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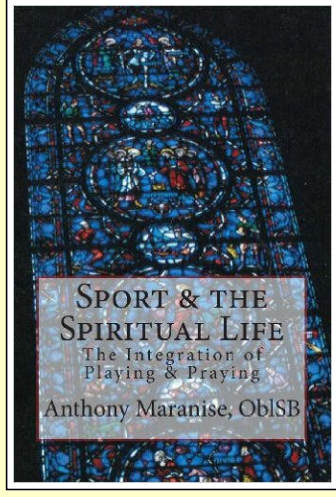
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Sport & the Spiritual Life: the Integration of Praying & Playing

Rev Michael P Kerrigan, CSP
Wednesday, November 11, 2015 5:18 pm.
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Sport & the Spiritual Life: the Integration of Praying & Playing, by Anthony Maranise, ObISB. Charleston, South Carolina (USA): Amazon Affiliate Publishing, 2013.

The caveat that "one should not judge a book by its cover" does not apply in reading Anthony Maranise's Sport & The Spiritual Life: The Integration of Playing & Praying. In this case, the book's cover depicting a stained glass window offers a helpful image and invitation for understanding and appreciating the contents and insights offered by the author about the interplay of sports and Christian spirituality.



The primary purpose of a church's stained glass window is to allow light from the outside to enter through the medium of an artistic rendering into a sacred space. For many centuries, stained glass windows have been used as ways to teach and to reflect upon sacred divine mysteries, an apropos model for reading these series of reflections.

Comprised of ten chapters, this book is written in an informal narrative style that utilizes anecdotal material along with insights from spiritual masters and traditions, noted theologians and philosophers, contemporary authors, recent church and papal teaching, and biblical perspectives in a reading exercise that sheds light about how sports and spirituality complement and interact with each other.

The reader can almost envision being inside a sacred space in which a guide offers insightful commentary, a different perspective from the ordinary way of viewing sports and physical recreation, and encourages connections to make new discoveries for further thought and consideration.

The diagrams, charts, glossary, and summaries along with the practical suggestions at the end of the chapters assist the reader in this reflective process. Chapter 3 examines five key Pauline passages that utilize athletic metaphors.

The author's Benedictine spirituality of 'ora et labora' is adapted in manner to consider new ways to "pray and play". The positive, educational values of sports such as 'asceticism', dedication, persistence, perseverance, necessity for discipline, commitment to training, striving for perfection and personal excellence, achieving goals, the importance of team chemistry, learning the lessons of humility and failure, developing friendships, etc. are seen as compatible with developing one's spiritual life and ways to grow in the Christian faith.

Both active sports participants and spectators are invited to view through the contemporary stained glass window in which sports, physical recreation, and the playing fields may be seen as mission territory that offers opportunities for prayer, evangelization, growth in the spiritual life, and Christian witness. Like daily life in the workplace, athletic endeavors offer opportunities to experience the divine in the ordinary human setting of sports and recreational activities.

Rev Michael P Kerrigan, CSP is based at the Catholic Church of St John - The Bronx, New York, USA

Sport & the Spiritual Life: the Integration of Praying & Playing, can be ordered on-line here: http://www.amazon.com/Sport-Spiritual-Life-Integration-Playing/dp/0615884083/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=

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