

Roberto Clemente. He was a pioneer in Major League Baseball



As the 2017 World Series gets underway this week between the Houston Astros and the Los Angeles Dodgers, we present a poignant story of one of pro sports' great humanitarians, the late Roberto Clemente.

Clemente (1934-1972) was a pioneer in Major League Baseball, both as a black man and a Latino, hailing from Puerto Rico. He made it to the Majors in 1955 and spent all of his 18 year career with the Pittsburgh Pirates. He became the first Latin American and Caribbean player inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1973.

His life was cut tragically short in a deadly plane crash in Nicaragua, on route to deliver humanitarian aid after a massive earthquake. Clemente had already been contributing to relief efforts from a distance, but he decided to travel to the scene in person to ensure that donations reached their destination after earlier supply shipments had been stolen by corrupt officials. He was 38 years old and still in the prime of his baseball career at the time of his death, and he left behind his wife and three young children.

Rumors bounced around the Catholic sphere this past summer that Clemente's cause for canonization was underway, but they've proved to be premature. However, it is known that Clemente was a serious practicing Catholic who endeavored to use his fame and wealth to help the less fortunate, so much so that he lost his life in an act of heroic service to the afflicted.

Even if we won't be seeing him declared a blessed anytime soon, we can certainly celebrate and give thanks for his witness, and for other athletes like him who boldly live their Christian faith, using their public platforms to sow goodness and the Good News in a world that desperately needs wholesome role models.

What professional athletes (past or present) have you admired for their witness of faith? Let us know in the comments!

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Source: Catholic Link