introduction to the Sociology of Sport* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Books, 1989), pp. 69-82.

³Allen Guttman, *From Ritual to Record: The Nature of Modern Sports* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), p. 16.

⁴Guttman, pp. 17-22.

⁵D. Stanley Eitzen and George H. Sage, "Sport and Religion," in Charles S. Prebish (ed.), *Religion and Sport* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993), p. 84.

⁶The end of the ancient Olympic Games was decreed around 395 A.D. by the Roman Emperor Theodosius, a Christian, as part of his effort to suppress paganism in favor of Christianity. Eitzen, p. 84. An exception may be found in the jousting tournaments of knights, who implored divine assistance. But this "spirituality" may find its source in war and not in sports. Sports, in relationship to war, may provide an avenue for expressing the warrior nature or activities that are part of humanity. Andrew Cooper, *Playing in the Zone: Exploring the Spiritual Dimensions of Sports* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 1998), pp. 136-43.

⁷Eitzen, 86.

⁸Eitzen, 87.

⁹These distinguishing characteristics, as cited by Guttmann, pp. 15-26, are found somewhat present in the Roman era of sports, which would be the other most secular period of sport. Notice how they also reflect many of the characteristics of industrialized society.

¹⁰In fact, "the emergence of sports as a pervasive feature of America life owes its development in part to the values of Protestant Christianity." Eitzen, p. 99.

¹¹"Sports" can be defined as playful physical contests (Guttmann, 7). This simple definition distinguishes sports (like baseball and basketball) from pure "play" pursued for its own sake (like running freely) and from "games" that are either noncompetitive (like leap frog) or less physical (like chess). Stated affirmatively, sports are organized and competitive physical play (that utilize mental ability). The term "athletics" describes sports at their highest levels of organization and competitiveness. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), for example, embodies the highest level of organization and competition for college sports). There are at least thirty different types of sports in the United States, many more games, and infinite ways to play. As sports and athletics become more organized, the closer they identify with "work," diminishing their playful dimension and its benefits.

Spirituality refers here to the description of a person's beliefs and practices towards an ultimate value, and for our purposes, is very similar to religion. The four C's of religion, Creed (fundamental beliefs about life), Code (prescriptions about moral, ethical and social behavior), Cultus (rituals that act out and reinforce the meanings expressed in the creeds and codes) and Community (people bound together by the shared creeds, codes and cultus) are arguably evident in the various spiritualities of today. Catherine A. Albanese, *America: Religion and Religions* (Belmont, CA.: Wadsworth, 1981), p. 8. Although religion and spirituality are not the same, they have enough in common to advance our inquiry into the relationship between spirituality and sports.

¹²Shirl Hoffman, *Sport and Religion* (Champaign, IL.: Human Kinetic Books, 1992), p. 7, citing Harr.

Edwards, *Sociology of Sport* (Homewood, IL.: Dorsey Press, 1973), pp. 261-62.

¹³Charles S Prebish, "Religion and Sport: Convergence or Identity?" in Prebish (ed.), *Religion and Sport: The Meeting of Sacred and Profane* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993), pp. 57-61. **Testimony** by its members (athletes speaking at seminars), **ethics** (the rules of the game, team, league and sport), **life teachings** (often derived from the rules of the game) and the belief in divine intervention permeate both spirituality and sport. Also, spirituality does not simply mean ethics. Some schools offer or require a course or two on ethics as a way to satisfy their sense of obligation to the multivalent dimensions of spiritual growth encompassed in the Jesuit mission statement.

Sports and spirituality also share **vocabulary** and **values** with words like faith, providence, sacred, sacrifice, dedicated, commitment, suffering, worship, and Hail Mary. They both utilize **proverbs** (scripture verses are found among the fans in the stands, the coach's pep talk and the players' locker). Ethics is an aspect of spirituality, but only one. Some degree of the **social functions** performed by religion/spirituality and sports are also similar (e.g., to alleviate the anxiety from the uncertainties and challenges of life and to provide for social integration).

¹⁴Cooper, 73.

¹⁵Cooper, pp. 20-47. Some distinguish between flow and peak experience, but we need not here.

¹⁶The similarities between sports and spirituality have led to different conclusions: some have gone so far as to say sport is a religion in and of itself, "a new national American religion at least similar to if not the equal of Judaism and Christianity." Others more cautiously call sports a "secular, quasi-religious institution," a "cultural religion," a "civil or folk religion" or a "natural religion" (Hoffman, 9-10). We need not go that far to see sports as an experience that can facilitate spiritual growth.

"The role of the chaplain cannot be overstated. A good chaplain, who is present to players, coaches, alumni and staff alike -- at practices, games, road trips and elsewhere -- is like a good spiritual director. If professors or administrators act as chaplains, then they may help to tear down the "invisible veil" between student life and academic life and help to nurture a more united university community.

That being said, coaches are probably the most important hire in the athletic department. No one individual has so much influence over the lives of the student-athletes. Just the sheer number of hours that players and coaches relate over four years, let alone the significance of that relationship, has incredible impact on the development of the student-athletes. If a coach seriously integrates the Jesuit mission into his or her approach, much can happen. So the practice of "hiring for mission" takes on added significance in the athletic department (see *Conversations*, Number 12, Fall 1997).

Although an Athletic Spirituality Program focuses on intercollegiate athletics, its potential suggests it be made available to all students through an advanced intramural or physical education program. A similar program should also exist for the fine arts (dance, music, drama, etc.), considered analogous to sport by many. What is the difference between Jesuits leading prayer services before games and the Kenyans' using witch

"A constant criticism of combining prayer with competitive sports is the potential for nurturing a spirituality that resembles superstition or even magic: doctors and witchcraft before soccer matches (Eitzen, pp.110-11)? What type of spirituality is represented when a priest addresses God as "Divine Father, Heavenly Goalie" before a hockey game, or what kind of spirituality puts stained glass depicting athletics in a cathedral? The ASP must also ask what type of spirituality it is putting forth with its rituals. Many argue it is wrong to ask God for victory in a game, but it seems that an integrated spirituality would express itself in all aspects of a person's life, including athletic competition. It may be of interest to learn that most sports superstitions involve uniforms, equipment, clothes, routines, numbers and charms (Eitzen, 107).



Andy Dunlap Photo Courtesy of University of Detroit Mercy

University of Detroit Mercy senior and Insignis scholar, Andrew Dunlap, from Deckerville, Michigan is a true representative of the Jesuit and Mercy mission. He aspires to achieve success beyond the classroom through campus involvement, helping others and self-evaluation. After six years at UDM, Andy has realized that one of the main reasons to go to college is not just for academics, but also to learn about yourself. With a double major in architecture (a five-year program) and mathematics -- two very intensive degrees -- Andy is glad he has taken the time to do that.

Andy's most prominent contribution to UDM is his dedication to assisting freshmen with their transition into college life through his position as director of the freshmen orientation program: Prologues, Transitions and Viewpoints (PTV). The program offers a canoe trip, backpacking and camping, critical thinking exercises and a volunteer project to bring the freshmen together as they help their community. Not only does Andy coordinate this week-long program, but he also voluntarily serves as a mentor to freshmen, offering them advice. "Classes have never been too difficult," he tells them. "The challenge is being out on your own and finding out who you are, why you are here, and how you fit in. The best advice I have is to get involved. I know it is a cliché, but it is the truth."