



Champion Coach Note: Love and Charity

Mother Teresa said, "Love is not patronizing, and charity isn't about pity, it is about love. Charity and love are the same – with charity you give love, so don't just give money but reach out your hand instead." The word 'love' is widely used in our culture today. We can 'love' a gift. We can 'love' an experience. And, of course, we can 'love' romantically. However, society has transformed 'love' into a feeling, and altered its true meaning.

What is love? Love (or charity in a Christian context) is not an emotion; rather, it is a conscious choice to "will the good of another" (CCC, 1766). Love is a disposition to do good for another person, expecting nothing in return. In its ideal form, love is willing self-sacrifice, a complete gift of self for another person. It is easy to love the lovable. But loving someone doesn't always involve liking them. We are called to love those who may be our enemies or who may be difficult to love. As a coach, you are obligated to treat all of your athletes with the same love and respect. Legendary UCLA basketball coach, John Wooden, said, "I treated everyone on my team the same. I just didn't play everyone the same." You have a tremendous amount of power as a coach; but with that power comes the responsibility to be consistent and to give equal respect to *all* members of your team.

How do we love? English writer, John Bunyan, once said, "You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never repay you." This week, reflect on love and charity. Ask yourself: am I truly acting for the good of my athletes? Do I not only tell them that I love them, but also show it? Do I love consistently, even when someone is



DePaul Catholic High School, Cross Country Team Praying

By charity, we love God above all things and our neighbor as ourselves for love of God. Charity, the form of all the virtues, "binds everything together in perfect harmony" ~ Col 3:14

Athlete Reflection

Remember the Titans: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WwJWW6UKnlc>

1. Do I give of my time and talents and expect nothing in return?
2. Do I make real sacrifices for the benefit of others?
3. Am I consistent in my treatment of others, regardless of how likeable they are?

particularly difficult to love? Am I someone who is reliable? Am I someone who will never prove false? Your capacity to love your athletes will encourage them to love others the same way.

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI said that sports can teach athletes to “overcome the logic of individualism and selfishness, which often characterize human relations, in order to make room for the logic of brotherhood and love, the only things that can lead to promoting the common good on every level.” Athletics can encourage individuals to give of themselves, expecting nothing in return. Create a loving team culture by encouraging self-sacrifice for the team and service to the community. St. Paul wrote, “Love is patient. Love is kind...Love endures all things” (1 Corinthians 13). If you truly love your athletes, you will have made a powerful, lasting difference in their lives.