

Knights, faith, sports belong together

When I write regarding the connection between our beautiful Catholic faith and sports, I cannot help but talk about the Knights of Columbus. I am a Knight, and I have always been impressed by my fellow Knights serving others and evangelizing through athletes.

At every level, from local to international, "The Knights of Columbus were there from the very beginning," said Supreme Knight Carl Anderson. "Our support exemplifies our commitment to the dignity of every person": members have provided more than 250,000 hours of service at Special Olympic events.

In 2014 the Knights were named a "Founding Champion of the World Games." The Knights of Columbus have for many years been a major sponsor of Special Olympics. They have committed \$1.4 million to the world games in Los Angeles.

I have been honoured to be included in this project, and have been almost as inspired by the love shown by Knights towards the athletes as by the athletes themselves.

I am always in awe of what Special Olympians overcome to accomplish their amazing feats. The individuals I will highlight later in this article have incredible God-given gifts, but the real heroes are Spe-



cial Olympians.

The Knights also organize basketball foul-shooting competitions around the world for young boys and girls at the parish level. This is a great community-building event.

There are many other events organized by Knights of Columbus. These include golf, bowling, soccer, and hockey.

My favourite over the years has been at St. Paul's

Parish, Richmond, where annually we have March Madness basketball or volleyball: locals versus Life Teen. What a wonderful chance for young and old to share and grow in faith together.

Throughout sports history there have been many champions who were Knights and have had the same experience I have. This list includes Baseball Hall of Famers Stan Musial, Joe DiMaggio, Tom Glavine, Ron Guidry, and Shane Victorino. The past state Deputy of the Knights of Columbus in Hawaii is Victorino's father.

In football there are Su-

per Bowl champions coaches Mike Ditka and Vince Lombardi, as well as San Diego Charger quarterback Phillip Rivers.

Boxing has heavyweight champions Floyd Patterson and James Braddock, whose life story was portrayed in the movie *Cinderella Man*.

In basketball there are Pat Riley, a Hall of Fame coach; and John Stockton, the all-time assist leader.

The Knights, faith, and sports belong together. Let's all of us, next time we talk to a Knight, take a moment to thank him for passing on our Catholic faith, our love of Jesus, through sports. □



A Special Olympics athlete (left) interacts with a Knight of Columbus at a football combine held in Indianapolis. Insets (counter-clockwise from left): Famous Knights Stan Musial, Joe DiMaggio, Mike Ditka, Vince Lombardi, Philip Rivers, James Braddock, Floyd Patterson, and Pat Riley.