

Renewal in Filipino Cultural Values Through Athletics and Sports

EDGARDO D. ALAURIN, O.P.

John Paul II, whom many people dubbed “John Paul the Great,” was by far “the most athletic pontiff in history.”¹ He is on the way to be canonized a Saint, and he may be a fitting patron saint of athletes and sports-loving people, because he preached the “gospel of sports and athletics,” about the harmony of body and soul. He loved and participated in sports during his prime: he was a soccer player in his youth, and as a young priest, he was a lover of the outdoor and active pursuits such as mountain-climbing, canoeing, skiing, cycling and hiking. He made use of sports to evangelize and to catechize, and even in his old age, despite his frail and ailing condition, he continued to teach the values of sports to the young. His entire life was a paragon of the words of St. Paul, “*I have done my best in the race, I have run the full distance, I have kept the faith.*”² He called sports as “one of the significant vehicles of lofty human values,”² “of high human and spiritual ideals” and “a significant vehicle for the overall development of the person and a very useful element in building a more human society.”³ He verily

¹ “Pope John Paul was also an avid sportsman,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer Sports*, April 4, 2005, p. A28.

² John Paul II, “An important vehicle of lofty human values,” *L'Osservatore Romano*, May 24, 2000.

³ John Paul II, “Sports can help to build civil society,” *L'Osservatore Romano*, November 15, 2000.

acknowledged its educational and spiritual potential to transform people and society.⁴

It is therefore important to identify and to promote the many positive aspects of sports so that they may be truly vehicles of human transformation. The key words will be “education,” and “inculturation” – to teach and to guide young people about the values of sports and try to infuse into them the values of the Gospel, so that in the process, they will be purified and transformed. In the context of the Philippine culture, sports and athletics may be one means or venue for a renewed evangelization.

A. *Filipino Value System in General*

Value as qualified in the Filipino sense is *halaga* (“value”), as in putting a price on things, or how much they are worth. In the qualitative sense, “*halaga*” refers to the importance of things that are intangible or immeasurable, like life, honor or dignity. Anything that is of value is *mahalaga* (“valuable”) as in things that can be quantified are expensive and costly, but qualitatively, *mahalaga* also comes from the root-word *mahal* (“dear”), and therefore, priceless or dearest to one’s heart. Thus, “value” is something *mahalaga*, because it is dear, precious and priceless that money cannot buy, and something that is kept in the heart with fondness.

Values are internalized ideas and feelings commonly shared by members of society or people [or group] that bind them together to live or work out together an orderly life, serve as the bases for making choices, preferences, and actions, as they constitute the foundation of what is ethically good and morally upright.⁵

⁴ On November 25, 2004 (five months before he passed away), Pope John Paul announced the creation of a new sports department called “Church and Sports” Department, in his address to the participants in the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for the Laity. This Department would provide new means for evangelization, as he considered sports to be an integral aspect to cultures around the world. See, “Pope Announces New Sports Department,” at <http://thepopeblog.blogspot.com/2004/08/pope-announces-new-sports-department.html>, accessed July 6, 2005.

⁵ F. Landa Jocano, *Work Values of Successful Filipinos* (Metro-Manila: Punlad Research House, Inc., 2000), p. 17.

Ours is a pluralist society and our values are products of the diverse cultural heritage heavily influenced for three centuries of Spanish colonial rule, the Muslims of Mindanao by Islamic traditions, the mountain tribes in Luzon, Mindanao and Mindoro that retained much of their pre-Spanish characteristics.⁶ On top of these are the Chinese, Indian, and the vast American influences.

But there are basic values that are based on a "common culture and a common social structure that we can truthfully call Filipino,"⁷ e.g., family, friendship, hospitality, loyalty, respect for elders and authority, among other things. These are values that are characteristically Filipino, positive or negative though they may be, but they define the true Filipino character, which we properly call "*ugaling Filipino*."⁸ These are also the values that shape the character of people, whether individually or collectively. *Ugaling Filipino* is a value system that "arises from our culture or way of life, our distinctive way of becoming human in this particular place and time,"⁹ and they are "best expressed in the actions we do and in the way we understand the events we experience."¹⁰

Christian faith has vastly contributed to the development of these native values that the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines [PCP II] acknowledged, but they have to be reviewed:

Hence we must take a closer look at how the values that we have from our Christian faith can strengthen the good in our cultural values or correct what is excessive in them and supply for their deficiencies.¹¹

⁶ See CBCP, Actas and Decree of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines [PCP II], Manila, 1991, no. 18.

⁷ PCP II, no. 19.

⁸ Ramon Agapay, *Ethics and the Filipino* (Manila: National Book Store, 2001), p. 77.

⁹ Vitaliano R. Gorospe, *Filipino Values Revisited* (Manila: National Book Store, 1988), p. 104.

¹⁰ F. Landa Jocano, *Work Value of Successful Filipinos* (Manila: Punlad Research House, Inc., 2000), p. 17.

¹¹ PCP II, no. 22.

As the Christian faith has taught the Filipinos the way to live the Gospel values, on the part of the Church, there is a need for a continuing process to help "correct what is excessive and supply for any deficiencies," so that these values may be purified, strengthened and transformed more into living the Christian faith in a social environment.

B. The Problem of Filipino Value System

Many observers, including concerned political and religious leaders, see our native values as negative in context and meaning, and as such serve as barriers to development. Some claimed that ours is a "damaged culture," our "character is flawed and weak," and our "values are negative,"¹² and that "many of the ills of our nation are traceable to or cultural values interacting with a social system which provides the 'wrong' signals and encourage the 'wrong' type of behavior."¹³ Still others, like social scientists, have alerted about the ambivalence of certain Filipino values, and the negative consequences that can follow when they are put into practice in "wrong" circumstances.¹⁴ Vitaliano Gorospe, SJ wrote:

Are Filipino values good or bad? The truth is that Filipino values are ambivalent in the sense that they are a potential for good or evil, a help or hindrance to personal and national development, depending on how they are understood, practiced or lived. They can be used in a good or evil context, e.g., *pakikisama sa kabuktutan or sa kaunlaran* [literally, "to be an accomplice in crime or progress"]. Filipino values have both positive and negative aspects depending on the context in which they are found. In a social system or atmosphere of extreme insecurity, the positive qualities of the Filipino take on negative and ugly appearances. For example, *utang na loob* ["debt of gratitude"] can lead to *pakiusap* ["asking favors"], nepotism or 'cronyism'. *Hiya* ["sense of shame"]

¹² F. Landa Jocano, *Issues and Challenges in Filipino Value Formation* (Quezon City: Punlad Research House, 1992), p. 1.

¹³ *PCP II*, Appendix I, p. 283.

¹⁴ See *Ibid.*

can become *pakitang tao* ["hypocrisy"] or *gaya-gaya* ["imitation"].¹⁵

But to present only the bad side is no more in the spirit of objectivity than it is to present only the good. In reality, Filipino values are bipolar – it has a negative polarity as well as the positive polarity.¹⁶ We have to admit though, that ours is not a perfect value system as all other value systems in the world, but there are beautifully treasured values and traditions that are authentically Filipino and there are still more room for growth and development. If these values are properly addressed, they may be effective jumping-board for value formation, education and evangelization.

C. *The Value of Sports for Filipinos*

We talk about sports, or games and leisure, in the life of Filipinos as "*mahalaga*," as to how they are part of their social or cultural life. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that some values inherent in sports help shape the some of their values, individual or communal. Sports have become part of the social order that involves behavior, attitudes and values.

As Filipinos are fun-loving people, one of the sources of their fun is "*laro*" ("games") and "*palaro*" ("competitions" or "contests"). "*Laro*" is the Filipino generic term for all forms of recreational play. Filipinos say, "*Laro tayo*" (meaning, "Let's play!"), whether they wish to play for fun without concern for consequence or engage in a highly competitive contest. The closest Filipino word for competitive game is *labanan* ("fight"), but it is very broad in scope for it applies to every form of conflict, fight, rivalry, and contest. On the other hand, the *palaro* sometimes refers to a group of special-occasion games, as in parlor games, that take place during special occasions, festivals and town fiestas and

¹⁵ Vitaliano Gorospe, SJ, "*Understanding the Filipino Value System*," at www.crvp.org/book/series03/111-7/chapter_Vi.htm-17k, p.3 of 4, accessed February 2005, translation is mine.

¹⁶ Cf. Tomas Quintin Andres and Pilar Ilada-Andres, *Making Filipino Values Work for You* (Manila: St. Paul's Publications, 1986), p. 4.

these are games that are competitive in nature and each contest has always been resolved to a conclusion.¹⁷ “Sports” and “athletics” are roughly translated into *paligsahan* (“competition”) and *palakasan* (“test of strength”) as referring to highly competitive games. At times *tagisan* (“test” or “contest”) is used to portray different rivalries as in *tagisan ng lakas* (“test of strength”), which is physical, and *tagisan ng talino* (“contest of mental abilities”), which is intellectual.

Sports is one thing that keeps people together: 1) *actively* – because of its team concept, of bonding and collective effort that enables people to work together as one for a common cause: winning; 2) *passively* – because of its rooted-ness, people support and cheer for their favorite team that breeds loyalties and fanaticism. Therefore, the main values that sports teach people, is that of togetherness, unity and teamwork. In fact those who are directly into sports develop a sense of brotherhood and fellowship as a way of bonding together. Common activities, common goals, common concerns, common experiences create a strong sense of bonding and camaraderie – *tulong-tulong* (“cooperativeness”), *sama-sama* (“togetherness”), *pagkakaisa* (“oneness”), and the like. The concept of *kasama* (“companion”), *kakampi* (“teammate”), *katuwang* (“help-mate”), *kaakbay* (“shoulder-to-shoulder partner”), *ka-brad* (“fraternity-mate”) becomes *kapatid* or *utol* (“brother”) in a much familiar and personal sense when applied in sports.

