THE UNIVERSITY OF SCRANTON ATHLETICS

THE ROYAL WAY SUNDAY PLAYBOOK

ENCOURAGE. ENLIGHTEN. INSPIRE.

If you are not radically grateful every day, resentment always takes over. — Father Richard Rohr

Attitude of gratitude is our department's theme for this year. Three very simple, very distinctly Jesuit words. I would add two additional preceding words: *PUT ON.* The gratitude attitude is not unlike the way in which Saint Paul talks about love (c.f., Col 3:14). He exhorts the faithful to **"put on** love." Love, like the attitude of gratitude, is not something that we simply feel. It is the fruit or the result of our actions. Feeling grateful often does not come easily — especially when we're mad, sad, tired, frustrated, or overwhelmed. We begin to "feel grateful" when we "put on gratitude" by smiling, by silencing the negative voices of doubt and despair, by getting over and beyond ourselves, by affirming and encouraging others, and by letting others support and challenge us.

Some year's back Benedictine Brother David Steindl-Rast presented a simple, profound, and incredibly popular Ted Talk entitled, *Want to be happy? Be grateful.* He said, "*In daily life we must see that it is not happiness that makes us grateful, but gratefulness that makes us happy*." We all want to be happy. But we often reverse the order. Ironically pursuing happiness will often make you unhappy. Happiness ***ensues*** from profound gratitude. So, how do we put on the attitude of gratitude? **Wake up and lighten up!**

Wake up: To the divine within and around us in every moment — even the tough ones that are different than you imagined. Wake up to the beauty and miracle of now. In athletics as in life we often fall out of love with the process of preparation, the struggle, the battle, the journey. We swipe past all of these rich experiences waiting for the one perfect moment, the one highlight, the perfect practice, the elusive championship. Sadly we often don't wake up to what we have until it's taken from us, until we lose a loved one or get injured or our playing career is over. Wake up now by putting on the gratitude attitude!

Lighten up: We are all at times gratitude vampires who make everything about us and turn the simplest and best things from gift into drudgery. In athletics we turn play into work valuing only one outcome – the victory, the destiny. Apathy means you don't care. Never stop caring! Detachment means you do your best, accept the result, and focus on growing. We often learn and grow more from our adversities than our victories. Epic failures often lead to dramatic successes. We must each tell ourselves a thousand times day: Lighten up! All will be well. All will work out. Let go. Let God.

Gratitude researcher Robert Emmons argues that "Gratitude is the recognition that life owes me nothing and all the good I have is a gift." Wake up. Lighten up. All is gift. Put on the attitude of gratitude. One Way: The Royal Way!

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