

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

THE ETERNAL RING...

This Sunday as most of us know is "Super Bowl Sunday." On this day the Kansas City Chiefs will battle the San Francisco Forty Niner's in what will hopefully be an exciting game. Recently I heard about two nuns who were lucky enough to go to the Superbowl. Now, there were some very rude guys sitting behind the sisters that badgered them and tried to get them to move. So one man said to the other, loud enough for the sisters to hear: "I think I want to move to Utah. There are only 100 Catholics there."

The second guy spoke up and said, "No, I want to go to Montana, there are only 50 Catholics there!" The third guy jumped in and said, "I want to go to Idaho, there are only 25 Catholics living there." At which point, one of the sisters, now exasperated, turned around and calmly said, "Why don't you all go to hell? There aren't any Catholics there!" Hopefully not!

Well, it's no secret that in our country today sports is a big business. Just think of how much money is spent for TV Superbowl ads some of which are rather creative! We all enjoy sports and watching games. Yet at times, things get a little out of focus. For instance, some people refer to sports as a "religion." Or as Catholics might put it, "the eighth sacrament!" Yet everything has its place, God is first-then football! Well, there might be some other things in between.

When a team is victorious in the Superbowl, all the players receive a special ring. The ring is a symbol that those players have reached the greatest goal. We Catholics are on a team too, not a football team but the team that is known as the Church. Jesus Christ is our coach. If we would only listen to Him, we could all win what I call the "Eternal Ring" - the best prize, eternal life and happiness with the Lord in heaven.

In this regard, I recently read about a Catholic quarterback by the name of Devlin Hodges. Devlin Hodges is the quarterback for the Pittsburgh Steelers. This young man was converted to the faith and went through R.C.I.A. classes. Last month, the National Catholic Register had an interview with Hodges who also was an altar server. The Steelers quarterback spoke about how the seven sacraments in the Church truly present what Christ first instituted two thousand years ago.

Then Hodges said this about faith and football: "I usually pray that no one gets hurt, that both teams play to the best of their abilities, and that if I get a chance to get into the game, I glorify God. Even though winning is fun, it's not really about getting that end result, so I don't ask for it. I just want to do the best I can and have everyone else do the best they can, so it all works out for the glory of God." I thought this was a very healthy and balanced perspective on sports and competition.

We have often heard it said, "Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing!" But that's nonsense. We could say that Devlin Hodges has it right. The great Saint Paul wrote: "Every athlete in training admits to strict discipline; they do it to win a perishable crown, but we an imperishable crown."

The imperishable crown that Saint Paul spoke of is much better than any Superbowl ring. Not only that, we don't need to play football or any other sport in order to win it. All we have to do is to practice-truly practice our Catholic faith in the greater contest known as "life." Today lets resolve to strive for the eternal ring!

*Sincerely in Christ,
Father Jerome*