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★★★★★ **Take up this book, read it -- then go out to play and pray.**, February 8, 2015

By **Dr. Kevin G. Vost**

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This review is from: **Sport & the Spiritual Life: The Integration of Playing & Praying (Paperback)**

This book clearly lives up to its title and subtitle. Anthony Maranise's first-hand knowledge about and passion for the spiritual dimensions of athleticism rings forth from every page, whether he is sharing "UACTs" (universally-accepted Christian teachings), Pauline scriptural athletic metaphors, Catholic doctrine, Benedictine wisdom, insights from other saints, scholars, personal mentors, or anecdotes from his own wealth of personal endeavors in coaching and serving as a chaplain for young athletes. The book provides insights on a host of potential goods and evils that sports may foster, depending upon whether or not they are performed with an attitude of gratitude and an aim toward serving neighbor and glorifying God.

Potential pitfalls addressed include the ill effects of the overweening parent with unrealistic demands on their children involved in sports, to the potentials for self-absorption, arrogance, and self-destructive habits like performance enhancing drugs. Potential benefits addressed include the development of a capacity for sacrifice and teamwork, for the development of discipline, endurance, virtue, and deep lasting friendships through sport. (I found Chapter 9 on "Sport as an Opportunity for Friendship" a particularly insightful essay on an aspect of sports that should not be overlooked.) All of those issues and more are addressed with insight and with practical, valuable suggestions and exercises so that athletes may grow in spirituality as they grow in physical strength and skill.

Sport and the Spiritual Life is an excellent primer in the field of sports-spirituality. It makes great reading for any athlete, parent, grandparent, trainer, coach, or chaplain of athletes. It is a warmly-written, enjoyable read that should fire up anyone's love for sports and gratitude to God for providing us the bodies and minds to play and enjoy them. I recommend this book to anyone who loves sports and loves God and who would strive to better love God and neighbor through the vehicle of sports.

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**Reviewer**

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