On the personal level, sports breed discipline. Virtues are developed such as, *tiyaga* (“patience”), *pagpapakahirap* (“sacrifice”), *lakas ng loob* (“courage”), *pagpupursige* (“perseverance”), *katapatan* (“loyalty”), to name but a few, which relate the “logic of sport” to the “logic of life.”¹⁸

¹⁷ Mellie Leandicho Lopez, *A Study of Philippine Games* (Manila: University of the Philippines Press, 2001), see p. 1. *Laro*, which may be translated literally as “game” or “play,” is given a much broader meaning using the words *palaro* (contests, as in *Palarong Pambansa*, the National Games), *palakasan* (“sports”), *paligsahan* (“competition, contest”).

¹⁸ See JP11, “Even the greatest champions need Christ,” *L'Osservatore Romano*, November 1, 2000.

D. Transformation of Filipino Values through Sports

Following the advocacy of John Paul II, *PCP II* re-stressed the urgent need for inculturation though it may be a difficult process.¹⁹ It is through this process of inculturation that the Church and the culture of people interact. The Church introduces the Gospel into the life of the people in such a way that the people will be able to appreciate its meaning and be in a position either to accept it or to reject it; or having accepted it, they may be able to assimilate it more fully into their lives.²⁰ The Church respectfully inserts the Gospel into a culture and it is in this process of insertion, contextualized in the Philippines, that the Church becomes Filipino to Filipinos.²¹ Inculturation would mean, inserting the Gospel into the Filipino culture and expressing it through the elements of our culture, in the process, the Gospel will affect and upset our "criteria of judgment, determining values, points of interests, lines of thought, sources of inspiration and models of life which are in contrast with the Word of God and the plan of salvation."²²

Since the Gospel message is not subject to adaptation and as such is unchangeable, universal, the same for everybody, it may be made more understandable and acceptable through the way it is presented. What is important is "how it is translated."²³ It is therefore important, "to search for *stepping-stones* in a culture that can make the Gospel message more accessible,"²⁴ "readily understood and assimilated."²⁵

Sports and athletics enter into this process as a *means* and as a *venue* of transformation of Filipino values. They can be "stepping-stones" to transform and develop traditional values for purposes of relating them to the Gospel values. By fostering the right attitude and discipline, it may give way for a meaningful renewal of cultural values

¹⁹ *PCP II*, see no. 202.

²⁰ See *Ibid.*, no. 203.

²¹ See *Ibid.*, no. 204.

²² *Ibid.*, no. 207.

²³ Nicolas Standaert, *Inculturation, the Gospel and Cultures* (Philippines: St. Paul Publications, 1990), p. 41.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, emphasis is mine.

²⁵ *PCP II*, no. 205.

in the light of the Gospel values. As they will be re-evaluated and given renewed emphasis, they can also fit into the goals of a renewed evangelization. It will be that these cultural values can be purified and be strengthened, while “the Gospel will bring about a beneficial transformation of cultural values,”²⁶ “correct what is excessive in them and supply for their deficiencies.”²⁷

Under this light the following are Filipino values and attitudes that can be transformed through the discipline of sports in the light of renewed evangelization:

1. *Pakikisama*

Pakikisama comes from the root word *sama*, which means “to accompany or to go along with,”²⁸ and thus denotes the characteristic of the Filipino as a companion-seeking social being who loves the company of friends and acquaintances. It makes the individual realize his oneness with the community and his personal commitment and loyalty to the community in return for a debt that he can never repay.²⁹ It connotes “being-with” and “being-part-of-a-whole;” as belongingness is a basic psychological need. It is the *ako-tayo* (“I-We”) relationship, which is characterized by a strong sense of personalism tempered by a deep, almost instinctive, group belongingness.³⁰ The Filipino does not feel secure nor complete without a *kasama* (“companion”), *kaputol* or *kapatid* (“brother”). He always seeks a family, a *barkada* (“peer group”) and a community. He never suffers alone nor does he celebrate his success alone. He always has a *kadamay* (“sympathizer”) in his joys and his sorrows. Fellowship among Filipinos continues even after death (as in “*lamay*”) that manifests one’s concern for a bereaved friend.³¹

²⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 207.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 22.

²⁸ F. Landa Jocano, *Working with Filipinos* (Quezon City: Punlad Research House, Inc., 1999), p. 66.

²⁹ See Gorospe, *Filipino Values Revisited*, p. 33.

³⁰ See Fr. Wilfredo Paguio, *Filipino Cultural Values for the Apostolate* (Makati: St. Paul Publications, 1991), p. 72.

³¹ See Andres and Ilada-Andres, *Making Filipino Values Work for You*, p. 28. Translations are mine.

In a more restricted sense, *pakikisama* ("peer-group friendship") means giving in or yielding to the will of the leader or the majority so that the decision of the group becomes unanimous. One unites his will with the wills of others in a gang or peer group for the sense of camaraderie.³² In a word, it is concession, but may rather have negative consequences and often associated with negative behavior, because it has been abused by many, as in "*sama-sama sa kalokohan*" ("doing foolish things together"). A person may join others in worthless or even dangerous ventures because he would be left out alone.³³ The group is called *barkada*, a peer group whose members have deep ties of friendship with one another. The bond of friendship is usually developed in the high school years and in the neighborhoods and it continues until adulthood. This bonding is usually indestructible for it is based on pure and genuine friendship.³⁴

Pakikisama can lead to very positive results when properly addressed or directed. It leads to *pakikipagkapwa-tao* ("human relationship"), *pagpapahalaga sa kapwa* ("respect for fellowmen") or concern for others, meaning group oriented or community oriented. It cannot be divorced from *pagdadamayan* ("unsolicited common concern")³⁵ and *utang-na-loob* ("debt of gratitude"). It makes one to be *makatao* ("love of fellowmen") which leads him to have that concern and feeling for others, while sharing his talents and time to the less fortunate members of the community.³⁶ *Pakikisama* can be positively directed to *sama-sama* ("togetherness") that is a better concept of

³² See *Ibid.*, p. 42.

³³ See Jocano, *Working with Filipinos*, p. 66.

³⁴ See Tomas Andres, *Positive Filipino Values* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1999), p. 155.

³⁵ *Pagdadamayan* ("unsolicited common concern") is closely related to *Pakikiramay* ("to condole with"). These Filipino traits are rooted in *pakikisama* or *barkada* system that enables one to assist a friend even without being asked, especially in difficult or bad times. It comes from the root word, *damay* which means "to be included or to be one with." *Pakikiramay* is better understood as oneness with a person in times of bereavement, or *pakikidamay* is oneness with a person in times of great need. These virtues have their origin in a very strong friendship and bonding (*pagsasama-sama*) that can be traced back in years of old. (Translations are mine.)

³⁶ See Andres and Ilada-Andres, *Making Filipino Value Work for You*, p. 43.

togetherness, deeper friendship, camaraderie or teamwork. It is a group united together based on common interests, purpose and goals; doing the same things in common and enjoying each other's company in bonded fellowship. But more importantly, they try to achieve something together by hard work and concerted effort, each doing his share of contributing for the cause. Such is the concept of a team in sports.

In sports, there is greater and stronger emotional attachment among individuals when the *samahan* ("group") or *kupunan* ("team") is directly involved in what they strive for, that is, when all the members of the group are unanimous in achieving a common goal. And given the right religious and spiritual orientation, *samahan* can lead to a very meaningful Christian bonding. They aspire to achieve a common goal imbued with the right attitude to compete or to accept defeat or go through the process of winning or losing, in agony and joy, and in the process gain some degree of fulfillment that goes beyond mere winning in competitions. These are larger than life experiences that extend even beyond their playing years – from *samahan*, it becomes *damayan* ("unsolicited concern") in real life.

Sama-sama is a better term for *pakikisama* properly applied in sports, because the team concept gives it a deeper meaning in togetherness and oneness, where members are all equal: "*Kung sama-sama, kayang-kaya!*" (literally, "It is much easier doing things together!"). It is better visualized in *kapit-bisig* ("locked-in-arms"), *kabalikat* ("shoulder-to-shoulder partner"), *katuwang* ("helpmate"), *kaakibat* or *kaakbay* (literally, "walking-with arms-around-each-other's-shoulders," meaning "intimate friendship") or better illustrated in team verses like, "*Kapag tulung-tulong, susulong!*" "*Sama-sama sa hirap at ginhawa!*" "*Walang iwanan!*" "*Walang bibitaw!*" – the Filipino version of: "*One for all, all for one!*" "*We are all in this together!*" "*In unity there is strength*" and "*United we stand, united we fall!*"

The Book of Ecclesiastes has this to say about *sama-sama*: "Two are better off than one, because together they can work more effectively. If one of them falls down, the other can help him up. But if someone is alone and falls, it's just too bad, because there is no one to help him" (Ec 3:9-10). And again: "Two men can resist an attack that would defeat one man alone. A rope made of three cords is hard to break" (Ec 3:12).

Sama-sama can be nurtured and sustained by the words of Jesus in the Gospel: "Remain united to me, and I will remain united to you"

(Jn 15:4); "That they may be one, just as you and I are one," (Jn 17:12); and in the words of St. Paul, that they "may be united in Christ," (Eph 1:10). Hence, if *sama-sama* in the team-concept of sports be given a Christian relevance, then it becomes, a "community" or "fellowship" with God, of the Christian values of social charity and of the spirit of Christian unity and "ecumenism" that can be understood better and lived in practice in terms of one's own experience of *pakikisama* properly modified.³⁷

Following one of the goals of renewed evangelization to establish new communities and associations, John Paul II says:

One of the central purposes of mission is to bring people together in hearing the Gospel, in fraternal communion, in prayer and in the Eucharist. To live in "fraternal communion" (*koinonia*) means to be "of one heart and soul" (Acts 4:32), establishing fellowship from every point of view: human, spiritual and material.³⁸

When *sama-sama* is translated into Christian fellowship, it becomes "*Kapatiran*," a "*Filipino Koinonia*" following the example of the early Christian community – as "they held things in common, to the breaking of the bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:42). They band together not only in their common interest, but their union becomes more established through common experiences, nourished by prayer and worship, and the reception of the sacraments:

In the first Christian community, brotherhood is expressed through *koinonia* – a fellowship that is based on sharing things in common: not just goods but of experiences, interests and goals. Such brotherhood is rooted in the fellowship Christ in the breaking of the bread. It is expressed in concrete events in which [brothers] are together. It is framed by planned activities carried out jointly. Such brotherhood cannot just be reduced to camaraderie.³⁹

It is the goal, therefore, of this *koinonia* to bring people together in a more Christian-like community and will be better enhanced by:

³⁷ See Gorospe, *Filipino Values Revisited*, p. 33.

