

Thought for the Day 4th May - John Reed

Read Hebrews 10:1-10

Someone on the radio the other day told us that Australians are desperate to get their sport back. I have to say, I'm not so sure about that. As a sports lover myself, I have a long list of things that are ahead of sport on my list of things I'd like to get back: to be able to meet at church; for children to go back to school; for everyone to be able to go back to work; to be able to shop freely and without fear or masks or social distancing ... Being able to watch the Dragons lose again is a loooooong way down the list!

But clearly for some it is important to get sport back - on our TVs, at least, if not with a live a crowd in the stadium. The NRL is working towards restarting their competition on May 28th. Other codes are trying to work out what they can do, and when. Some are exploring online alternatives. Formula 1, for example, has launched a new Esports Virtual Grand Prix series, with the drivers "driving" the designated racetrack for that weekend online on the F1 PC video game.

One of the more unusual replacement events happened this last weekend. The famous Kentucky Derby horse race is always run on the first Saturday in May. But, of course, that couldn't happen. So, instead, the race's sponsors broadcast on YouTube the ... wait for it ... Kentucky Turtle Derby! That's right, the "fastest two minutes in sport" has been replaced with the "slowest eight minutes in sports," complete with commentary from the callers that usually cover the horse race.

We make do with substitutes until we can get the real thing. The substitutes are not "fake," or worthless, they are real events in their own right, and they provide real entertainment, they're just simply not quite the same as the "real" thing. You might say that they are "shadows" of the reality that will one day come and replace them.

The writer to the Hebrews says (as does Paul in Colossians 2:16-19) that the Old Testament laws and practices, with the temple and the priesthood and the sacrifices and so on, were not worthless or empty things – they were simply the shadows of a greater reality yet to come. But now, for us, the greater reality has come, in Jesus. In Jesus, God has once and for all dealt with sin, and opened up the way for us to come to him, in ways that the old practices never really could. So let us rejoice in this reality – and never be tempted to go back to the shadows that it has replaced.