Today’s news, tomorrow’s chip wrapper. Not so this excellent programme. It doesn’t have the same soaking abilities of regular newsprint and I know there are many of you out there that collect them, or even get them signed for posterity.

That well-worn phrase does however capture the transient nature of football. Saturday’s heroes, Tuesday evening’s villains. A manager who one minute know’s nothing about the game can learn an awful lot very quickly if his side suddenly has a winning streak.

Nothing in this world lasts forever, and in football even more so. How does a player cope with it all? Either the adulation and hero worship one minute, or getting injured and losing his place in the side the next… the reality is that they become quite phlegmatic. I had to look that word up just to check. There’s an awful lot of shrugging of shoulders, which can mask genuine anguish on the inside. Every player wants to be out there playing and no-one likes being sidelined for whatever reason, but equally if they’re out of the squad it doesn’t take much to see them back in again, even if it does mean someone else’s misfortune.

Amidst such uncertainty, as in life, prayer is essential. Putting your trust in God and acknowledging that much in life is out of our control can paradoxically help us live in the moment and redouble our effort to affect our circumstances. Praying is empowering. It also helps us deal with misfortune and lay aside negative things like regrets and unforgiveness. These can be real life sappers as many of you know all too well.

So many people mistake faith for something religious and irrelevant to real life, but this is simply not the case. Having an eternal perspective helps us engage with the now and deal with the past: you can leave your regrets at the foot of the cross for instance, and move on. You can forgive partly because of what you have been forgiven, and ultimately because God is the judge and justice will be done.

Talking about signing things (paragraph 2, before the sermon), I was chatting with one of the players about the Senior Greens meeting that was going on the other week and was reminded of when I turned up to a Senior Greens meeting one time and was asked for my autograph.

‘Seriously mate you don’t want my autograph,’ I advised him. ‘I’m only the Chaplain.’

‘Oh I thought you were that new Argentinian!’

Now I know that as you get older everyone looks younger, but seriously – mistaking me for Andres Gurrieri? Inside I was dead chuffed, and I had only just started as Chaplain. I’ve aged a lot since then.