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## *What's the Point?*

**An article for the *Cathedral Times*  
by the Rev. Canon George Maxwell**

It's time to begin again. Every year we say good-bye to summer and return to school, work, or whatever we were taking a break from. The pace picks up. Traffic thickens. The task list lengthens with all the things we didn't finish the day before.

Before we shake the sand out of our shoes, though, I want to go back to a question one of my heroes asked this July, just before playing in the 153rd British Open Championship at Royal Portrush Golf Club in Northern Ireland.

Scottie Scheffler, a three-time major champion and the world's top-ranked golfer since 2023, was the favorite to win. During a press conference, while reflecting on his love for the game, he seemed to slip into a deeper conversation—with himself as much as the reporters.

What is the point of it all? Scheffler asked.

A reporter had asked him how long he celebrates a victory. Scheffler admitted the celebrations last only a few minutes. Then, he continued to say something remarkable.

"There's a lot of people that make it to what they thought was going to fulfill them in life, and you get there, you get to No. 1 in the world, and they're like what's the point? ... Why do I want to win this tournament so bad?"

The question became even more interesting, of course, when he went out and won the tournament by four strokes.

So, what was he really saying? Some thought he was tired of the grind. Others assumed he was searching for meaning or managing anxiety. But I think they missed something essential. Scheffler is a Christian. It's not that he doesn't love golf or want to win. It's that he views his life through the lens of faith.

The tension—between giving everything to the game and recognizing its limits—is not contradiction but clarity. Golf matters, but it cannot do what we sometimes demand of it: define us, fill us, give us a self. In a culture that insists our worth comes from achievement, Scheffler points elsewhere—to love, faith, family, something deeper than the game.

The cultural critic Christopher Lasch diagnosed this dynamic decades ago. In *The Culture of Narcissism*, he showed how modern life confuses intensity with substance, performance with identity, and applause with selfhood. The roar of the crowd becomes the measure of our being. But achievement promises fulfillment while delivering only fleeting satisfaction, leaving us restless and chasing the next win.

Scheffler's honesty cuts through that illusion. He names the emptiness at the center of applause. He admits what Lasch described: that a life built only on performance cannot satisfy our deepest longings.

And yet—even with this clarity—Scheffler confesses he struggles. He offers no formula, no slogan. He simply tells the truth: living beyond achievement is hard in a culture that constantly trains us to perform, market ourselves, and measure our value by success. His words strike home because they acknowledge the gap between what we know and how we live.

Lasch helps explain why. The culture of narcissism doesn't just shape individuals—it shapes whole communities. We are urged to compete, consume, and display. To step back and say "this isn't the point" feels

like swimming against the current. Yet that's the very move Scheffler gestures toward: anchoring in something more durable than applause.

Here's the key: none of us can make that move alone. Lasch was right about the diagnosis but less clear about the cure. We need communities strong enough to tell us the truth and gentle enough to hold us when we falter. We need practices that form us in ways performance never can. We need people who remind us of our worth is not in the win, the grade, the promotion, or the applause.

This is where the church comes in. The church dares to say: the point is not what you achieve, but who you are in God. Around Word and Sacrament, we remember our identity—beloved, forgiven, called. Here we practice a rhythm not driven by performance but by grace. We learn to hold ambition in one hand and humility in the other, to live not for applause but for love.

This is what we mean when we say the purpose of church is to be church.

Church is the place where we are not afraid to ask ourselves the question “What's the point?” In fact, we welcome it. Church is the place where the answer becomes clear: the point is not the win, but the life we share in God.

And that is a gift no tournament, no promotion, no applause can ever replace.