

The Parish of Christchurch



*The Priory Church of the Holy Trinity, Christchurch
St George, Jumpers • St John at Purewell*

for Sunday 1 August, 2021

Dear Friends,

Citius, Altius, Fortius – the Latin for ‘Faster, Higher, Stronger’, the motto for the Olympic Games. Even with the absence of spectators, it is hard not to be affected by some of the TV coverage: so many outstanding performances, so much achievement even to qualify, so many tears, both of elation and disappointment.

What we cannot see, though we may guess, is the dedication and commitment to training that lies behind any of these achievements, much as we can only guess at the hours of practice and rehearsal that are the foundation of any performance by the musical virtuoso, the ballerina, or the star actor.

For St Paul, the image of the athlete in training was an apt metaphor for the Christian life:

‘Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it. Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable garland, but we an imperishable one. So I do not run aimlessly, nor do I box as though beating the air; but I punish my body and enslave it, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified.’ (1 Corinthians 9.24-27)

The race we run, unlike those in the Olympic and Paralympic Games, is not against other, but with ourselves. The “imperishable garland” to which Paul refers is the eternal life, the ‘heavenly call’ and promise of resurrection of which he writes so powerfully:

‘Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us then who are mature be of the same mind ...’ (Philippians 3.12-15a)

‘I press on to make it my own ... forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead ...’
As the Olympic Games continue, and the Paralympics follow on, may we all reflect on these challenging words of Paul. His purpose in writing them was to inspire his readers to bring a comparable commitment and dedication to living for Christ, and to allowing the Holy Spirit to transform us, our thoughts, attitudes and behaviours from the inside, as the example of athlete, the rower, the gymnast, the swimmer, the cyclist and those of the other disciplines, can inspire us to aim higher, day by day.

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Geoffrey Morgan, Priory Organist

It was back in April 2002 that Geoffrey Morgan took up the post of Priory Organist. At the end of August 2021, he will be standing down from this post which he has held with such distinction for the past nineteen years. In addition to his regular accompaniment of the choir in Mass settings, canticles, anthems and motets, he has made an invaluable contribution to the regular organ recital series. Many, myself included, have appreciated his playing of hymns: a skill sometimes undervalued by young organists, but vital to congregational involvement in worship.

To mark Geoffrey’s long and valued service, the PCC has awarded him the honorary title of Organist Emeritus. This will happen formally at Choral Evensong on Sunday 5 September, when we will also be making a presentation in token of our thanks. To contribute to this presentation, please give by one of the following means:

- **by bank transfer**, please use: Account Name - P.C.C. of Christchurch No.2 Account; Sort Code 52-21-34; Account Number 52428001.
- Please use "Geoffrey" as the reference and email finance@christchurchpriory.org
- **by cheque**: please make cheques payable to P.C.C of Christchurch No.2. Account and mark for Ian's attention. If posted, to Priory House, Quay Road, BH23 1BU. Whether by post or by hand, please clearly mark "Geoffrey" on or in the envelope.
- **by cash**: please put in an envelope for Ian Penny and bring to the Priory, marked as above.

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Confirmation 2021 Anyone who has not yet contacted Fr Richard or myself about joining the Autumn confirmation course should please do so by mid-August. The Confirmation Service will be in the Priory on Sunday 17 October, at 2.00pm.

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Choral Evensong with the Revd Jonathan Evans

A reminder that Jonathan Evans will be preaching at Choral Evensong on Sunday 12 September at 6.30pm. This will give us an opportunity – finally! – to mark his departure from the parish earlier in the year and to express our gratitude. Everyone is warmly invited to this service and the post-service reception.

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During August ... this pastoral letter will be produced fortnightly, rather than every week. Second, as we did last Summer, on Sundays 1st, 8th and 15th the Priory 10.00am Eucharist will be recorded (sound only), and will be available via the website and YouTube later in the day. Many thanks to all those who are making this possible.

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Re-reading those two passages, it could appear as if Christian life was all effort, strain and commitment. It's far more than that, as witness Paul's description of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5.22: "By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."

So, yes, living as a Christian with integrity, humility and purpose does take effort and sustained commitment – but there will also be joy. Perhaps this is the other image we can take from the Olympics and Paralympics, and not only from the winners. (If you haven't seen it, try to find the footage of Kye Whyte, who won silver in the BMX men's race.)

With the fruit of the Spirit in our personal life-training programme, we will be well placed, when our time comes, to echo Paul's words from 2 Timothy 4.7-8:

'I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing.'

Amen. May it be so. Wishing you the fullness of God's blessing,

Charles Stewart