

St. Francis de Sales Parish

All glory comes from daring to begin.

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Meanderings...

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BY REV. ROY ROBERTS

MOST people likely do not know that when I went to university for my undergraduate degree, I enrolled in a special course called Sports Administration offered at one university in Canada, Laurentian in Sudbury. Each year, they admitted 25 students to the program. Most of these aspiring administrators had visions of working for professional sports teams and organizations, ranging from the NHL, the NBA to the CFL and the NFL. Many of them still do.

Very few of us had any interest in the ranks of amateur sports, working behind the scenes in the provincial or national sport governing bodies. I had my hopes on working for the Olympics. So much so that my first real recollections of Olympic sports were in Munich in 1972. Later, when I went to High School, I studied German for three years because I figured it would help my Olympic career. I loved the Olympics, the pageantry and the achievements.

When I came to St. Francis the first time, in 1994, I had arranged to arrive on March 1, so I could have two weeks of vacation to watch the Olympic Games in Lillehammer, Norway.

I particularly loved some of the more obscure sports at the time, like cross country skiing, or luge, or biathlon. I dreamed one day of becoming the president of the International Olympic Association and ridding the Olympics of anything tainted by human partisan judging. The purity of the original motto, "*citius, altius, fortius*" (faster, higher, stronger) means that the winner is not judged, but rather the one who crosses the finish line first. It was about the pursuit of human excellence, and passion for the love of sport, and not the love of endorsements.

It is wonderful to see so much excitement about the Games. I hear people talking about them in the stores, schools, and offices. My own views of the Olympics have soured over the years with all the drug scandals, and doping infractions. It becomes hard to conceive of a 'clean athlete', and skepticism taints every world record.

The Olympics have lost much of their innocence for me, yet when they come round again, I am glued to the television in the naïve wonder of the capabilities and endurance and struggles of these athletes.

Their amazing feats serve to inspire us to reach deep in ourselves and demand better. That's the theme of every Lent.

- SR