

# GAA GAMES DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE



# THE SOUL OF SPORT

**The Psychological Meaning of Sport to humanity.**

Dr. Colm O'Connor, Author & Psychologist





LIFE  
DEMANDS A  
HEROIC  
RESPONSE  
AND SPORT  
SHOWS YOU  
HOW

YOU ARE DOING THIS  
FOR EVERYONE IN LIFE  
THAT FACES  
DEFEAT.....



# WHAT WE WILL EXPLORE: The Meaning of Sport



# CONSIDER HOW SPORT AFFECTS US: CHILDHOOD



EG 2: To understand sport, instead of watching the game, watch the crowd!



# EG 3 How sport captivates with last minute free; set-point; a putt; etc.



What you are doing as trainers is more than just teaching skills, maximising performance, or winning.





# THE PASSION OF SPORT: IT'S DEEPEST PURPOSE





The purpose  
of sport is to  
transcend the  
potential  
anonymity of  
Life.

Sport is one  
of the vital  
ways we rise  
out of the  
Mundane and  
into the  
Marvellous



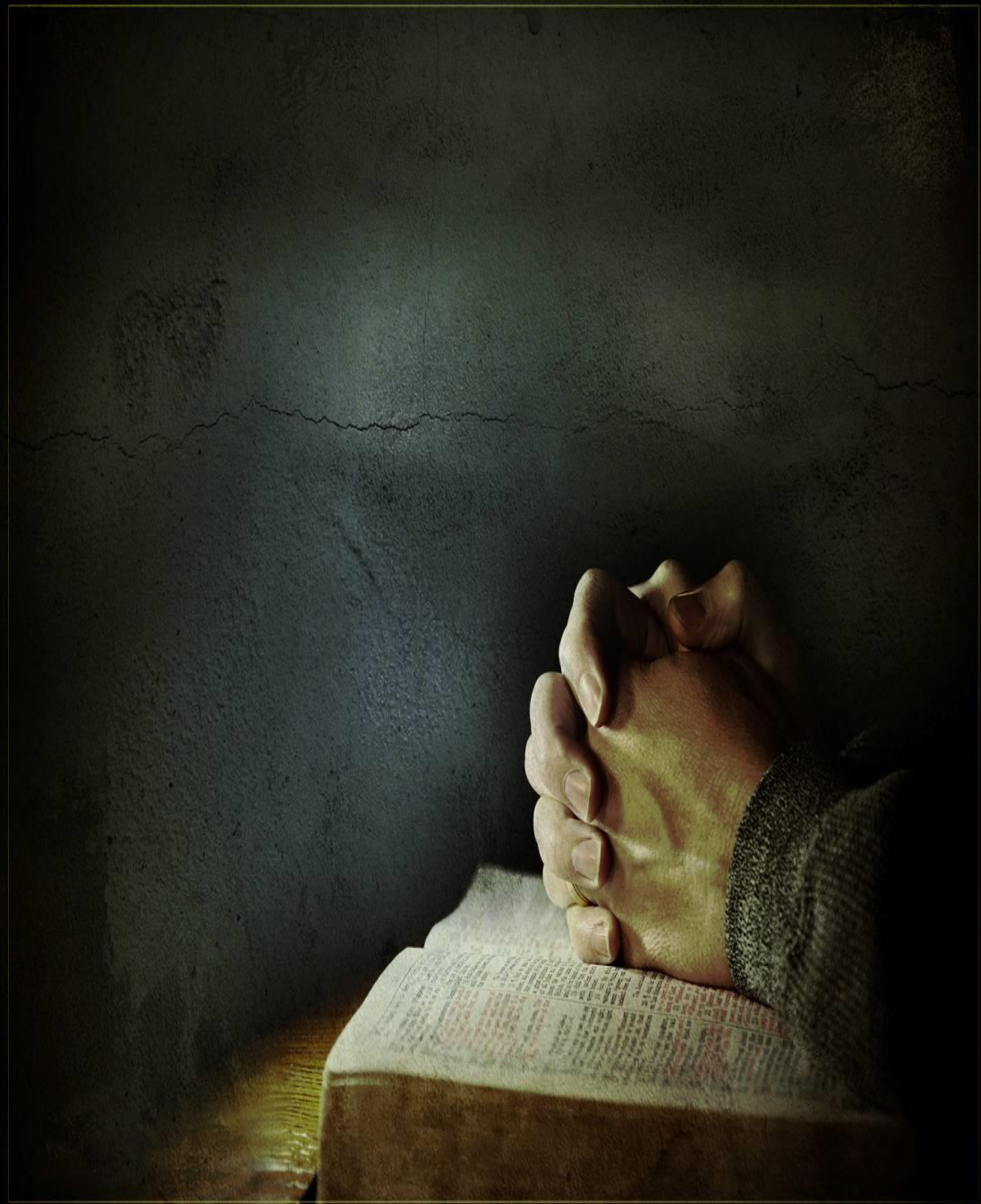
SPORT ALLOWS  
YOU TO  
EXPERIENCE A  
VICTORY AND  
LIBERATION  
THAT IS NOT  
AVAILABLE TO  
THE HUMAN  
ANIMAL



