

## So what motivates you?

# PASSION FOR SPORT

A track event in athletics can be over in a matter of seconds or maybe a few minutes. A marathon may take a couple of hours. What do they have in common; well, lots of things – probably starting with some decent footwear!

Actually I was thinking more about before the off, long before the off, in fact; weeks and months, maybe even years, before the moment when, hopefully, it will all come together.

It is in that period, in the long hours and days of training and preparation that the foundation is laid for even beginning to believe that qualifying for, let alone competing at, the highest level is a possibility. Here, there is no place for the fair-weather athlete; no place for oversleeping and missing a gruelling two hours in the gym or pounding the streets while others dream on. For these dedicated souls, any dreaming has to be done when wide awake and while it hurts!

All who aspire to be the best can tell stories of sacrifice, of going through the pain barrier one more time and yet they do it and would, quite truthfully, have it no other way. Something must motivate them, and motivate them far beyond what others would consider reasonable.

Perhaps even more than being motivated, these people seem to be compelled to press on, to keep raising the bar, to become increasingly focussed upon a single goal. They will not be distracted; they will not be deterred; they will not be less than best.

But there are other costs to count. As the intensity increases some athletes find themselves distanced from colleagues, friends and even family. "Is anything really that important?" they are asked. And it is a question to which the answer is blatantly obvious.

And what of us? We who will not, realistically, be among those eyeing the podium which honours those who attain their goals. Yet we do have goals, modest though they may seem by comparison. And yes, we can be motivated. Even if the physical excellence of star athletes is beyond us, we can experience a depth of motivation to live the best life there is.

What could possibly be that motivation? No surprises; it is love and a love that is within such easy reach of us all. It is an overwhelming love and an all embracing love and an unconditional love. It is the love of Christ which compels us; compels us to be the person God intended each of us to be (2 Cor 5; 14).

And suppose we do respond; suppose we are motivated? Will it be pain free? Probably not. Will it make demands upon us? More than likely. Will it be worth it? Definitely.

*(See 1 Cor 9; 24-27)*

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