

Babe Ruth: America's prodigal son

The following story can be read without saying who the person is or even whether the person is male or female. At the end see if the group can guess who the person is.

- By the time this person was 7 years old; around 2nd grade, they were smoking, stealing, lying and in trouble with the police.
 - Their father and mother could not control them, and the persons would not listen to the parents. Their father even tried to beat them, but the person would not change.
 - Finally the parents decided to put them into a Catholic orphanage called Saint Mary's. The parents disowned their child, and signed over the legal rights of guardianship to the religious brothers who ran the orphanage.
 - The person continued to do poorly there and to disobey. Finally, one brother, Br. Matthias made a connection with the person, and taught them about sports, school and manners.
 - The person left the orphanage when they were older and became one of the best athletes ever. They made tons of money and became an American icon. The money, power and fame got to the person however and the person was known for eating whatever they wanted, drinking, smoking, sex with women. The person was married twice and lived a reckless and restless life.
 - All of this reckless behavior took its toll on the person's body and they ended up in serious condition in the hospital at the end of their life. This is when the person's life changed and they received the following letter from a junior high student.
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- Do you know who the person is? HINT - There is even a candy bar named after this person. Here is the letter that changed Babe Ruth's life.**

Dear Babe,

Everybody in the seventh grade is pulling and praying for you. I am enclosing a medal, which, if you wear it, will make you better.

Your pal,

Michael Quinlan

P.S. I know this will be your 61st homer. You'll hit it.

Well, when he heard that letter, the Babe was overcome with emotion. He tried to speak, but his throat tightened. He then looked at his wife and pointed to his chest. She put the medal (which happened to be the Miraculous Medal) on his pajamas, and he wore it every day of his life thereafter.

That same night, one of Babe's best friends, Paul Carey, was surprised to spot the medal, but he was also struck by the look on Babe's face. Carey later described the sight as "fear having a battle with hope." "Babe," Carey asked, "don't you think you should get your house in order?"

"For the first time in my life," the old slugger later wrote, "I realized that death might strike me out. I asked Paul to get the chaplain, and I made a full confession. In the morning, they brought me Holy Communion. I thought to myself: What a comfortable feeling to be free from fear and worries. I could now just turn them over to God."

Ten days later, Babe Ruth walked out of French Hospital--and friends saw a man remarkably changed. He was no longer the cut-up, the drinker, the prankster . . . Instead he talked often of his gratitude to St. Mary's Orphanage and Industrial School, and of his love for Brother Mathias, the tough guy who loved him, taught him to play baseball, and convinced him that God had cared enough to make a place for him in this world. . . . And he did his best to say he was sorry for the bad example he displayed to kids [during his baseball career]. Babe Ruth also donated money to the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington DC and his plaque can be seen in the crypt of the Shrine.