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From sports phenom to priest candidate

Joe Ferullo | Feb. 22, 2010 NCR Today

Grant Desme was well on his way to baseball fame and fortune -- until fate intervened. Now, the 23-year old minor league phenom is on his way to the priesthood.

A fascinating, detail-filled profile in Sunday's Los Angeles Times tells Grant's story [1]: a kid consumed with baseball since childhood who suddenly found himself, almost against his will, considering the larger questions of life and his place on the universal canvas.

According to the *Times*, Desme was a top prospect in the Oakland A's organization. But a wrist injury kept him away from the game two seasons ago, and he spent that time slowly considering another path for his life -- the priesthood. He comes from a very Catholic family, but athletic achievement was also something of a calling in his house -- so he was torn. Desme waited until he recovered, and rejoined the game in 2009 -- where he had his most stellar season yet. Still, he told the *Times*, the pull of the church did not wane as his sports success grew. Another injury -- very minor, something that only kept him on the bench for a couple of weeks -- reinforced the random nature of life in general, and of an athlete's life in particular. That pushed him to make his decision final.

This August, Grant Desme won't be with the other boys of summer. Instead, he'll walk into St. Michael's Abbey in Orange County, just south of Los Angeles. There he will prepare for life as a priest in the Norbertine order.

That move has sparked a minor tumult of discussion and debate in the baseball world, among scouts, executives and fans. Sports blogs have been on fire with the news for weeks. But, as *Times* sports reporter Steve Lowery writes about Desme at the end of his article: "As far as he's concerned, he's giving up nothing of what the world had to offer. What the world had to offer simple wasn't enough."

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[1] http://www.latimes.com/sports/la-sp-grant-desme21-2010feb21,0,2018918.story