³⁸ JP II, *RM*, no. 26.

³⁹ Rodel Aligan, O.P., Address to the Dominican Community at UST, Manila, on March 26, 2005 (unpublished).

1) accepting one another (Rom 15:7), 2) forgiving one another (Eph 4:32), 3) serving one another by bearing each other's burdens (Gal. 6:2). "To live in 'fraternal communion' (*koinonia*) means to live in harmony, to be 'of one heart and soul' (Acts 4:32) in God, establishing fellowship from every point of view: human spiritual and material."⁴⁰ Under this atmosphere, people, especially the young, may be encouraged to "put together the practices of popular piety with the greater use of scripture, real liturgical worship, the building up of faith community and involvement in social issues."⁴¹

St. Paul also gave the model of the body parts to illustrate unity and togetherness: "And so, there is no division in the body, but all its different parts have the same concern for one another. If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer; if one part is praised, all the other parts share its happiness" (1 Cor 12:25-26). *Samahan*, as a team, imbued with the Gospel values can be an ecclesial unit working together in a fraternal bonding and common concern. Under this atmosphere of *sama-sama* will all the other Filipino values be nurtured, purified and strengthened.

Kapwaan ("fraternal love") will be developed. *Kapwa* means "being part of" or "being in equal terms with others," as in being members of the same organization, peer group, to a greater extent, a fellow human being. It can be a way to give emphasis on the high premium Filipinos give to relationships – *kapwa* as a moral basis of relationships which means they must treat each other equally because they are after all *magkapwa-tao* ("fellow human beings"),⁴² which is the very essence of Christian love – "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Mat 22:38), "Do unto others as you would others do unto you" (Lk 6:31), "Treat others the way you would have them treat you," (Mat 7:12), "Whatever you do to the least of my brethren, you did it for me." (Mat 25:40).

This fellowship configures the model of the Church in a group imbued with the Christian virtues of faith, hope and love, nourished in common celebration of the sacraments particularly the Eucharist,

⁴⁰ *RM*, no. 26.

⁴¹ *PCP II*, no. 17.

⁴² See Jocano, *Issues and Challenge in Filipino Value Formation*, p. 14. Translation is mine.

using the concept of *agape*, guided by a priest or a spiritual director, or a fellowship of shared experiences, time and common effort where they learn the virtues such as *balikatan* ("burden-sharing"), *ugnayan* ("bonding"), *malasakit* ("unsolicited concern"), *pananagutan* ("responsibility and accountability"), *pagdadamay* ("sympathetic concern"), *tulungan* ("cooperation"). The *samahan* becomes *kapatiran* ("brotherhood," "fellowship") in Christ, or *kapwaan* ("fraternal love,") as a Christian virtue.

This *pagsasama-sama* ("togetherness") that originally started from *barkadahan* ("friendship") will become eventually, *Kapatiran Kay Kristo* ("Brotherhood in Christ"), *Kupunan Kay Kristo* ("Team for Christ"), *Kampihan Kay Kristo* ("Teammates for Christ"), *Katropa Kay Kristo* ("Buddies for Christ"), *Kaakbay Kay Kristo* ("Partner for Christ") where everyone acknowledges each other as *Utol* ("brother"), *Kuya* ("elder brother"), *Bro* (short for "brother"), *Mano* (short for "hermano"), *Brad* (short for "brother"), etc., inspired by the Gospel passage: "*Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in their midst*" (Mat 18:20).

2. *Bayanihan*

There is one social virtue that is distinctively Filipino. It is *bayanihan*, because it illustrates the willingness of a Filipino to help others in need. *Bayanihan* is a value relative to *sama-sama* attitude, the "spirit of teamwork and cooperation."⁴³ It comes from root words *bayan* ("country"), *bayani* ("hero"), *ani* ("harvest"). Coined together it elicits the meaning of togetherness, heroic act, concerted effort, and accomplishing something good for a noble cause and a common goal, then reap the fruits of their labor. Thus, this value is socially and community oriented. It is teamwork that "gets things done faster and better;"⁴⁴ or by getting involve with a group for a bigger challenge especially in times of crises, such is a trait called *pakikibaka* ("struggle").⁴⁵ This Filipino value is better illustrated by a group of people doing something for a common purpose such as a group of men carrying a *nipa* house of a neighbor

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁴⁴ Jocano, *Work Values of Successful Filipinos*, p. 30.

⁴⁵ See *Ibid.*, p. 32. (Translation is mine.)

or a friend to be transferred to another site, a group of men carrying a long log to be used as bridge, or a group of men helping a troubled driver push his *jeepney*, or a group of bystanders helping to extinguish the fire in the neighborhood, or bring an injured person to a hospital. It is a virtue that comes out spontaneously in an effort to help others in need. They join their hands in doing something meaningful, helpful, productive and beneficial to others and to the community without monetary compensation, a Filipino "Good-Samaritan" attitude in a concerted effort to help others and the community. Any accomplishment is compensated not monetarily. Any beneficent result comes from a free-willing commitment of each member to the group of unsolicited service extended to others and to the community. It is solidarity with other individuals with the same intention:

Bayanihan is many hands and minds working together, each one contributing his share, doing his best for the attainment of a common goal. It is sharing together of the fruits of a common toil and sacrifice. It is working together to get the job done; it is to share together in the harvest in good or bad weather.⁴⁶

Bayanihan is the paragon of the team concept of togetherness that motivates a group to achieve or accomplish something for a noble cause. Their collaborative effort makes the job much easier and less burdensome. A strong bonding leads the group to patient endurance, while each one does his share to contribute for the common cause. It entails a concerted effort or struggle – *pakikibaka*, so that the greater the challenge, the greater is the moral reward. With *bayanihan*, the practice of solidarity is well illustrated. As a social and moral value, it can be integrated with the Gospel values while emphasizing the communitarian aspect of Christian life, expressed in Filipino virtues such as, the *sakop* mentality ("kinship"), the social values of *pakikiisa* ("being one with"), *pakikisangkot* ("getting involved"), *pakikiramay* ("to sympathize with"), and *sama-sama* ("togetherness").⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Andres and Ilada-Andres, *Making Filipino Values Work for You*, p. 45.

⁴⁷ Wenifredo Padilla, "Inculturation in the Philippine Religious Setting," A Term Paper on the Principles and Practice of Inculturation, Faculty of Theology, University of Santo Tomas, 2004. (Unpublished).

Sports, whether team or individual, can be *bayanihan* properly speaking when it is ordained to an ideal purpose, like giving honor to one's Alma Mater, or remotely, to one's country. In the past, winners were enshrined as heroes, and for their fellowmen, they were models of virtues and sacrifice.⁴⁸ Sports and athletics were originally a means to reap glory and honor for one's family and community, not to mention one's personal glory. Today, it is one way of giving prestige and honor to one's Alma Mater, community and country. Sports heroes become instant national heroes in their respective homeland as they become the source national pride. This "*bayanihan*" attitude can help revive the motivation of amateur athletes to serve their country in sports competitions, to produce a bunch of new heroes with renewed moral and spiritual values to bring honor and pride to their country.

3. *Utang na loob*

Utang na loob refers to "debt of gratitude." It is indebtedness, which is harder to pay than money. Sociologically, it is need-oriented, it involves reciprocity – exchange of gifts, services and goodwill.⁴⁹ It is a debt that creates a relationship, which may have no end because the Filipino does not want to be branded as "*walang utang na loob*."⁵⁰ It permeates and influences all facets of the Filipino way of life – business, education, politics, morality and religion. Though taken or misunderstood sometimes to be a negative value to some extent, *utang na loob* is a very human and very positive experience and can be the basis of the Christian value of gratitude, loyalty and fidelity.⁵¹ If positively

⁴⁸ See Stewart Ross, *The Original Olympics* (Illinois: Peter Bedrick Books, 1999), p. 36.

⁴⁹ Jocano, *Issues and Challenges in Filipino Value Formation*, p. 17.

⁵⁰ Andres and Ilada-Andres, *Making Filipino Values Work for You*, p. 32.

⁵¹ See Gorospe, *Filipino Values Revisited*, p. 31. (Note: Fr. Gorospe notes that *utang na loob* largely worked against the individual. Within the family it has come to mean that children are expected to provide for their parents in their old age, as they owe them a lot not only for their life but also for their entire education. A child who does not pay this debt of gratitude is an "ingrate" ("*walang utang na loob*") or without shame ("*walang hiya*"). In the social scene, it is blamed for almost all the evils in the Philippine society such as the *lagay* system (bribery and extortion), graft and corruption in politics and in the government, smuggling. Corrupt government officials for instance

used and tempered by justice, truth and human dignity, *utang na loob* reflects the beautiful aspect of the Filipino character.⁵²

Perhaps a more practical and experiential approach for *utang na loob* to shed some light on its positive relevance as a Filipino value is to regard it in line with the Christian virtue of Charity: "*The gift you have received, give as a gift*" (Mat 10:8). One is grateful or has *utang na loob* because he was a recipient of a charitable act or any form of generosity from another. *Utang na loob*, therefore inclines him to do the same to others, a reciprocity of good things received: "*Do unto others as you would others do unto you*" (Mat 7:12). It is "*kusa*" ("out-of-one's initiative") character of the goodwill of debt-recognition, as interiorized by "*malalim na pagtanaw ng utang na loob*" ("profoundly acknowledged indebtedness"). It becomes not a burden of reciprocity but an open initiative, an "open zone of creative relating and responding in graciousness and gratitude."⁵³

Athletics and sports may be a means for this approach without putting too much pressure on the individuals. Examples of these are poor athletes who were given scholarships of schools, given better education and eventually, were given a better future and opportunities.⁵⁴ *Utang na loob* to their Alma Mater makes them witnesses to hard work, sacrifice and perseverance, as well as promoters of the good name of their school. In many instances, these alumni athletes, especially those who become successful in life, return the favor to their Alma Mater by helping other aspiring athletes to follow the same track. They become a source of material and moral support in any way they can. *Utang*

are perpetuated in their position because of "false loyalties" due to *utang na loob*. In some instances, poor people are indebted to the rich and powerful by little favors, particularly material or monetary, that result to string attachments.)

