

Coffee & Doughnuts with Jim Hunter

Jim Hunter, Baltimore Orioles announcer and parishioner of St. Mark in Fallston, sits down with the Catholic Review.

CR: What, and where, are your Catholic roots?

Hunter: Growing up in New Jersey, the Catholic faith was very important in the home my parents made. I attended Catholic elementary school at St. Benedict's Parish and Catholic high school at St. John Vianney, both in Holmdel, N.J. Except for two years at community college, all of my schooling was at Catholic schools, as I got my communication arts degree at Seton Hall University.

My faith and commitment to my Catholic roots has grown tremendously at St. Mark Parish in Fallston. Father Jerry Francik, our pastor, is a tremendous shepherd and a dear friend. Now, my entire mindset is based on my faith.

CR: Your Twitter handle displays your Catholic high school, and your Oriole bio notes that you're in the Knights of Columbus. Many public figures are reluctant to profess their faith; why share yours?

Hunter: I'm proud of my faith. Along with my family, it's the most important aspect of my life. In a subtle way, I look at it as evangelization. If one person agrees with anything I post or knows the type of person I am, I feel that is a positive feeling toward Jesus. I don't force my faith on anyone, but I am proud of who I am, and proud to profess it.

CR: Thomas Boswell famously wrote “How Life Imitates the World Series.” Can you think of ways in which baseball imitates a faith-filled life?

Hunter: As the Catholic Church is a community of faith, Major League Baseball is a community family. When you are part of a major league organization the people in the organization become part of your “work” family. We spend so much time together as a group during the baseball season, in the same way that parish families spend time together during the course of the liturgical calendar.

CR: The Orioles travel one-third of the year. What are your favorite churches on the road?

Hunter: St. Michael’s Cathedral Basilica in Toronto stands out. It is a beautiful church. The Orioles will be in Toronto Easter weekend, and I’ll attend Easter Mass there. Catholic Athletes for Christ (CAC) is a wonderful organization that arranges Mass each Sunday at almost every ballpark, so Catholic members of the visiting team can attend Mass while away from home. I’ve met two bishops at Masses on the road.

CR: Favorite saint?

Hunter: I have a strong affinity for St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, a tremendously faithful servant. Seton Hall University, my alma mater, was named (in 1856) in her honor by her nephew, Bishop James Roosevelt Bayley, the archbishop of Newark, who before that was (eighth) bishop of Baltimore. When my wife, Bonnie, and I visited her shrine in Emmitsburg and attended Mass at Mount St. Mary’s, I felt a tremendous calmness. She was a pioneer in Catholic education in the U.S., of which I took advantage.

There is a relic of Mother Seton in the altar in the chapel at St. Mark in Fallston, so she seems to continue to be a part of my life.

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