

## THE OLYMPIC FLAME OF LOVE

( a reflection by Willy Effinger)

***“In the Old Covenant I sent prophets wielding thunderbolts to My people.  
Today I am sending you with My mercy to the people of the whole world.  
... Before the Day of Justice I am sending the Day of Mercy.”***

*(Diary entry 1588)*

As I was resting on the bosom of the Father, this truth was revealed to me in an “enlightened” way, so to speak; namely, in the form of a burning flame. To be more precise, it was the Olympic Flame. Today, mankind goes to great lengths and even greater expense to keep some kind of Olympic spirit alive. The flame is kept alive at all times on Mount Olympus in Greece; with great pomp and ceremony, it is transported by specially selected people nearly all across the world to open the next sports spectacle. That is exactly what it is: a great spectacle which costs millions of dollars, leaving the hungry, the needy, the homeless and the destitute to go away empty-handed.

Mercy, my friends, is so different! Yet, there are some similarities. The flame of mercy, which I would like to call the “Olympic Flame of Love”, is burning mightily, at all times on God's holy mountain. No one, no individual or government, will ever be in the position to extinguish it. This “Olympic Flame of Love” is given and handed on at no charge; no airplanes, ships, cars or any devices are needed. All that is needed is an open heart. It is freely given so that it can be freely handed over to another!

Here is where a most notable difference happens. The giver, although he gives the flame of mercy away has lost nothing. On the contrary, he will not only keep it himself but will be able to pass it on over and over again. You may ask if there winners in this Olympic-proportioned game of love and what will be the prize? These are important questions which, when answered, will make everyone realize that they are winners, that they are garnishing the highest prize: eternal life!

This Olympic flame of mercy and love is passed on from person to person, from Church to Church, from community to community, by deeds of mercy, words of mercy and merciful prayers. Passing this torch will undoubtedly rain down “gold medals” in the form of heavenly graces upon the giver and the receiver. Yet, this is not all. The celebration goes on and on; by our participation, we show an unquestionable proof of our love for God and, at the same time, we pay reverence to His mercy and glorify His Name.

On your journey, if it should happen that your torch runs low on fuel, just get a “refill” through the Sacraments that Holy Mother Church makes available to us for free. In the end, you will be a gold medalist, as Saint Paul says in 2 Timothy 4: 7,8: *‘I have fought the good fight to the end; I have run the race to the finish; I have kept the faith; all there is to come for me now is the crown of uprightness which the Lord, the upright judge, will give to me on the Day; and not only to me but to all those who have longed for His appearing.’*

So, pick up the torch of mercy and run, jump, swim, towards the finish line. The Year of Mercy is just ahead of us. Extraordinary graces can and will be bestowed upon all who run this race to the end. Remember that there is nothing to be afraid of, for you will never be alone; the God of mercy is with you always and everywhere. He watches over you so you can be at peace and prepare yourself for the race. His tender mercy will envelop you and will give you the wisdom and endurance you need. Your zeal will be greatly rewarded during this upcoming Year of Mercy.