SPORT IS  
HUMANITY'S  
MAGNIFICENT  
AND AGELESS  
RESPONSE TO  
THE POTENTIAL  
ANONYMITY  
OF LIFE



SPORT, LIKE  
RELIGION, IS  
VITAL BECAUSE  
WE ARE  
PHYSICALLY  
POWERLESS TO  
OVERCOME  
FATE,  
CIRCUMSTANCE,  
AND THE  
UNSPOKEN  
TRAGEDIES IN  
LIFE



# SPORT TRANSCENDS FATE

&

Is magical,  
inspirational,  
and essential.



THEREFORE:  
SPORT IS  
RELIGIOUS  
AND  
SYMBOLIC.



SPORT  
ELEVATES  
THE  
PERSON





SPORT  
HELPS THE  
ATHLETE  
ACCESS  
UNKNOWN  
HIDDEN  
STRENGTH



SPORT IS A  
BRIDGE  
BETWEEN OUR  
LITERAL AND  
IMAGINED  
WORLDS



## THE TEAR POINT

BECAUSE IT GIVES  
EXPRESSION TO  
OUR UNSPOKEN  
TERRORS AND  
DREAMS SPORT IT  
EXPOSES OUR  
DEEPEST  
VULNERABILITY  
AND BRINGS US  
TO THE TEAR-  
POINTS OF LIFE

A photograph of a starry night sky. In the center, there is a large, diffuse nebula with a reddish-pink hue. The surrounding sky is dark blue and black, filled with numerous small, bright white stars. The nebula has a soft, glowing appearance, with some brighter spots within it.

SPORT  
ALLOWS YOU  
TO  
PARTICIPATE  
IN  
SOMETHING  
LARGER THAN  
THE SELF



SPORT GIVES  
THE PROMISE  
OF VICTORY



SPORT IS  
ENCHANTMENT

Sport allows the magical, imaginative, playful world find expression.

We don't watch sport to be entertained, we watch to elevate our life out of what is literal & mundane into what is imaginary, magical, and marvellous.



LIFE  
DEMANDS A  
HEROIC  
RESPONSE:

SPORT  
SHOWS YOU  
HOW





SPORT IS NOT  
ABOUT  
WINNING  
BUT ABOUT  
THE  
ULTIMATE  
ACT OF  
HEROISM IN  
LIFE:



HONOUR &  
COURAGE ARE  
GREATER THAN  
WINNING.