⁵² Andres and Andres-Ilada, *Making Filipino Values Work for You*, p. 33.

⁵³ Dionisio Miranda, SVD, *Loob, The Filipino Within* (Manila: Logos Publications, Inc., 1988), p. 52. Translation is mine.

⁵⁴ See Dong Magsajo, "Skywalking with Samboy," *The Philippine Star*, May 30, 2004, pp. K-1 and K-4. In this article, retired basketball superstar, Avelino "Samboy" Lim dedicates himself to training young people, giving training camps for children of all ages and to impart values, such as discipline, commitment, hard work and teamwork. It is *pamamahagi ng galing* ("sharing one's gifts"). And "he will never stop trying to make people see how much better they can become."

na loob is also a virtue that makes one realize his indebtedness to people, or the importance of saying "*Salamat!*" ("Thank you!") to those who helped him follow the road to better opportunities in life. This indebtedness goes through ages of time as one carries that gratitude literally till the end of his life. It is a value and attitude that has a long-term investment of kindness and charity that is "*kusa sa kalooban*" ("out-of-one's good will").

Utang na loob is gratefulness extended to one's mentors, the coaches who have given them all the time and attention to develop their skills and talents; and to all people who touched their lives, parents, relatives, friends, acquaintances, etc. are their inspiration: "*Ang hindi marunong tumingin sa kanyang pinanggaligan ay hindi makakatungo sa kanyang patutunguhan.*" Literally, it means that "one has to look back at his roots to achieve his goals in life," but, this dictum teaches people to be grateful and to acknowledge the kindness and generosity of people who helped them on their way to success or achieve their goals. In the Gospels, the best way to illustrate this *utang-na-loob* attitude is the narrative of the ten lepers (see Lk 17:11-19).

Pope John Paul II said, that sports give us "an attitude of gratefulness to God, who is the giver of every good and therefore, also the giver of the necessary physical and intellectual talents."⁵⁵ We remember in the parable of the talents (see Mat 25: 14-30), that God is the Source of everything and the Giver of all good things, including our very being. Sports and athletics is an area where one realizes the giftedness that he has to develop, but it should also make him realize to thank God for these natural gifts. Simple *utang na loob*, then, may be transformed into a grateful recognition of God's divine generosity, who continues to shower us with His abundant blessings. Is there any other way to thank Him than the Eucharist? For, it is in the *EUCCHARISTIA* ("thanksgiving") that our gratefulness ("*utang na loob*") is celebrated sacramentally, where people are constantly nourished and nurtured:

⁵⁵ JP II, "Beloved Young Athletes," Address of John Paul II on November 24, 1984, to the European Olympians who had participated in the LA Olympics, at http://www.appleseeds.org/JP2_Sports.htm, accessed October 24, 2003.

The Eucharist is a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Father, a blessing by which the Church expresses her gratitude to God for all his benefits, for all that he has accomplished through creation, redemption, and sanctification. Eucharist means first of all "thanksgiving."⁵⁶

A group gathered together in prayer or doing an act of thanksgiving and worship in the Eucharistic sacrifice is more likely to grow in faith, hope and love in an ecclesial community. *Salu-salo* may be a Filipino Eucharist, that is, sharing food, but maybe common concerns, material, moral or spiritual.

4. *Lakas ng loob and Hiya*

Lakas ng loob means being courageous, daring, aggressive, *hindi nahihya* ("unabashed"), *buo ang loob* ("gutsy.") It is the attitude of overcoming all odds, maintaining grace under pressure, holding one's own ground, and the ability to hurdle bigger challenges or to weather adverse circumstances. *Lakas ng loob* is the inner strength of mind and heart that enables a person to face adversities or bear difficulties with courage; it is also strength of spirit.⁵⁷ It also entails *kagitingan* or the courage to uphold one's convictions and beliefs in spite of the odds challenging them. It is different from *tapang* which is purely raw courage, because, courage has moral conviction.⁵⁸

Sports is a good training ground for *lakas ng loob*. Though it refers to "*loob*" as of the heart, but it also trains the mind and the will to be tough, hence *lakas ng loob* also means mental toughness to overcome fear, to be heroic or simply to emerge victorious. It indicates the type of will or amount of will power a person has in relation to his goals, ends and purposes (purposiveness and intentionality).⁵⁹ Susan Casey once wrote:

⁵⁶ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), no. 1360.

⁵⁷ See Jocano, *Work Values of Successful Filipinos*, p. 33.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁵⁹ See Miranda, *Loob*, p. 33.

Sports remain a great metaphor for life's more difficult lessons. It was through athletics that many of us first came to understand that fear can be tamed; that on a team the whole is more than the sum of its parts; and that the ability to be heroic lies to a surprising degree within.⁶⁰

It is *lakas ng loob* that teaches one to persevere in any endeavor, not to quit, and to keep on trying. Michael Jordan, one the greatest athletes in Basketball, once said: "I can accept failure. Everyone fails at something. But I can't accept not trying."⁶¹ It is courage that that makes the heart of man, to be a champion, a winner, or simply, an achiever. In sports and athletics, we see the heroism of winners and losers alike, who displayed extraordinary feats of courage and won the admiration and respect of people.

Lakas ng loob, as courage, cannot be measured, as it is intangible. It can only be tangible when one displays an extraordinary effort to overcome moral or physical obstacles, or when he displays the will to win and in the process survived and hurdled all adversities. Sometimes, even the runner stumbles!⁶² But from setbacks come *lakas ng loob* and *katatagan ng loob* ("firmness of the heart"), *tiyaga* ("patience"), and *di-sumusuko* ("never a quitter"). "No guts, no glory!" "A winner never quits, and a quitter never wins!" "No pain, no gain!" are the best lines to illustrate *lakas ng loob*.

Lakas ng loob has many faces, in the Bible, we are inspired by the courage of the prodigal son to go back to his father, the courage of the Canaanite woman to approach Jesus despite the opposition, the courage of Zaccheus to overcome scorn, the courage of Esther against

⁶⁰ As quoted by Wilson Lee Flores, "Business lessons from sports champs," *The Philippine Star*, Business Life, September 13, 2004, p. F-1.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² In the olden times, we remember the courage of Pheidippides who ran the road from Marathon to Greece to announce the Greek victory in 490 BC, then dropped dead. In recent times, Marathoner Vanderlei de Lima of Brazil won the bronze medal in the 2004 Athens Olympics. Lima finished the race despite being pushed into the crowd by an Irish-born former priest, while leading the marathon pack at the time of the incident. He returned home with a hero's welcome and said: "I attained my objective to bring back a medal. It doesn't matter what color it [medal] is: gold, silver, or bronze." See, *The Philippine Star*, September 3, 2004, p. A-32.

her persecutors, the courage of the Maccabees brothers and Stephen to face their martyrdom, of Joseph to overcome his misfortunes, of David against his adversities, of the adulteress woman to face her shame, of the Mother Mary at the foot of the cross to see the agony of her Son, but, above all, the courage of Jesus to carry the burden of His cross and accomplish His work of redemption. In the Christian parlance, we remember the courage of thousands of martyrs who died for their faith, including St. Peter and St. Paul. We also remember the courage that inspired the apostles to proclaim the Good News after Pentecost. It is also the same courage that teaches men to overcome fear. "Be not afraid!" was the favorite line of John Paul II:

Christ addressed this invitation many times to those He met. The angel said to Mary: "Be not afraid!" (see Lk 1:30). The same was said to Joseph: "Be not afraid!" (see Mt 1:20). Christ said the same to the apostles, to Peter, in various circumstances, and especially after His resurrection. He kept telling them: "Be not afraid!" He sensed, in fact, that they were afraid. They were not sure if who they saw was the same Christ they had known. They were afraid when He was arrested; they were even more afraid after His resurrection. The words Christ uttered are repeated by the Church – "Be not afraid!" These are not words said in a void. They are profoundly rooted in the Gospel. They are simply the words of Christ Himself.⁶³

Hiya is negatively understood as shame, embarrassment, timidity, and shyness.⁶⁴ The Filipino is very sensitive to personal affront, so he avoids the feeling of *hiya*, an emotion that makes one inhibit himself in a situation which is perceived as dangerous to his ego, a fear of being left exposed, unprotected and unaccepted. But on the one hand, *hiya* is the value that regulates the Filipino's social behavior. Just as one is very careful not to be subjected to embarrassment or *mapahiya*, so does the Filipino make it a point not to cause another person to be embarrassed.⁶⁵ *Hiya* is one virtue that allows a Filipino to be modest,

⁶³ JP II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, p. 5.

⁶⁴ See Jocano, *Work Values of Successful Filipinos*, p. 68.

⁶⁵ See Tomas Andres and Pilar Ilada-Andres, *Understanding the Filipino* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1987), p. 76.

humble and unassuming and he would rather stay at the background rather than being noticed in the frontline or be in the spotlight. If taken as a negative attitude, it curtails one from asserting himself in a more competitive environment, lacking self-confidence and "*lakas ng loob*," lacking self-esteem and self-reliance.

