

The girl edges out God

Columbus A&E star makes his choice

By Sara Smith

Dan DeMatte, a sophomore at Ohio Dominican University, has decided that when he graduates and gets a job, he's going to marry his girlfriend, Amber, and settle down.

That doesn't sound like much of a revelation for a college kid until you realize he was pondering the priesthood—and did his soul-searching with the A&E network's TV cameras peering at him.

The bible-icious 21-year-old, who shares a house in Columbus with nine buddies, was one of four young men featured in A&E's reality show *God or the Girl*. (He has trimmed off his curly locks since shooting ended.)

"Married life is where I want to make my sacrifice," DeMatte said as he sipped a cup of coffee this week. "I chose God through the girl."

He said that the purpose of the show was not to give people a perfect example of what aspiring seminarians struggle with. It was a chance for the four young men to prove that you can be real, love God with all your heart and still exist in this world.

"Considering it was produced by four Jewish guys, I think they did an incredible job," he said.

The five weeks of taping took their toll on DeMatte. Finding time to do homework, pray and carry an 80-pound cross on his back during a 20-mile spiritual journey was tricky with all the cameras.

"I think it's hard to hear God's voice when the cameras are around," he said, fiddling with his cross necklace. "There were cameras everywhere. I just ran off and prayed a lot."

DeMatte said he never thought he would decide to become a priest or a husband on the show. The thought of answering that question in five weeks with cameras in his face and homework to do was absurd to him.

"I was doing it to be a witness," he said. "It was an opportunity to let people know about our life."

But much to his surprise, he got things sorted out by the end of shooting.

Like Joe and Mike, two other guys on the show, DeMatte chose the life of a layperson. Only one, Steve, has entered the seminary.

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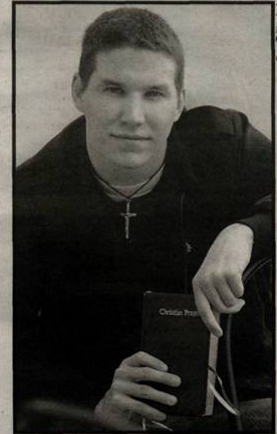
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"My heart wanted the priesthood": DeMatte surprised himself by making up his mind during the shooting of *God or the Girl*

Given everything that's happened in the Catholic Church in the last few years, Pope Benedict XVI probably doesn't mind one-in-four odds.

DeMatte took some time off from his three-year relationship while he was exploring other possibilities. He said Amber, who herself once considered becoming a nun, was extremely understanding about the entire process.

Nonetheless, he said Amber would beat him to a pulp if he put her through another breakup.

DeMatte said God is helping him come to terms with a calling to married life, though he still struggles a bit with his choice.

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