By Pat Haggerty

Many of us have been consumed by the Olympics over the past week and a half. We have watched event after event, cheered on our favorite athletes, and digested every morsel of Olympic trivia that we can consume. We have become exhilarated by some of the successes and deflated by the sadness of some of the failures.

There is nothing wrong with this Olympic-mania! It incites our feelings of patriotism. It promotes our sense of the global village. It encourages us to appreciate discipline and persistence.

Perhaps we can take a lesson from this experience---despite its magnitude and pomp. There are things to be learned from the dedication of the athletes to the symbolism of the medal ceremonies.

We do learn that, in some cases, persistence does pay off. Following a daily regime has its merits. How many of you have seen the commercial in which athletes proclaim: “I haven’t had a dessert in two years!” Or, “You know that novel everyone has read, well, I haven’t read it!”

Let’s consider how this Olympic spirit can be translated into a Christian spirit of persistence, discipline and courage. We need not be Olympians to aspire to high goals. The difference is that our goals are connected to eternal goals and not temporal satisfactions. How sweet is that!

We can follow our own regime of daily prayer, frequent reception of the sacraments and adherence to the precepts of our faith. We can train to be evangelizers of the Word. Each in our own way, we can run our individual races and stay focused on what is---Who Is---most important.

Let us look to the passage from Hebrews (12:1-2), and we can probably understand how this makes sense to us as Christians: “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of

witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Let us run the race we were intended to run as Christians on our journey toward the Lord.