Sports and athletics can help build self-confidence and self-esteem, therefore the best training ground to overcome *hiya* which most of the time is a hindrance to growth. The moral side of building self-confidence and self-esteem can be better supplemented by Christian formation of spiritual value of *lakas ng loob* or courage rooted in deep faith. Courage nurtured in strong faith is trust and confidence in God, because, "*if God is with us, who can be against us?*" (Rom 8:31). Jesus also taught His disciples to be courageous: "*It is I, do not be afraid!*" (Mark 6:50). "*Hiya*" can also constructively teach people respect or to be submissive to authority, as in under the tutelage of a mentor, as well as humility in victory and the grace to accept defeat: "*Be humble toward one another, always considering others better than yourselves*" (Phil 2:3).

5. *Amor Propio, Delicadeza and Palabra de Honor*

These are borrowed Spanish terms, which Filipinos use to define *damdamin* ("sensitivity") at a personal level. It includes emphasis on highly personalized feelings of self-esteem, or to some as "self-love" or "self-control."⁶⁶

Amor propio is a Spanish phrase, which means self-esteem (or self-respect) and is associated with personal eccentricity and extreme sensitivity. In the negative sense, it can be harnessed as self-pride, that prevents one from swallowing his pride.⁶⁷ In the positive side, it embodies his self-worth, self-respect, and the totality of his being a person anchored in his personal dignity and honor, in fact, it can motivate one to excel, because to excel is to strengthen one's *amor propio*.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ See Jocano, *Notion of Value in Filipino Culture*, (Quezon City: Punlad Research House, 1992), p. 16.

⁶⁷ See Jocano, *Work Values of Successful Filipinos*, p. 68.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

It includes sensitivity to personal insult or affront. *Amor propio*, however is not aroused by every insult, slight remark or offensive gesture. The stimulus that sets it off is only that which strikes at the Filipino's most highly valued attributes. For example, a badly beaten team will never be cowed by jeers and insults of the opponent, but they could serve as the motivating factor to work harder to beat the same opponent or excel next time. *Amor propio* is ego defensiveness, dignity or personal pride.⁶⁹ It is equated with "*dangal*" which is personal honor, dignity, integrity and respectability, and as a moral norm, it characterizes identity, pride and commitment to ideas, principles and practices of people.⁷⁰

Delicadeza is translated as "refinement" or the sense of propriety and decorum, the proper behavior and judgment for what is right, appropriate, ethical, and moral. It is "sensitivity to ethical rules governing propriety of a social behavior, or being a refined person."⁷¹ It calls for honesty and sincere commitment to good morals to protect one's name, honor and dignity. Hence, it is closely linked with *amor propio* ("self-esteem or self-respect"). This Filipino virtue is also rooted in *hiya* ("sense of shame") that prevents one from doing something that is *nakakahiya* ("doing something embarrassing in public") or prevent others from being *mapahiya* ("avoid embarrassing others").⁷² *Delicadeza* is therefore, doing what is right and avoiding what is not right out of good morals. For instance, it is embarrassing for a player or an athlete to quit in the middle of a fair game because it will lower his self-esteem and it will betray his supporters' trust; it is not right for a coach to receive money from an opposing team, or from someone who has a vested interest in his players or his team; it is not right for a referee to receive gifts from anyone who is associated with any team or groups under his jurisdiction for it may adversely affect the exercise of his duty; or it is inappropriate for a player or a coach to transfer from one opposing team to another for it lowers their credibility and self-respect. A person without *delicadeza* can easily be bought, but a person

⁶⁹ See Andres and Andres-Ilada, *Understanding the Filipino*, p. 75.

⁷⁰ See Jocano, *Issues and Challenges in Filipino Value Formation*, p. 16.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² See Andres, *Understanding the Filipino*, p. 76. Translation is mine.

with *delicadeza* stands firm for his moral convictions and principles. In general, a man with *delicadeza* is a man of integrity and honor; he makes the right judgment according to the dictates of his conscience and sound reasoning. He is very sensitive about the social norms and right behavior, following the words of St. Paul: "Let us live honorably as in day light" (Rom 13:7).

Palabra de honor literally is "word of honor." It is the virtue of keeping a promise, of being true to one's word and is basically rooted in honesty and sincerity. Hence, it is expressed in the phrase "*Isang salita lang*" (literally, "One word is enough"). It is *katapatan* ("sincerity") when one is true to his word, dedicated to his work, and sincere in his relations with other people. It is also *paninindigan* ("to stand up for one's principle"), that is, one's ability to stand up for a cause that is good.⁷³ *Palabra de honor* is a sense of commitment not only through words but fulfilled in deeds, a sense of loyalty in a committed service to people, friends and institutions. A person with *palabra de honor* earns his place in society, because, he is credible, well admired and respected.

The Tagalog saying: "*Ang sinumang nangangako ay napapako!*" means that one is morally obligated to fulfill his word as a commitment, and by doing so, he shows he is sincere, honest and trustworthy. In line with this, the Gospel reminds us, "Say 'yes' when you mean 'yes' and 'no' when you mean 'no'!" (Mat 5:37). And the Book of Ecclesiastes says, "*Do what you promise to do. Better not to promise at all than to make a promise and not to keep it*" (Ec 5:5). With *palabra de honor*, one learns the virtue of sincerity of words and the honesty of deeds, as if heaven is the witness that enables him to conscientiously fulfill his word: "*Make good to the Lord all your pledges*" (Mat 5:33).

These three Filipino social values, positively taken, are solid grounds for good morals and behavior, which basically define the true heart and intentions of a Filipino. With a sense of propriety (*delicadeza*) he learns the values of proper behavior in and out of the playing court, of knowing what is right from wrong, and knowing one's own limitations. *Delicadeza* is the test of his character to uphold good

⁷³ See Jocano, *Work Values of Successful Filipinos*, pp. 26-28. Translation is mine.

intentions translated into good behavior. As one is taught following the rules of the games, to be honest and sincere, he may be led to the faithful following of the rules of society and the rules of life. *Palabra de honor* can test his sense of loyalty to people, group (team), community or institution. It is fidelity to truth, justice and peace. His commitment to the team and his teammates entails a lot of sincerity, honesty and dedication that extends to his future commitment in society. *Amor propio* will help him establish his own place in society, maintain his good name, dignity and honor and to motivate him to excel in any of his endeavors.

If nurtured in the gospel values: "Anyone who listens to my word and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on a rock" (Mat 7:24). Good breeding needs a good mentor: "Declare a tree good and its fruit good or declare a tree rotten and its fruit rotten, one or the other, for you can tell a tree by its fruit" (Mat 12:13) "A good man produces good from his store of goodness" (Mat 12:35). These values can help the individual maintain a more Christian approach to his own personal life and in his association with others: "Do unto others as you would others do unto you" (Mat 7:7).

6. *Juan Tamad, Juan Masipag, Juan Matiyaga and Juan de la Cruz*

These are names that portray the Filipino people in their attitude to life and enterprise. The Filipinos are forever being accused of sloth.⁷⁴ The tendency to be indolent is, certainly, a trait of the Filipino, and side by side with it is his lack of initiative.⁷⁵ *Juan Tamad*, the Filipino mythic figure and folklore hero, symbolizes this character and attitude. It is the attitude of some Filipinos who prefer easy life. We have a

⁷⁴ Gilda Cordero-Fernando and Nik Ricio, *Turn of the Century* (Quezon City: GCF Books, 1990), p. 162.

⁷⁵ See Teodoro Agoncillo, "Filipino Traits and Customs," *Onli in da Pilipins*, at <http://www.rogersantos.org.filtrraits.html>, updated January 15, 2004. (Note: The author explained that, as Jose Rizal pointed out, the Filipinos have this tendency as a result of the tropical climate which is like Paradise to them [even to the Westerners], the abundance which Nature has endowed the country which makes the Filipinos exert less effort and because of the close family and personal ties where he can go from one relative or friend to another.)

cute term for it too – *pabandying-bandying* (“easy-go-lucky”), but these *pabandying-bandying* guys are hardly cute.⁷⁶ There is no excuse for laziness and being contended with mediocrity. All of us are required to work and to work hard.⁷⁷ We get rid of *Juan Tamad* because he has no place in Filipino society; *Juan Masipag* (“Juan, the industrious”) and *Juan Matiyaga* (“Juan, the enterprising or hard-working”) now have become the embodiment of Filipino industry, entrepreneurship and his desire to earn a decent living domestically or abroad. Given better opportunities and a good break, the Filipino is known for his industry and dedicated service. He is even willing to work in a foreign land⁷⁸ to earn a living for his family and loved ones. *Sipag* means “industry or hard work”: “*Pag may itinamin, may aanihin*” (“He who plants will have something to reap”). It is always equated with the concept of *tagumpay* (“success”). Hence, a Filipino who is *masipag* and *matiyaga* is always on the road to success. As he works with nature, he treats his work as prayer to God – “*nasa Diyos ang awa, nasa tao ang gawa*,”⁷⁹ a reminder that “God helps those who help themselves.” This Filipino attitude will always be guided by the words of the parable of talents: “*You are an industrious and reliable servant. Since you are dependable in a small matter, I will put you in charge of larger affairs. Come share your master’s joy*” (Mat 25:23).

But let us not forget about *Juan de la Cruz* (name derived from St. John of the Cross) who is also the Filipino alter ego of *Juan Masipag* and *Juan Matiyaga*. He is accustomed to the hardships in life and has the ability to cope with them. He can endure the difficulties of time through patience, perseverance and strong faith in God. It is the *Juan-de-la-Cruz* character that helps him survive the challenges of life and

⁷⁶ See Rod Nepomuceno, “The dreaded Juan Tamad syndrome,” *The Philippine Star*, March 1, 2005, p. H-3.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ Once the word *Filipina* was entered into the Oxford Dictionary to mean “domestic helper or household help” due to the propensity of *Filipinas* working aboard because of economic difficulties at home. It was perceived as an insult to the *Filipino* image, but on the one hand, it portrays the true character of the *Filipino* (or *Filipina*) as hardworking and enterprising, and the willingness to sacrifice for his family and loved ones.

