

# Vlad brings big faith with his big bat



2008 Photo by Christian Petersen/Getty Images North America

With the much-anticipated signing of Vladimir Guerrero, the Baltimore Orioles are getting a proven slugger with a reputation for some amazingly freewheeling swings. (Two years ago in Baltimore, the Dominican superstar famously smacked a bloop single against the O's by connecting on a pitch that *bounced* in front of the plate).

Yet, there's something else the long-suffering birds might be getting with their latest signing: a man of deep Christian faith who says he takes his Bible with him everywhere he goes.

Check out these snips from a 2007 Los Angeles Times article when Vlad played for the Angels:

*Two hours before taking the field for the game that would give his team the division title, the Angels' best hitter is sitting on the floor in a tiny room behind home plate at Angel Stadium, a Bible in his lap.*

*Vladimir Guerrero may fear no pitcher, but he's a little nervous about God.*

*"I comfort myself with the Bible," Guerrero says. "It's like having my family there."*

*In that case, Guerrero is truly blessed on this morning because he has both: the good book and members of his extended family, namely the handful of Spanish-speaking teammates he gathers every Sunday for a short chapel service led by broadcaster Jose Mota.*

*Today's reading comes from Galatians 2:20, in which Paul talks about commitment and example. So Mota asks the players to name the person whose example they've*

*followed in life.*

*Guerrero breaks into a wide smile. It's as if Mota has thrown a batting practice fastball right in his wheelhouse.*

*"My mother," he says. ... Teammate Erick Aybar says Guerrero is humble, likening him to a second father.*

*"He's a good guy," adds the Dodgers' Wilson Valdez, who works out with Guerrero in the Dominican each winter. "Everybody likes him."*

*Guerrero, who habitually speaks of himself in the third person, believing the pronouns "I" or "me" to be boastful, laughs off such praise.*

*For Mota, among Guerrero's closest friends, such modesty is a product of the two most important things in his life: faith and family.*

*"He's seen the examples of guys that have not been humbled," he says. "They move away, they come back and they don't even relate to the people they grew up with. That's what Vladdy doesn't want to do."*

*"If this ended for Vladdy right now, he'd be out in the fields doing the crops. Happily. If this ended today, Vladdy would be Vladdy. Just somewhere else."*

**Much more here.**