

A few words from the Vicar

Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it. Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable garland, but we an imperishable one. (1 Corinthians 9:24-25)



I'll admit to having mixed feelings about the Olympics.

You'll have guessed by now that I'm not the athletic type. Indeed, the last time I engaged in athletics of any description was under duress at my school's sports day! And then I did nothing more than stand at the finishing with a stop watch in hand!

I just wasn't (and still aren't) particularly interested in athletics and team sports like football and rugby. So when I reached the 4th year and the opportunity arose to go ice skating instead, I took it! But despite being largely disinterested in athletics, I'll probably watch a few of the events on the telly and will do my best to resist the strong temptation to put the kettle when the highlights are shown during the News.

The fact is I can't say I'm looking forward to the deluge of hyperbole and clichés that will be showered upon us by all the press and television commentators assigned to cover the games. I'm sure that *Private Eye*, which delights in taking the rip out of such journalistic excesses, will have a field day!

That's not to say I am entirely unsporty. I've always liked walking. Indeed, in my younger years, when I was 14, I was a member of an Army Cadet team from London that took part in the Nijmegen Marches in Holland. It was good fun. We walked 30 kms a day for 4 days and I have a medal somewhere to prove it!

Now, before you write me off as a moaning Victor Meldrew, let me say that even I can appreciate that hosting the games is a great national honour and all that. I just wish there wasn't such a massive price tag attached!

I appreciate too that providing an opportunity for the world's top athletes to give of their best is a good thing. I might not be particularly sporty myself but (if I use my imagination) I can appreciate that, for the athletes, simply taking part in the Olympics must be reward in itself for all their years of hard work and dedication. Most won't win a medal but all will have made sacrifices and trained hard so that winning a Gold Medal is at least a possibility.

I must admit, I admire their dedication. And I hope you do too!

Well St Paul urges us Christians to approach our spiritual lives with the same intense dedication.

The great prizes, forgiveness, a new beginning in life, our salvation and the promise of an eternity in God's love were all won for us long ago at great cost by Jesus through his death and resurrection.

But that does not absolve any of us from training hard spiritually. Therefore all of us should adopt our very own spiritual training regime. For those physically able to do so this must

mean attending worship on a regular basis (more than once each Sunday?). For all of us this means making an effort to live our day to day life in the way that Jesus would have us live it. And it also means setting aside time regularly for personal prayer and reading our Bibles.

In short we must go for Gold!

Every Blessing

Dave

P.S. At 8am on Friday 27th July 2012, thousands of people across the UK will be joining together to ring in the first day of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Everyone across the country is invited to take part.

It's the brainchild of Turner Prize-winning artist and musician Martin Creed, who has called it *Work No. 1197*: Basically all the bells in the country will be rung as quickly and as loudly as possible for three minutes.

We'll be joining in (I couldn't resist) and will be assembling by the Church Tower at 7.55am. Why not come along? You won't get a lie in that day so there's no point staying in bed!

Bring a bell if you have one!