⁷⁹ Andres and Ilada-Andres, *Making Filipino Values Work for You*, p. 29.

overcome adversities with courage. He bears a cross in his earthly life, but that cross also symbolizes his strong faith in God. This attitude actually emanates from his *maka-Diyos* (literally, “pro-God”) attitude and trust in God that “makes him accept the suffering of hard times to the extent that if he is exposed to a sub-human activity, he calls on God.”⁸⁰ The *Juan-de-la-Cruz* attitude is the Filipino Christian approach to the complexities of life: “*If anyone who wishes to follow me, he must deny his very self, take up his cross and come follow me*” (Mat 8:34).

The youth instead of being a sloth – *tatamad-tamad* (“tendency to be lazy”), *tutulug-tulog* (“tendency to sleep while doing nothing”), *patambay-tambay* (“waiting for nothing”) or *pabandying-bandying* (“easy-go-lucky”) may as well make his time productive or profitable. Sports is one way of whiling away the time wisely. One of the reasons for juvenile delinquency is sloth and idleness, the youth’s lacking sense of productivity, or the large number of seemingly neglected youngsters who roam the streets to while away the time.⁸¹ “Get hooked into sports, not in drugs,” is an encouragement for the youth to do something worthwhile and avoid the dangers of addiction: vices, alcohol or drugs. The idea is to keep them busy while enjoying the company of friends and acquaintances. Sports and athletics are the best antidote to idleness, indolence and sloth. They could ennoble the people especially the underprivileged, the poor and marginalized youth to aspire for higher things, and to achieve their goals by using their time wisely, because, “*Ang sa kabataa’y walang gawa, mahihirapan kung tumanda*” (“If in his youth, one has done nothing, life will be more difficult when he grows old.”) For young people who do not learn to work or to realize the value of work will have nothing to look forward to but hard times.⁸²

Wilson Lee Flores, a noted Filipino businessman-writer, encouraged in his article “Business lessons from sports champs” the valuable contribution of the values of sports in the field of business and entrepreneurship:

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ See Francisco Zulueta, *Sociology Focus on the Philippines* (Mandaluyong City: National Book Store, 2005), p. 213.

⁸² See Thelma Kintanar, *Cultural Dictionary for Filipinos* (Manila: University of the Philippines Press, 1996), p. 112.

What a better way to inspire optimism and national discipline, to drumbeat the Philippine economy towards sprinting for global excellence than to celebrate Olympic sports – that most magnificent showcase of the power of the human will to compete and to excel beyond the body's normal capabilities... Sports teaches all of us – whether entrepreneurs, managers, students, professionals, housewives, artists or leaders – valuable lessons about self-discipline, undying passion, iron determination, competition, guts, faith, diligence and team spirit.⁸³

This goes to show that the ideals and discipline of sports can be applied in many aspects of life particularly in one's personal endeavors. Sports and athletics develop the heart of an achiever, if not a champion or a winner. Following the dictum, "A winner never quits and a quitter never wins," an achiever in order to reach his goals should never give up, for giving up will achieve nothing. Great achievers in history also personified mental and physical discipline, as well as focus on their goals no matter how difficult the obstacles – men and women alike.⁸⁴

Sports can become a breeding ground for the young to be productive while making use of their time for recreation, play, and other physical activities. Sports propagate teamwork and in a team "everybody works." "There is no 'I' in a team," as the saying goes, that becomes a reminder to remedy the "lack of discipline as in *kanya-kanya* ["to- each-his-own"] attitude."⁸⁵ The collaborative effort in a team will teach people the value of hard work in attaining success, "finding meaning, excitement and fulfillment in what they are doing."⁸⁶ Success, therefore, can be attained through "*tiyaga*" ("patience") and "*sipag*" ("industry"), and easier to achieve in collaboration with others.

⁸³ Flores, "Business lessons from sports champs," p. F-1.

⁸⁴ Ibid, p. F-3. The author of this article enumerated great sports personalities that serve as models to this effect: Michael Jordan who was initially dropped from his High School varsity team then become one of the greatest players of all time; Lance Armstrong a cancer survivor who won the world's toughest bicycle race Tour de France an unprecedented record of seven years in a row (1998-2005).

⁸⁵ See *PCP II*, Appendix I, p. 283.

⁸⁶ Jocano, *Work Values of Successful Filipinos*, p. 29.

Says John Paul II: "Sports is not merely the exercise of muscles, but it is the school of moral values and of training in courage, in perseverance and in overcoming laziness and carelessness."⁸⁷ In the Philippines, poverty is one major social problem rooted in worthless use of time, as the saying goes: "*Ang katamaran ay ina ng kahirapan*" ("Laziness is the mother of poverty").⁸⁸ There is, therefore, a need for people are to be re-oriented about the value of time and how it should be spent profitably, but more importantly, to re-orient them about the dignity of work, because it is "through work [that] man must earn his daily bread."⁸⁹ "Work is a good thing for man – a good thing for his humanity – because through work, man *not only transform nature*, adapting it to his own needs, but he also *achieves fulfillment* as a human being and indeed, in a sense, becomes 'more human being'."⁹⁰ Work leads man to be "industrious" – and industriousness as a virtue, is a moral habit "whereby man becomes good as man."⁹¹

The Book of Proverbs says, "*Being lazy will make you poor, but hard work will make you rich. A sensible man gathers the crops when they are ready; it is a disgrace to sleep through the time of the harvest*" (Pr 10:4-5). St. Paul admonishes: "*Work hard and do not be lazy!*" (Rom 12:11); "*We command these [lazy] people and warn them to lead orderly lives and to work to earn their own living*" (2 Th 3:12).

It is through worthwhile activities that people are given the chance to view life with a better perspective and to discover their self-worth, so that they can become a "good soil" that "*bears a hundred, or*

⁸⁷ JP II, *Address to the European Olympic Athletes*, November 24, 1984.

⁸⁸ Kintanar, p. 106.

⁸⁹ JP II, *Laborem Exercens* (opening line).

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 9.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, see especially nos. 9 and 10. (Note: John Paul linked work and industriousness in view also of family life, since the family requires the means of subsistence which man normally gains through work. Work and industriousness also influence the whole *process of education* in the family, for the very reason that everyone "becomes a human being." E.g., the father, as the bread-winner of the family works hard to send their children to school, or sports can be a stepping-stone for a good education as athletic scholarships are given to deserving students in schools for them to have better opportunities in the future – as JP II said "becoming a human being is precisely the main purpose of the whole *process of education*.")

sixty or thirtyfold" (Mat 13:23). As the saying goes: "*What I am is gift from God, and what I will be is my gift to Him.*" Sports teach people to be hardworking and to reach for their goals. Sports help people realize their God-given gifts, and to develop them in order to become useful members of society.

7. *Maka-Diyos*

Belief in God is fundamental to human and national existence, whether the belief system be Christian, Muslim or whatever.⁹² This Filipino value illustrates the religious characteristic of the people, who firmly believe in the supernatural and in all kinds of spirit dwelling in individual persons, places or things.⁹³ "*Bahala na ang Diyos*"⁹⁴ or "*Nasa Diyos ang awa*" ("God will take care" or "It's up to God's mercy") are but expressions of Filipino's strong faith in God.⁹⁵

Maka-Diyos (literally, "pro-God") is the expression of the Filipino's deep sense of religiosity and total dependence in the Supreme Being. He is very religious and he has the Saints, Sto. Nino and the Mother Mary to pray to through novenas and other religious devotions. The Filipino belief in God taught him to trust in prayers and he believes that, "*Ang maging malapit sa Diyos ay malapit sa biyaya*" ("He who is close God is close to His blessings").⁹⁶ Success is considered a blessing from above. It also taught him to value traits like perseverance, patience and endurance.⁹⁷

From early times, Filipino ancestors believed in a supreme being they call *Bathala* and intermediaries of men they call *anitos*. These beliefs were substituted by the early missionaries with the Christian

⁹² Jocano, *Issues and Challenges in Filipino Value Formation*, p. 18.

⁹³ Andres and Ilada-Andres, *Making Filipino Values Work for You*, p. 28

⁹⁴ "*Bahala na*" literally means, "*leave it (things) to God*" or "*let God take care of it*" or "*let God decide (for me/us)*. *Bahala* is a corruption of *Bathala*, the Tagalog word for God or the Creator, from the Sanskrit *bhatara* or lord. See Kintanar, p. 158.

⁹⁵ See Andres and Ilada-Andres, *Making Filipino Values Work for You*, pp. 28-29.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 29. Translation is mine.

⁹⁷ See Zulueta, p. 77.

belief in God and in the intercession of saints as a means of cultural accommodation.⁹⁸ From this sprung the popular devotions to saints and the Blessed Virgin Mary, partly because of Filipino's natural closeness to their mothers ("*maka-ina*") and the use of intermediaries ("*taga-pamagitan*") in dealing with other people.⁹⁹

Despite the deteriorating conditions in the life of the Filipinos, both social and political, the *kahirapan* ("poverty") and lack of *kaayusan* ("order"), the bright side of the Filipino character continues to exhibit his "*bahala na*" attitude based on his *paniniwala sa Diyos* ("trust in God") on top of *paggalang* ("respect"), *pag-ibig* ("love"), *kabanalan* ("religiosity") and *pagdadamayan* ("unsolicited concern.") In other words, the attitude of being *maka-Diyos* ("strong faith in God") that help him sustain even the unbearable effects of life.¹⁰⁰

From the negative point of view, the "*bahala na*" ("come-what-may") attitude reveals that Filipinos are naturally fatalistic that "whatever happens to him is the work of fate,"¹⁰¹ or worse, the will of God, a misconception indeed which to some extent, causes the life of the Filipinos to be stagnant, and blamed today for the poverty and misery which still enslaves many people. It becomes a complete but false trust in God without any security as regards other alternatives for the redemption of any action.¹⁰² *Bahala na* is one ambivalent Filipino mentality, but this attitude could be the root of the positive value of risk-taking, entrepreneurship and social responsibility, to take chances trusting in both human effort ("*bahala tayong lahat*") and divine providence ("*bahala ang Maykapal.*") The will to take chances and risks, no matter what difficulties and problems the future entails is necessary for growth and destiny.¹⁰³

⁹⁸ See Wilfredo Paguio, *Filipino Values for the Apostolate* (Manila: St. Paul Publications), pp. 4-5.

