

BBC RADIO ULSTER

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Friday 15th June 2012

I got to hold an Olympic torch this week.

Now this is quite ironic for a man whose greatest sporting achievement to date has been the 10 metres breaststroke.

You see I wasn't wearing one of those famous white tracksuits and the flame was long since extinguished. But it was still a thrill to hold an Olympic torch in my hand.

In fact it was my most exciting Olympic experience since getting Mary Peter's autograph after the egg and spoon race at sports day in Springhill Primary School in 1972!

And speaking of school, I got to hold the Olympic torch during an inspiring event involving all the schools in Cookstown. For the past six months all the schools in that area, nursery, primary and post primary, have been working together to build good relationships between children from different schools.

And they've focussed the project on the Olympic ideals such as friendship, respect, courage and determination.

Of course the Olympic flame has continued its tour in Scotland this week. My favourite moment was when a group of young people ran alongside the torch on St Andrew's West Sands, where the iconic beach scene in 'Chariots of Fire' was filmed. Complete with the unmistakable movie soundtrack, of course.

There's something unflinchingly positive about the people and places in the Olympic torch relay. I like that. It goes against the flow of cynicism and negativity in the world.

There's nothing that drains your energy like negativity. But like a black hole in outer space it's hard to resist and it sucks you in.

Negativity can even be fashionable in the Western world. At times it seems it's not cool to be positive.

People and organisations can find themselves stuck in an awful cycle of negativity.

But the good news is that we have a choice. We can choose to think and act in a positive way.

John O'Donohue wrote:

'Negativity is an addiction to the bleak shadow that lingers around every human form ... but you can transfigure negativity by turning it toward the light of your soul.'

For people of faith, getting stuck in negativity is not an option. As the Bible says:

'Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, ...pure, ...lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things'

So today, why not steer clear of negativity and live your life like an Olympic hero running along the beach in St Andrew's to the inspiring tune of 'Chariots of Fire'.