

Teams Commentary for June

My brother has just joined a gym called *Fitness First*. And yesterday when I took him out for a meal he declined a pint of beer in favour of a freshly squeezed orange juice and instead of his usual pie and chips he opted for a Caesar salad! He has made the decision to take greater care of his body. And there's a whole industry out there just waiting to help him.



One of the greatest preachers in our Catholic tradition – John Chrysostom – has a powerful sermon on the amount of energy we invest in looking good: ‘sitting in a barber’s shop, when you are having your haircut, you take the mirror and examine the style from all angles and you ask bystanders and the barber himself if the hair is lying nicely across your forehead!’ He is being sardonic. This preacher would far rather have us sink our energies into something that has eternal implications. So would St Paul in his letter. They are both in the beauty industry too - but the kind of beauty that lasts.

They both admire the desire to take care of ourselves. And how we know that must mean saying ‘no’, making time, a regular routine, ‘no pain, no gain’ and all that. But they would have us translate that knowledge into making us fit for the long haul. Training for eternity. Among other things that means learning the ability to say ‘no’ to something important in order to say ‘yes’ to something vital.



Teams is in that industry. Its structure and discipline, like physical exercise, is aimed at taking care of ourselves on levels that last beyond this life. Investing in our vocation as married people. Taking time with each other, with our children and with our God. In contrast to my brother’s gym it might be called *Family First*.