⁹⁹ See Wenifredo V. Padilla, OP (Unpublished article).

¹⁰⁰ *PCP II*, see especially Appendix I, pp. 282-283.

¹⁰¹ Teodoro Agoncillo, "Filipino Traits and Customs," *Onli in da Pilipins*, at <http://www.rogersantos.org.filtraits.html>. Accessed on January 15, 2004.

¹⁰² See W. Paguio, p. 135.

¹⁰³ Gorospe, "Understanding the Filipino Value System," p. 3.

The *maka-Diyos* attitude is a dynamic openness that welcomes the possibilities of the future. People have to take risks but with big responsibilities; it is being optimistic about the future based on hard work and faith in God. With the belief that “*Nasa Diyos ang awa, nasa tao ang gawa*” (“God helps those who help themselves”), this attitude can well be dramatized and experienced in sports where there are a lot of risk-taking and game of chances. But better results are gained through sacrifice and hard work. Players pray for courage and strength, as they pray for success and victory. It is prayer that binds their hearts together and boosts their morale. It is through prayer that they place their complete trust in God and through prayer that they ennoble them to work harder. This *maka-Diyos* attitude could serve to inculcate a deeper love for God, the devotion to the Saints and the Blessed Mother. These devotions should eventually lead to the reception of the sacraments particularly, the devotion and the celebration of the Eucharist, “the true center of the Christian life.”¹⁰⁴

In sports, people may come to realize that the source of their giftedness of body and strength is God, and they acknowledge His divine power. That in the face of countless endeavors, God is always in their midst and they are united together imploring His blessings: “*Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in their midst*” (Mat 18:20). After all, this *maka-Diyos* attitude is the love of God to the fullest: “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind*” (Mat. 22:37). Sports and athletics can be given a religious and spiritual orientation that leads to meaningful celebration of prayer, and worship.

8. *Makabayan and Makatao*

Patriotism is love for one's country, and in the traditional way, this virtue was measured by one's heroism usually as an act of sacrifice. *Makabayan* (literally, “pro-country”) means to be of service to one's country and countrymen, to be a “*bayani para sa bayan at sa taong bayan*.” The spirit of nationalism and patriotism are one of the values that have to be instilled among the young:

¹⁰⁴ Vatican II, *Eucharisticum Mysterium (EM)*, no. 6.

Love of country above self should be the moral basis of our national life. On the other hand, love of self above country is a prime source of our current inability to move forward. Let us then give love of country the emphasis it warrants in the early education of the young.¹⁰⁵

In the light of our national situation, *PCP II* advocated the need for “us citizens of this ‘earthly city’ to be *makatao*, *makabayan* and *maka-Diyos*” (literally, “pro-person, pro-country, pro-God”) and that “we need to exercise a healthy nationalism which would require the living of such values as: *pagsasarili* [“autonomy,” “self-reliance”], *pagkakaisa* [“unity”], *pakikipagkapwa-tao* [“the virtue of relating with other persons”], and *pagkabayani* [“heroic act”].”¹⁰⁶ On the personal level, to be a *makabayan* needs primarily to be *makatao*, that is, the Filipino way of being a *bayani* to others, by being sensitive to others, especially to those who are in need. It is best demonstrated in his willingness to help others or to welcome them into his home as in the case of Filipino hospitality.

The Filipino is well known for his great hospitality. In the Gospel, he may be the Good Samaritan (see Luke 10:25-37), who is willing to do a heroic act by helping someone stranger to him, give him the best food, the best drink and the best accommodation according to his humble means. He makes him feel at home while he is the host, sleeps on the cold floor. Call it naivete, but the Filipino opens his heart.¹⁰⁷ This is Filipino hospitality in the full Christian sense that Filipinos do best, following the words of Jesus: “*Whatever you do to the least of my brethren, that you do unto me*” (Mat 25:40). The *makatao* attitude of a Filipino is also nurtured by the Gospel teaching: “*Give to all who beg from you, and, do to others what you would have them do to you*” (Luke 6:30-31). Being *makatao*, therefore is sensitivity to others and the Christian way of treating them as brothers in Christ.

One appropriate venue to teach the young people to be *makabayan* is sports and athletics, for what is more heroic than to represent one’s

¹⁰⁵ Jocano, *Issues and Challenges in Filipino Value Formation*, p. 19.

¹⁰⁶ See *PCP II*, no. 251. Translation is mine.

¹⁰⁷ See Agoncillo, “Filipino Traits and Customs.”

country in international competitions, to contribute to its national pride and worldwide recognition, to wear the national colors while becoming ambassadors of universal peace and brotherhood? Heroes and models are made in sports for the young to imitate. They are the *bayani* ("heroes") to their countrymen. John Paul II reminded of the "responsibility that athletes have towards their spectators, especially the young people, who look at them as models to imitate."¹⁰⁸

Today, the spirit of nationalism and patriotism of athletes have somehow diminished due to monetary and individual interests. It is therefore, very timely to re-educate and re-orient the young to this effect, but first, it must begin with a renewal of values and attitudes that they are made of, as today sports in our country is plagued with controversies – politics, violence, drugs, over-commercialism, cheating and the like.¹⁰⁹ Sports and athletic programs may be geared towards the moral and spiritual renewal of the individuals: for the love of God and for the love of country. By excelling in sports they are given the rare opportunity to represent their country and play for their countrymen.¹¹⁰

There is more to learn in sports and athletics for the love of one's country (*makabayan, makabansa, bayani ng bayan*) and there is more to thank God for one's own gifts and talents (*maka-Diyos, pananampalataya sa Diyos*). People become heroes by their own effort and sacrifice. But, doing things for God, country and fellowmen is

¹⁰⁸ JP II, "Keep your eye on heavenly goal."

¹⁰⁹ Note: No less than Pope John Paul called for reflection and renewal in sports that will serve as "vehicle of lofty human values." Graham Lim, the Basketball Association of the Philippines (BAP) secretary-general commented; "*We have lost the principle of amateurism, of playing for the country; players are dictated by their agents; money talks.*" (See, Joaquin Henson, "Sporting Chance: BAP slams door," *The Philippine Star*, September 26, 2003, p. A-34.) In line with this, Col. Julian Malonso, former Philippine Olympic Committee President, said in an interview: "*Before the advent of professional Basketball, players were very proud to wear the national jersey without monetary compensation. Now, it is very difficult to look for players who will die playing for his country.*" It meant that in the changing times, priorities and values also change.

¹¹⁰ The Philippines is yet to win a gold medal in the Olympic Games since it joined in 1924. It will therefore be a great honor for an athlete to win the first gold medal for his country and fellow Filipinos.

bayanihan in the noblest sense that must be constantly instilled in the hearts and mind of the young. The ultimate goal of a Filipino athlete must be to play for his beloved country to give it honor and pride.

9. *Paggalang*

Paggalang ("respect") is the value by which Filipinos give parents, elders or superiors due respect to his person or office. Age is equated with wisdom and experience, hence, *galang* demands that a Filipino uses courteous language and action to the older members of the community. "*Mano po*," is a practice of kissing the hands to show respect, submission and obedience for the elders and those in authority. *Paggalang* also requires polite form of speech used in conversation with elders, such "*opo*" and "*ho*".¹¹¹ Older siblings and close relatives are also given due respect by virtue of seniority. From the Christian point of view, *paggalang* shows the true reverence and respect of Filipinos to elders following the commandment "*Honor your father and your mother*" (Ex 20:12). In line with this, St. Paul has this to say: "*Do not rebuke an older man, but appeal to him as if he were your father. Treat the younger men as your brothers, the older women as your mothers, and the younger women as your sister, with all purity*" (1 Tim 5:1-2). Thus, this commandment has its social dimensions that go beyond the family boundaries. The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches:

The fourth commandment is addressed expressly to children in their relationship to their father and mother, because this relationship is the most universal. It likewise concerns the ties of kinship between members of the extended family. It requires honor, affection, and gratitude toward elders and ancestors. Finally, it extends to the duties of pupils to teachers, employees to employers, subordinates to leaders, citizens to their country, and to those who administer or govern it.¹¹²

This virtue of *paggalang* therefore, is basically rooted in Christian faith and also reveals that "Filipinos experience family closeness and solidarity ("*pagpapahalaga sa pamilya*"), politeness (use of "*po*" and "*ho*"),

¹¹¹ See Andres and Ilada-Andres, *Making Filipino Values Work for You*, p. 38.

¹¹² CCC, no. 2199.

hospitality (“*tuloy po kayo*”), gratitude (“*utang na loob*”)¹¹³ that extend to social group affinities such as *pakikisama* (“peer group friendship”), *pakikitungo* (“to relate with others”) or *pakikibagay* (“to conform with others”) among his friends and acquaintances. Hence, *paggalang* also calls for respect for peers during deliberation of important matters,¹¹⁴ such as in group associations.

In the Filipino culture, priests are well respected and treated with much reverence. Traditions handed down the picture of the priest “as a demigod on a pedestal dealing on supernatural matters from his armchair.”¹¹⁵ Much can be said about his authority and influence. A priest is looked up to not only as a religious figure, but also as a father, mentor and leader. *Paggalang*, therefore, is extended to priests by virtue of their sacred office and ministry, done in practice by the kissing of the hand. When people kiss the hand of a priest, he in turn, wishes them well by imparting his blessings in a form of prayer. The kissing of the hand, “*Mano po*,” we now call “*Bless*,”¹¹⁶ is the trademark of Filipino way of *paggalang* that is an extended gesture of respect for elders and to those in authority. Hence, it is a gesture of *pagamalasakit* (“love and concern”) by the elders for the young by wishing them well.

