

# The true "gold" of the Olympic Games

Virtues and Values / Virtues and values - Year 1

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Por: Blanca Ruiz Ant3n | Fuente: Revista Misi3n (<http://revistamision.com>)

(Revista Misi3n, June 2016).- The Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro 2016, to be held from 5 to 21 August, meet to close to 10,500 athletes. The best players in each country will compete for leave to their nation in the Most High. Luis Felipe Areta, Loli Checa and Yusra Mardini know the pressure to participate in these games, and are three examples of athletes whose motivation goes beyond get the gold and the global recognition.

The history of Yusra Mardini (Damascus, Syria; 1998) are being forged in the water. Although it has only seventeen years, knows what is swim to save his life and the lives of others. He left Syria, together with his sister Sara, in August 2015, when he had lost hope that the civil war that had raged in her country since five years ago to end soon. There was a large part of their family, their hopes and a promising future in the world of swimming. In spite of his youth, or perhaps thanks to her, had represented to Syria in several international tournaments. However, now the young promise sought refuge to save his life: back was the illusion of careers in the sport.

## Swim in the hope

After passing through the Lebanon and Turkey, Yusra and her sister paid to traffickers to help them cross to the coasts of Greece. Finally, one night, within the inflatable boat is found the sisters Mardini, along with twenty other people; all full of hope to reach your first destination in a Europe. However, few minutes after sailing, when they were in the middle of the Aegean Sea, the boat began to make water. Without hesitation, Yusra and Sara decided to go to the sea and tow the boat, with the help of two other persons, during three hours to reach the port of the island of Lesbos. "was not afraid to die because if anything happened she knew that could swim to the island. But had twenty other people with me. In Syria, had worked as a rescuer in a swimming pool; if he had drowned any person, not what I would have forgiven never", ensures the young.

Already in Greece, during the following weeks, lived in the street. Final-Mente, the Sisters Mardini came to Austria and managed to go to Germany, and by these coincidences of life, completed located in a refugee center near a swimming club, where someone simply decided to give him an opportunity: Yusra will participate in the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro; will form part of the Olympic team of refugees that competes on equal terms with the other 205 computers. The swimmer ensures that, with its history, aspires only to "serve as an inspiration to others".

## A mother of elite

Combine elite sports and motherhood can seem like an impossible task. However, Loli Checa (Chair, Valencia; 1982) athlete specializing in the 10,000 and 5,000 meters, ensures that, after having their first child, had "a progression great", and after having the second, "I had the level in all the tests and in the 10,000 meters, I improved my own brand".

Loli is considered a pioneer because "before, have a son and be an athlete meant having to leave the competition. But without a doubt, you may proceed. Want is power", explains. According acknowledges, an improvement as marked after two births are not usually happens, but explains that, in his case, before being a mother "lived 24 hours a day by and for athletics", but then the sport ends when sales of the track and outside, await you your children. Ensures that was raised to leave the athletics having at their first daughter. "devote myself to athletics at one hundred per cent and have a daughter I seemed impossible," explains. But surprisingly, began to notice a great improvement in their performance. "I was much better, physically and mentally, that before having to my daughter. Previously, all my life around the athletics, and there was no other thing. If one day I was wrong training, all I was wrong. But once that I had to my daughter, athletics stayed on the track. I came very well because, due to my character, gave him a lot of laps to things and I was influenced negatively. Now this is not the case".

Loli participated in the Olympic Games in Beijing 2008, where reached the semifinals of the 5,000 meters, and planned to participate in the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro 2016, although finally, you will not be able to do so due to an injury. But overcoming and sacrifice are constants in the life of this athlete. Therefore, your prescription "to get to do something in the athletics focuses on strength of will and discipline".

## Triple jump to the priesthood

Luis Felipe Areta (San Sebastian, 1942) was ordained a priest in 1980, but its journey toward the priesthood was initiated in parallel to the triple jump. "When I was ordained priest, almost looked like it had decided from one day to another, but it was a path that had begun with 18 years, when i asked for admission to Opus Dei, one day after having beaten the record of Spain Absolute of long jump," recalls. During his youth in San Sebastian, was thirteen times champion of Spain of long jump and, after taking part in the European games, at 16 years, received an invitation to go to Madrid and participate in the preparatory training at the Olympics in Rome 1960. "At that time in Madrid, lived in a residence of elite athletes and I wondered on those issues so profound that all the wonders of the world," says. There he met Opus Dei and, after discern their vocation, decided to request the admission as cash.

Participated in the olympics of Rome of 1960 and in the 1961 Ibero-American games in the disciplines of the triple jump and long jump, and later at the Olympic Games in Tokyo 1964 and Mexico in 1968, where he arrived at the end, but to compete injured, was twelfth. As explained, the sporting spirit has helped a lot in the spiritual life. "Life is to start and start afresh, but always with a goal. In the spiritual life don't deleted when third attempt; you can always try again, and the most important opportunity we have is the now".

## Evangelization in the Olympics

During your stay in the World Youth Day (WYD), which was held in Rio de Janeiro in 2013, the Pope Francisco blessed the flag of the Olympic Games. According to the Cardinal said Orani Jo3o Tempesta, Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro, was the first time that a Pope blessed the Olympic flag and Paralympic.

In the face of the enormous influx of people expected to be, the diocese of Rio de Janeiro has organized a service of interreligious chaplaincy, close to the Olympic Village, and nearby churches will count with liturgical celebrations in different languages, with information pamphlets to visitors.

Among the initiatives that have been organized since the archdiocese brazilian, highlights 100 Days for Peace, in which 50 days before

and 50 days after the Olympics prepares to their assistants to this competition for "live something as important as the peace". According to the Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro, it is intended that the Olympics will provide an opportunity to reflect on the "beauty, the importance and the solidarity in sport, a practice that is characterized by the diverse origins of its competitors".

Translated by catholic.net – Santiago Schietekat