

Jesus Christ and Baseball: Local Athlete Combines Two Great Loves

By Lisa Sievert
Special to The Southern Cross

SAN DIEGO — What does a young man who has played and dreamed about baseball since the age of five do when he realizes he'll never make it to the major leagues? If he is **Dan Cassidy**, he works hard at "handing it over to the Lord."

Cassidy, a parishioner at the Immaculata Church at USD, moved on from his dreams of pro baseball to become a physical therapist, but kept his love for the game alive by playing amateur ball.

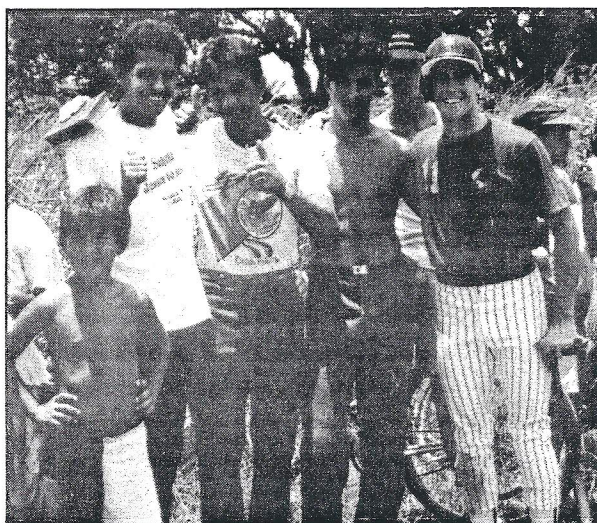
During a game in Kansas he approached the director of **Athletes in Ac-**

players like celebrities. "Joy was most dramatically expressed through the warm eyes and smiles of the children who came to watch us play, and hoped to receive a gift from the players," Cassidy says. "The significance of simply signing an autograph can be very inspiring for a young child who dreams of being an athlete someday."

The autographs of Cassidy's team were different from those typically given by players from professional teams. "Our autographs included our favorite verse from Scripture," he explains. The passage on each autograph Cassidy signs is 1 Cor 13:13 "There are in the end three

things that last: faith, hope, and love, and the greatest of these is love."

"In participating in my favorite activity, I discovered how people were excited about how my life has been changed by a relationship with Jesus Christ, coupled with a career in baseball," Cassidy says. "If given a chance to begin my career again it certainly would be played for the glory of God, knowing all things work out



POST-GAME PIC — Dan Cassidy (far right) and friends celebrate after winning a game in San Jose, Cuba. Cassidy has played ball with Athletes in Action in Brazil, Venezuela, and Aruba and with Sport and Cultural Exchange International in Cuba and in the Yucatan Peninsula.

tion and asked about playing baseball for Christ. For the past two summers since then he has witnessed his faith while hitting and fielding on baseball diamonds in Brazil, Venezuela and Aruba with Athletes in Action and to Cuba and in the Yucatan Peninsula with **Sport and Cultural Exchange International**.

During the trips, the Christian teams played either national or church teams. "My role with Athletes in Action was three-fold," Cassidy says, explaining his duties as player, infield coach and team therapist.

"Being in charge of dispensing medications and nursing the team back to health, I acquired the nickname, 'Doc.' There was a joy in taking care of a bunch of guys who needed to be healthy to serve the Lord through their play," he says.

By far, Cassidy was most moved by his visit to Cuba. He says the kids are so in love with baseball that they treated the

for the good.

"The impact we made on those children is yet to be seen, but the seed is now planted for the Lord to do the watering and growing. It will be outrageously fruitful," he adds.

Cassidy has truly found peace in playing and giving to Christ, and he wishes that for others. "I hope all of you come to realize, in your own lives, the abundant blessings that you will receive when uniting your efforts in life with the peace and harmony of Jesus' plan for you. He is truly our Lord and Savior."

Cassidy's dream is to organize a Catholic group to evangelize in Spain, Austria, Switzerland and Italy for 2 to 4 weeks in the summer of 1993 or fall of 1994. He is looking for professional, semi-professional or college baseball and softball players, male or female to form a team. To find out more about this opportunity to play ball and share your faith, call Dan Cassidy at 272-5870.