¹¹³ Gorospe, “Understanding the Filipino Value System,” p. 1 of 4.

¹¹⁴ See Andres, *Understanding the Filipino*, p. 56. Translation is mine.

¹¹⁵ Paguio, *Filipino Cultural Values...*, p. 56. (Note: Historically, a priest is respected, all because of the authority and prestige of the priests of the preceding generations, that is during the Spanish regime. The priest was the defender of the people, the builder of towns, the dispenser of food and clothing. The parish priest was the inspector of the local public instruction, a consultant of the *gobernadorcillo* [town mayor] and the presiding officer of various gatherings. Thus, he was looked up to as a father, a pastor and a protector of the people.)

¹¹⁶ “*Mano po*” (from Latin *manus*, *us* and Spanish *mano*, meaning “hand”), means “Your hand please!” or “May I have your hand kissed!” In practice, however, it is not “kissing of the hand” taken literally. It is actually, taking the hand of an elder and let it touch one’s forehead. The elder, in fact, says a blessing “*Kaawaan ka ng Panginoon!*” (“May God be gracious to you!”) or “*Pagpalain ka ng Panginoon!*” (“May God bless you!”), and for those who knew Spanish “*Dios contigo!*” (“May God be with you!”) Hence, the gesture is now called “*Bless*.” During the Spanish times, the actual kissing of the hand was done with the kissing of the Bishop’s ring with the belief that such a gesture would gain indulgence and blessings.

To this effect, *paggalang* is mutual respect and love, both of the young and the old.

With a priest in their midst, in groups or associations outside the home *paggalang* can be a dynamic openness to possibilities for better relationships, something to be realized like an extended family. Towards the realization of this Christian community, the Filipino natural respect for authority ("*paggalang*") is an advantage.¹¹⁷ St. Paul taught: "*Respect those among you whose task it is to exercise authority in the Lord; esteem them with the greatest love because of their work*" (2 Thes 5:12).

Team sports can provide the atmosphere of belongingness that breeds respect and concern for one another with a bonding that is almost similar to brothers and sisters, the coaches and priests being mentors and elders. But more importantly, sports teaches the value of respect for one's fellow-competitor or worthy opponent:

You are my adversary, but not my enemy. For your resistance gives me strength. Your will gives me courage. Your spirit ennobles me. And though I aim to defeat you, should I succeed, I will not humiliate you. Instead, I will honor you. For without you, I am a lesser man.¹¹⁸

St. Paul advises: "*Respect and honor everyone who deserves them*" (Rom 13:7).

Respect extends to all men by the dignity of persons. Sports teach respect that extends to one's adversaries as competitors.

10. *Ober-da-Bakod Attitude*

Ober-da-bakod ("jump over the fence") is an attitude of Filipinos in general, to do things the "short-cut" way, that instead of following a "legal" process or doing things the proper way, they do it the easy way like "jumping over the fence instead of entering through the main gate," or "entering through the back door instead of the front door." It is an attitude or mentality of finding the easy

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

¹¹⁸ ESPN commercial plug on Olympic's "Celebrate Humanity," 2004.

way in to get ahead of others, violating rules or conventions. It describes the lack of discipline in social life like *pagtutulakan* (literally "to push or box out"), *singitan* ("to inch through"), *dayaan* ("cheating"), *lamangan* ("to take advantage of others"), *gulangan* ("to be shrewder than others"), *aregluhan* ("settlement"), *palakad* ("intermediary transaction") or *pakiusap* ("asking undue favors") and *palakasan* ("connections with people in power or authority"), that become the basis of dishonesty, unfair practices and corruption in society. We see them crossing the street by jaywalking, entering into a one-way street, cheating during examinations, not falling in line or inching into a long queue, securing fake diplomas or birth certificates to get a passport, or to go abroad, paying fixers to get a driver's license, violating traffic rules and giving grease money to traffic policemen to avoid getting a ticket, looking for *padrinos* ("patron") to enter a job, etc.¹¹⁹

Filipino Time also falls under this category of lack of discipline for its utter disregard for time, schedule and appointment. However, something can be done about this attitude, because Filipinos show a sense of discipline in the right environment, or in a more organized society:

Most Filipinos who migrate to other countries adapt very quickly to the traffic rules, time discipline and other characteristics of those other countries; those who do not adapt

¹¹⁹ Note: As of this writing, one prestigious Catholic school is hounded by the scandal that two of their varsity players faked their Philippine Educational Placement Test Certificate (PEPTC) supposedly given by the Department of Education (DepEd). PEP Test is an acceleration exam for overage high school students to jump to college. The two players allegedly presented spurious document in order to play college basketball in Universities Athletic Association of the Philippines (UAAP). The issue boils down to the questions on cheating and dishonesty that involves a network of individuals or groups that demeans the institution and a black mark for the sporting world. It raises the question on the recruitment program that some sectors may have adhered to the principle of "winning at all cost." (See Ed Picson, "Questions on Admissions," *Manila Bulletin*, October 18, 2005, p. F-2.) Under this note, it is also a reflection of what is going on in society in general. The *Ober-da-bakod* mentality may be traced as one of the reasons for the country's dishonesty and corruption, a major issue that has to be addressed first in the lowest level, such as the school or the parish.

soon find themselves paying heavy traffic fines or without jobs. It is not that deeper values have changed, but that the social system has called into practice the values of discipline and punctuality, which were not emphasized in the Philippine context.¹²⁰

"Sa ikauunlad ng bayan, disiplina ang kailangan" ("For the progress of the nation, discipline is necessary"). This saying was popularized during the early years of Martial Law (1973) to inculcate the sense of discipline among Filipinos and it is still very much applicable to the present situations, where the *ober-da-bakod* mentality and attitude demonstrate the Filipino's lack of the sense of discipline. The *kahirapan* ("misery") and lack of *kaayusan* ("orderliness") may partly be traceable to these cultural values interacting with the social system. These values and attitudes that "transmit 'wrong' signals that encourages 'wrong' type of behavior"¹²¹ can be remedied when given due attention. On a positive note, *ober-da-bakod* attitude may be the basis for Filipino ingenuity and entrepreneurship, for creative undertakings to overcome the *Juan-Tamad* attitude and to venture into a more decent occupation.

Sports and athletics can be a means to teach people discipline and good behavior, that hard work and committed effort pay dividends. In a team, one learns the value of a collaborative effort to achieve an end, but each one has to live a well-disciplined life governed by rules and regulations. There are no shortcuts to victory or success; it is a long and arduous process. One can be victorious or successful in life only if he is endowed with the right attitude and given the proper direction. He should learn the meaning of sacrifice and hard work through a dedicated effort to achieve his goals. The path to self-discovery and discipline may be painstaking, but in the end, the rewards are satisfying and plentiful.

It is also the role of the Church to teach people the right attitude and give them proper direction: "To the Church belongs

¹²⁰ PCP II, Appendix I, p. 283.

¹²¹ See *Ibid.*

the right, always and everywhere, to announce moral principles, including those pertaining to the social order,”¹²² as part of its continuing work for the salvation of souls. The Church teaches men the values of the Gospel, and leads them to the “Way, the Truth and the Life” and that, no one comes to the Father but through Jesus (see Jn 14:6). There is no shortcut to salvation; but salvation entails sacrifice, which one earns through his own efforts, hard work and good deeds – *“Enter through the narrow gate... But how narrow is the gate that leads to life, how rough the road, and how few there are who find it!”* (Mat 7:13-14). The discipline of sports is like entering into a narrow gate and hitting a rough road. As applied to human life, William Barclay explains this passage:

- 1) There is the difference between the hard and easy way, but there is never an easy way to success, except through toil. Success is always a product of toil or hard work.
- 2) There is the difference between the long way and the short way. We are constantly faced with the short way, which promises immediate results, while the long way promises results that are far distant. However, the lasting things never come quickly and the long way is the best way in the end.
- 3) There is the difference between the disciplined way and the undisciplined way. Nothing can be achieved without discipline, and many an athlete and a man has been ruined because he abandoned discipline and let himself grow slack.¹²³

Doing things the easy way may look very inviting at the moment, and the hard way may look very daunting. The only way to get our values right is to see, not the beginning, but the end of the way, to see things, not in the light of time, but in the light of eternity.¹²⁴ Again, Jesus has one piece of lesson about the *ober-da-bakod* attitude: *“Whoever does not enter the sheepfold through the gate but climbs in some other way is a thief and a marauder”* (John 10:1).

¹²² CCC, see especially no. 2032.

¹²³ William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975), pp. 278-280.

¹²⁴ See *Ibid.*, p. 180.

As they can be given a more positive outlook, Filipino values can be Christianized. Indeed, Filipino values are such that they can be transformed and adapted to Christianity.¹²⁵ Therefore, the priest, as an evangelizer, plays a major role in this transformation. These inherent cultural values and attitudes, whether they were perceived as negative or ambivalent, can be transformed into something more positive, internalized and purified by the values of the Gospel. Sporting and athletic activities aim to help the individual develop his character to become a better person, and to become a better Christian imbued with the right attitude and virtues in view of his divine calling.

Guided by a dedicated mentor, sports and athletics can help build a strong foundation of values based on actual experiences. People learn much from experience, because, "Experience is the best teacher," as the saying goes. If imbued with the Christian values, says John Paul II: "[Sport], among other things offers the opportunity to improve [one's] personal spiritual state."¹²⁶ It is the breeding ground for personal and social values; its purpose is to educate and to teach good moral values: "*A healthy tree bears good fruit*" (Mat 7:17); and, "*A good person brings good things out of his treasure of good things*" (Mat 12:35). A good mentor breeds good students because he allows them to discover their self-worth and help them develop their God-given gifts. □

¹²⁵ See Wilfredo Paguio, p. 73.

¹²⁶ See JP II, *Address to the European Olympic Athletes*, November 24, 1984, at http://www.appleseeds.org/Jp2_Sports.htm accessed October 24, 2003.