

# Baseball Player Teaches Villa Students a Lesson on Drugs

By Teresa A. Parsons

Students at St. Joseph's Villa heard first-hand evidence that professional sports — in this case baseball — and drug abuse don't mix from Juan Bonilla last Wednesday, July 31. The former San Diego Padres second baseman was visiting Rochester with the Columbus Clippers, who played the Red Wings later that evening.

His words and manner were low-key, but his message was clear and harsh. "I don't care what you use — cocaine, marijuana, whatever ... you want to die, you keep on using," he said in one of two presentations to more than 80 villa students, from both the resident and day programs.

From the age of 13-25, Bonilla said, he used drugs ranging from marijuana to angel dust, primarily because of peer pressure. In the process, he nearly wrecked his career, was nearly arrested and lost his job with the Padres last year. He has since made his way back to a berth with the Clippers, the triple-A farm team for the New York Yankees. But it hasn't been an easy task.

Although he completed a 28-day rehabilitation program in San Diego, Bonilla described his comeback as a battle he's still fighting. He contacted more than 25 teams looking for an opening at any level. "The first question they all asked wasn't 'How's your arm?' or 'Are you in shape?' but 'Are you still on drugs?'" he said.

His audience was responsive, asking a variety of questions ranging from "How

long were you using pot?" to "Did your mother know?"

When asked if he was ever afraid he'd try drugs again, Bonilla was frank. "Yesterday is gone, tomorrow is not here yet, so you have to live for today, take it one day at a time. But about tomorrow, I honestly don't know," he replied.

Steve Hanson, the villa's substance abuse specialist, believed Bonilla was targeting an important population at St. Joseph's Villa, which provides mental health services to emotionally handicapped and mentally ill children and adolescents. "There is a large at-risk population at the villa," he said, explaining that for kids who have difficulty coping with daily life, drugs are one way to avoid dealing with tough situations.

"Kids don't buy the hard-sell approach," he said, adding that Bonilla was effective because he wasn't preachy. Instead he stressed the practical approach, pointing out the emotional damage, public disgrace and economic hardship drugs wrought in his life. His approach and his status as a professional athlete won his audience's respect, Hansen said.

Bonilla described some kids' refusal to take his message seriously as frustrating at first — that is until he began to see himself in them. "That was me a few years ago," he said of one Puerto Rican student who tried at points to disrupt his presentation. "I thought they threw that mold away."



Juan Bonilla, second baseman for the visiting Columbus Clippers, speaks to groups of students at St. Joseph's Villa about the ravages of drug abuse.

Although he doesn't hope to get through to every kid, one in 10 or even one in 100 would make his efforts worthwhile, Bonilla said. And he was pleased with his reception

at the villa. "At one high school in New York City," he recalled, "one of the kids pulled out a BB gun and shot at me ... This was beautiful."

## Archbishop Mahony Installation Set

Los Angeles (NC) — Ceremonies marking the installation of Archbishop Roger M. Mahony as archbishop of Los Angeles will take place Sept. 4 and 5, the Los Angeles Archdiocese announced.

Sept. 4 is the feast of Our Lady Queen of the Angels and the 204th birthday of the city of Los Angeles.

The first phase of the installation will take place Sept. 4 at Our Lady Queen of the Angels Seminary at San Fernando Mission, where the new archbishop will meet with the priests of the archdiocese.

During the evening prayer Archbishop Mahony will formally present to the con-

sultors of the archdiocese the papal letters authorizing his appointment.

The next day, Sept. 5, Archbishop Mahony will be installed in St. Vibiana's Cathedral and will take possession of the church of Los Angeles.

The ceremony will occur in the same sanctuary where Cardinal Timothy Manning, 75, who is retiring after 15 years as head of the archdiocese, was ordained to the priesthood 51 years ago.

Archbishop Mahony, 49, has headed the Diocese of Stockton, Calif., since 1980. He was appointed head of the Los Angeles Archdiocese July 15.

## Music Competition

To celebrate its 100th anniversary and the 60th anniversary of its school of music studies, The Catholic University of America's Benjamin T. Rome School of Music is sponsoring a composition competition. Open to university alumni and students enrolled in the school of music, the contest seeks a commemorative festive overture or prelude of about 5-10 minutes for full orchestra.

The winner will receive \$1,000 cash and the score will be performed at the J.F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts' Annual Benefit Concert next April. Full scores should be addressed to: Elaine R. Walter,

Dean, The Benjamin T. Rome School of Music, Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., 20064. Deadline is Sept. 1, 1986.

## Pilgrimage Planned

A pilgrimage by bus is planned September 14-16 to the shrines of St. John Neumann, Our Lady of Czestochowa, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. Contact Mary Kelly in Fairport at (716)377-1158 for more information. Deadline for reservations is the end of August.

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