

Super Bowl Sunday  
February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2006, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> 2007 and February 6<sup>th</sup> 2010

Few people know that this is the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in ordinary time...

But almost everyone knows this is Super Bowl Sunday!

Did you ever realize that there are great similarities between football and the Catholic way of life?

In the Catholic Football line-up: You are the quarterback, calling the plays....making decisions, making quick choices; that you will have to play (live with) for the rest of your lifetime.

Your Line: The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: Wisdom, counsel, understanding, knowledge, fortitude, piety, fear of the Lord.

Running Backs: Faith, hope and charity.

Jesus Christ is your coach; God is the referee, the umpire.

With the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, three theological virtues, and the Running Backs of faith, hope and charity, we have a well balanced team.

But our opponent is the devil, the quarterback.

His Line: The seven capital sins: pride, greed, lust, anger, gluttony, envy and sloth.

Against our backfield of faith, hope and charity, the devil has a backfield of distrust, despair and racial prejudice.

The rules of the game of football can be compared to the game of life by using the Ten Commandments. In a venial sin, you lost yardage, a personal foul is like a mortal or serious sin, so you lose possession of the ball.

The object of the game of life is not to lose possession of the ball, that is your soul.

Also.... The object is to get to the goal line, that is Heaven.

Christ is our coach; he will direct us, guide us, signal us to victory, cheer us on.

Throughout the game, Christ the coach will send in plays, through the seven sacraments.

What are some of the plays?

There are hundreds of football plays; I wonder if we use them in our daily life, throughout our life time?

Quarterback Sneak: To sneak in prayers during the day... for example: Jesus, I love you, my Lord and my God; come Holy Spirit; Lord give me wisdom, courage; Jesus what would you want me to do; Jesus give me the gift of wisdom; Jesus give me common sense; Jesus, give me the gift of integrity....

The Crossbuck: Is the sign of the cross, showing reverence, respect, devotion in this Catholic gesture; in making the sign of the cross, when beginning our prayers, and during the Mass, this is like touching all the bases to borrow from baseball jargon, with reverence, respect and devotion.

The Handoff: Making excuses, or blaming someone else for your misfortune.

The Double Reverse: When tempted to say a prayer, change your mind or change the subject.

The Screen Pass: It is shameful and unjustified to waste time on the internet, viewing websites and pornography. Use the “screen pass” for our eyes and minds.

The Fake Punt: It is rarely used in football today. But sometimes in our life, some of us have been fakers and phonies. The prayer for us fakers and phonies could be: “Lord, give me the grace to be what I think I am, rather than what I am.”

Power Play: Could be Mass and Holy Communion.

Sacking the Quarterback: Would be verbally or physically abusing someone we love.

Out of Bounds: Being at the wrong place, at the wrong time, doing the wrong thing.

Two Minute Warning: Is leaving Mass before the last blessing.

In football jargon, we have heard or seen the “Hail Mary Pass,” which is a desperate attempt to score a touchdown at the last minute of the game, on a ‘wing and a prayer.’ This could be a reminder to all of us to begin to say the rosary, while in bed at night.

Remember, the point after a touchdown is called a “conversion.”

Hopefully through a death, illness, loss of a job, a separation or divorce, a misfortune, triggers a “Mini Spiritual Somersault,” in one’s life.

And finally, a winning touchdown is when one dies in sanctifying grace, and enters Heaven.

That is the last and final play of one’s lifetime!

Grantland Rice, a famous and great sports writer once wrote:

*“For when the One Great Scorer comes to mark against your name, He writes – not that you won or lost -- but how you played the Game.”*

Can we see any similarity between football and the Catholic way of life?

We have only one game to play in this lifetime.

One victory to attain, one soul to save... “What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?”

Occasionally we might lose or fumble the ball; then we can use the huddle or time out, through the rite of reconciliation (also known as confession or penance) to get possession of the ball back.

**Please kneel for the following: I suggest closing your eyes and allowing the words, ideas to resonate in your mind and heart.**

*May our actions never be out of bounds.*

*Keep us, like our field goals, between the uprights.*

*May our fumbles be few, our recoveries quick.*

*And when we score a touchdown, remind us of the front line who provided the tackles.*

*And when passes are intercepted, let us try to improve our aim.*

*Teach us to prize an honest defeat above a dishonest victory.*

*Help us to play the game of life, so that on your divine score board,*

*O Divine Referee,*

*We may be included in the "everlasting hall of fame" ....Heaven.*

*Amen.*