



Chaplain's Corner

Volume 6, No. 21

February 1, 2012

Welcome to the Chaplain's Corner newsletter. If you have a joy or concern you'd like to share with our staff, send an e-mail or give us a call at Ext. 8348. We only share concerns with the campus community, via newsletter or e-mail, with permission. You can view the current issue of our newsletter (in PDF format), and previous issues, on the Spiritual Life page of the Lynchburg College website—www.lynchburg.edu/spirituallife.

Concerns

Our sympathies are extended to:

- **Meredith Gunter** (senior, Forest, VA), whose great uncle died.
- **Teresa Gunter** (Academic & Career Services) on the death of her husband's Uncle Alvin.
- **Heidi Koring** (Academic Advising), whose father, J. William Koring, died in Florida on January 29th.
- **Kristen Sands** ('10, the Bahamas), whose mother died.

Our concerns are extended to:

- **Lisa Womack** (Business Office), whose stepfather, Joe Ponton, was recently diagnosed with lung cancer and is hospitalized.

Faith and Football

This Sunday, after church, millions will watch the New England Patriots and the New York Giants compete in the Super Bowl. I will probably watch some of the game, but I have a toddler who will prefer the puppies and kittens on Animal Planet.

For the football illiterate, Tim Tebow is one of the quarterbacks for the game Sunday. In college he was known for writing Scripture references on his eye black. He chose a verse from Isaiah 40 to wear while he was the quarterback for the Florida Gators when they played Kentucky in 2009.

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:28-31 NRSV)

It's a common scripture citation for athletics, as well as the lectionary scripture for the week, which seems to promise physical stamina and favor for those who follow the LORD. In a recent article, Kathryn Schifferdecker, Associate Professor of Old Testament at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN, has this to say:

The subject of faith and sports is a particularly hot topic these days, fueled largely by Tebow's outspoken evangelical Christian faith and his come-from-behind wins with the Denver Broncos this season. Countless articles, tweets, and blogs have been written about Tebow and his blending of faith and football, many appreciative, some not. Tebow's practice of publically professing his faith in Jesus at every opportunity has made him a lightning rod for debate over the issue.

Tebow is also known for bringing a special person to each of his games, usually a child or young person fighting an illness. He often talks about the struggle of his guest at the after game interview instead of recapping his performance. Tebow himself does not claim the Lord's blessing on the field, but Schifferdecker also quotes a recent poll saying:

43% of respondents believe that Tebow's successes are due at least in part to divine intervention. Such a belief is fueled by Tebow's practice of dropping to one knee in prayer several times during a football game. But it's worth noting that Tebow himself isn't necessarily praying for victory. Instead, as revealed by an NFL microphone he wore during the Broncos' Dec. 11 come-from-behind win over the Chicago Bears, he prays for protection for himself and the other players, and for strength to honor Jesus.

So what is the role of the divine in athletics and sport? For centuries the winners of military conquests claimed God's favor, but I am not in the camp that believes the divine predestines human events—even the Super Bowl. I do believe that God cares deeply about each person who plays and each who watches and each who tunes in simply for the commercials. The Bible also tells us that God cares particularly for the poor, the vulnerable, the sick and the outcast. Originally the passage in Isaiah 40 was written for the Jews in exile, precisely when they were at their most vulnerable and downtrodden. The original recipients of the promises in Isaiah 40, in other words, have a lot more in common with the sick and injured kids in the Broncos' stands than they do with the strong, fit players out on the turf. That's not to say that the promises of Isaiah can't speak to a Tim Tebow (they obviously can).

No matter if you have a favorite team for Sunday or if you could care less about football, God cares about each of us and our struggles. God embraces each of us no matter who we are, what we do, what is in our past or what games we play.

Blessings, Stephanie

*By Stephanie McLemore
Chaplain and Director of Church Relations*

Passages . . . through grief

A group for those who have had significant loss.

When—7-9 p.m., six weekly sessions, beginning Thursday, Feb. 23rd

Where—First Christian Church, 3109 Rivermont Avenue

Cost—\$60 per person (scholarships are available).

To register, call Susan Williams at 434.944.8458

Worship Opportunities on Campus

- **Roman Catholic Mass**—4:30 p.m., Snidow Chapel
- **Lynchburg Christian Fellowship [lcf]** - 10:30 a.m., Sydnor Performance Hall
- **Quaker Meeting** – 10:30 a.m., Spiritual Life Center
- **Holy Eucharist**—8:30 p.m., Snidow Chapel on February 29, March 28, and April 18

Regularly Scheduled Meetings

For a list of our regularly scheduled meetings during the academic year, go to the Spiritual Life webpage—www.lynchburg.edu/spirituallife and select "Spiritual Life Spring Semester Calendar."

Spiritual Life Center
434-544-8348
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