THIS IS SPORTS  
GREATEST VIRTUE  
& represents  
humanity at its best

# SPORT TRANSCENDS



**A father designs a headstone for his wheelchair-bound son depicting him "free of his earthly burdens."**



SPORT  
DEMANDS  
A PHYSICAL  
ENDURANCE  
THAT  
MIRRORS LIFE  
and ABSORBS  
US FULLY IN  
THE FIGHT  
FOR LIFE



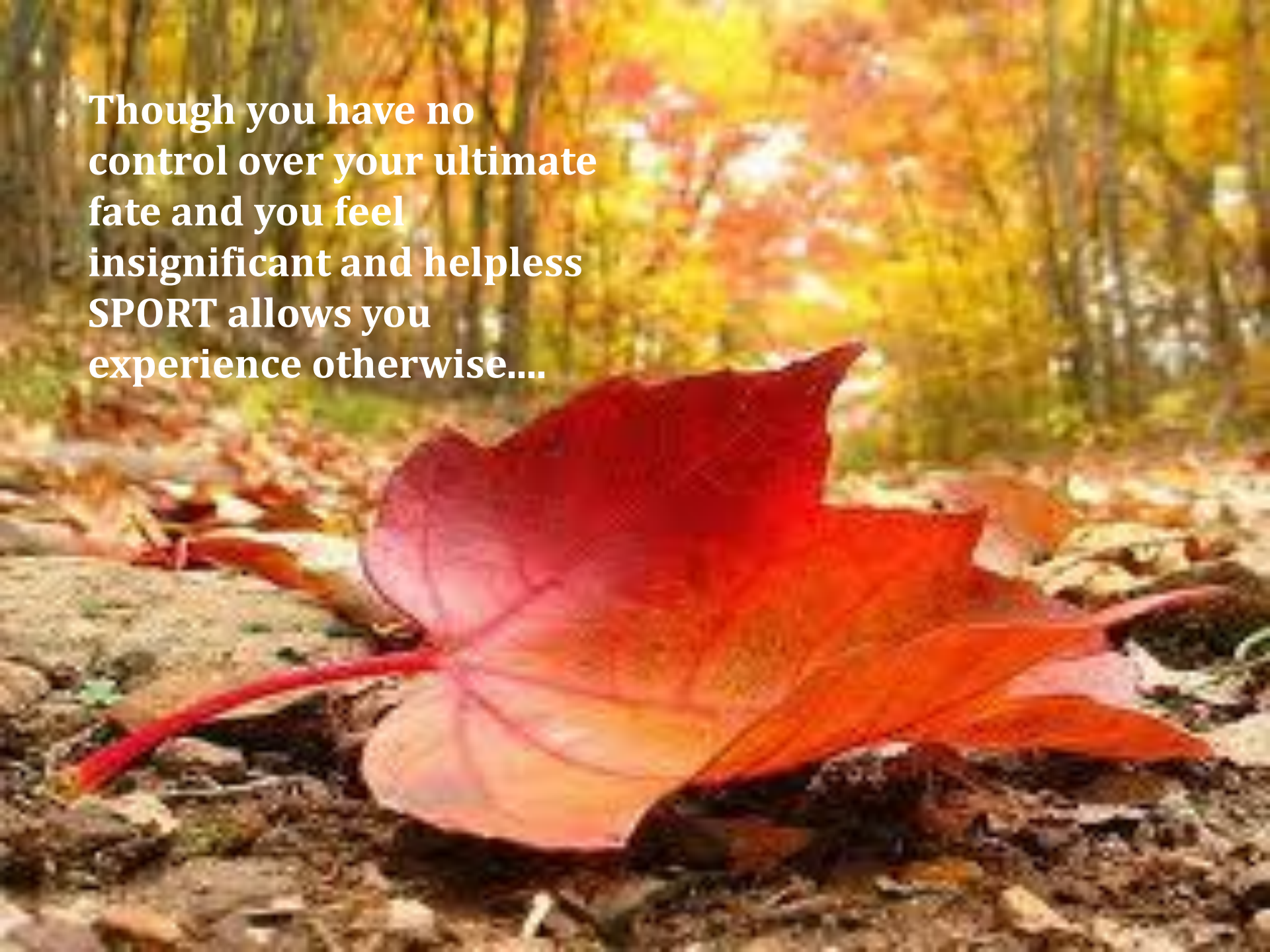
**CROKE PARK REPLICATES  
THE ANCIENT CELTIC FESTIVALS**

# CONCLUSION

You are an imagining  
being who takes  
flight within a mortal  
body



**Though you have no  
control over your ultimate  
fate and you feel  
insignificant and helpless  
SPORT allows you  
experience otherwise....**





**Sport, music, poetry,...**





# Ordinary everyday heroism with a small 'H'.





Heroics goes deeper into human nature than anything else.



"I DID IT"



# The Magnificent & Marvellous



# Our wonderful symbolic life





MORALE AS A CLUSTER OF ENHANCING ILLUSIONS TO ENABLE SURVIVAL IN BATTLE