



Fraternity of Fatherhood

A Spiritual Fraternity for All Men

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The Catholic Men's Movement Comes of Age **By: Tim Drake**



Brothers:

It is true that men generally don't like to attend religious services and don't get involved in church? Consider the evidence:

— Citing dismal statistics, researcher David Morrow's book *Why Men Hate Going to Church* (Thomas Nelson, 2005) concludes that men "are the world's largest unreached people group."

— A 2011 *Christian Century* article, "Why Do Men Stay Away?" notes how

men are "famously outnumbered" by women at worship and "often are not particularly happy about it" when they do attend.

— A Barna study published that same year found that over the preceding two decades church attendance had declined by six percentage points among men, that the percentage of men who had volunteered at church had suffered a similar statistical drop over the same

Ask yourselves if you are
"open to God's surprises"
or if you are "closed and fearful
before the newness of the Holy
Spirit." *Pope Francis*

OUTPOURING

OF THE

SPIRIT

ACTS 2:3

period, and that an estimated 39 percent of all men could be considered “unchurched” — meaning that they haven’t attended a church event (outside of an event such as a wedding or funeral) in the previous six months.

— A December *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* article on men’s participation at church cited a statistic that 64 percent of parish life is comprised of women. The perception — or misperception rather — is that men are less involved in church than women.

The reality, however, is that there also is evidence of a resurgence in male involvement in church, at least as far as Catholic men in the United States are concerned. For the past two decades, a Catholic men’s movement has been steadily expanding in size and strength to the point where it is having a huge impact on male spirituality and involvement in Catholic communities. On both a national and local level, the Catholic men’s movement has come of age, as an increasing number of Catholic men are seriously embracing the faith and their roles as husbands and fathers in leading their families to Christ.



Many may recall the multi-denominational Promise Keepers movement of the mid-1990s that held large stadium events across the country. The Catholic men’s movement is not like that: It’s less flashy, more consistent, and growing.

“Promise Keepers conferences were designed to be spectacles,” writes John P. Bartkowski, sociology professor at the University of Texas at San Antonio in his book about the

movement. “And the problem with a spectacle is it needs to be outdone by something more spectacular and more stimulating the next time around.”

My own diocese hosted its annual Catholic men’s conference during the second weekend of Lent. The first of these conferences, held 17 years ago, was attended by approximately 300 men. Over the past five years, the event has consistently drawn more than 500.

Chris Codden, director of the Office of Marriage and Family for the Diocese of St. Cloud, said that she’s seen a growth in the younger base among attendees.

“From the evaluations from the men, they want good solid Catholic speakers that challenge them and give them ‘meat and potatoes,’ not ‘fluff,’” said Codden.

Many other dioceses also sponsor annual Catholic men’s conferences. In 2002, there were just 16 Catholic men’s conferences. According to Dan Spencer, executive director for the National Fellowship of Catholic Men, there are now approximately 75 diocesan-sponsored Catholic men’s conferences each year.

“There have been six or seven new conferences just within the last eighteen months, in places such as Omaha and Des Moines,” said Spencer. New York is currently organizing a conference, he added.

Typically, men’s conferences feature a prominent priest or Catholic leader who provides one or two inspiring talks, the opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, prayer, and the celebration of Mass. They also

often feature workshop or breakout sessions focused on topics of particular interest to men, or small-group sessions where men spend time with one another talking about issues that face them and their families.

What's more startling, however, is what comes out of such conferences. Men often are inspired to meet more regularly to hold each other accountable and for support in living out their faith in daily life. As a result, thousands of men across the country remain active in local men's groups that meet quite regularly.

Here I can speak from experience. Nearly 10 years ago, three other men and I began a morning men's prayer and book-discussion group. Once a week, we gathered for prayer, support, dialogue, and accountability. I told the men at our first meeting that I had no intention of the group lasting forever. I said that we would work through a couple of books, and that would be it.

Yet here we are, 10 years later, having read and discussed countless books. We have expanded our group, and about a dozen of us continue to gather every Tuesday morning at a local restaurant. Over the years, more than 100 different men, including priests and seminarians, have participated. Some have driven more than 90 miles to see what we're doing.

Not only that, but God has multiplied the effort. Some men who originally were part of our group have moved and started men's groups elsewhere. At least four men have established separate weekly men's groups within their own local parishes. We've also been told stories about the impact our gatherings have had on other restaurant patrons who have seen our group joined in prayer.

This phenomenon is being replicated across the country. Spencer said that parish-based groups have "exploded." He cites that Milwaukee has approximately 130 men's groups, Cincinnati has 75, and Kansas City has 60.

"Some are Bible-study groups, others are accountability groups, some study the weekly Sunday Scripture readings," explained Spencer. "Some involve the Knights of Columbus. Others begin with a study or a book, while others create their own materials. Approximately 105 dioceses participate in the three-year ['That Man is You'](#) program."

The local efforts bear fruit for parishes and beyond. Some parish-based men's groups have mentorship programs for boys in high schools. Others have started parish retreat-based programs like Christ Renews His Parish or Cursillo, weekend experiences of spiritual renewal that lead directly to the formation of ongoing small faith-sharing groups. The fruit of many of these efforts is that it motivates men to be more involved at all levels within the parish — in liturgical ministries, in religious education, in volunteerism, in charitable works, and much more. As examples, Spencer noted that men in Kansas City have been working on an anti-pornography initiative, and a group in Columbus, Ohio, recently participated in promoting Home Enthronement to the Sacred Heart.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that men's participation in such groups strengthens their families and marriages, deepens their faith, and leads them to a greater participation in the sacraments. According to a Gallup Poll study of "That Man is You," men entering the program tended to place in the bottom 25 percent of Gallup's Spiritual Commitment Index, but finished the program in the top 25 percent.

Jesus Christ continues to call men — as he did the Twelve — to follow Him, and they are responding.

If we are to be conformed to Christ, then we need to conform ourselves "to the Gospel precept of fraternal love," as the Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us (#2488). Christ and the apostles demonstrate properly ordered fraternal love among men. It stands in stark contrast to the disordered love that our contemporary culture tends to celebrate and model.

Just as men on the battlefield band together under the leadership of their general to protect freedom, so evangelical Catholic men are being arrayed in a spiritual formation as a band of spiritual brothers centered

Fraternity of Fatherhood

around Christ to do battle against the cultural forces set on destroying our families.

Make no mistake. We are on a battlefield, and the choice is stark. Either we are for Christ or we are against him. There is no middle ground.

"There is a hunger," Kevin O'Brien, former professional football player and co-founder of the Catholic men's conference Men of Christ, told me. "Men feel an emptiness inside and want to see faith presented in a masculine modality. They want to be challenged. When faith is presented in its proper form, men are attracted to it."

Many of our brethren have been seriously wounded through the bullets and the shrapnel that the culture is hurling at us. Men's groups offer a tremendous opportunity to strengthen men in virtue. Iron sharpens iron, the saying goes. As men, we must avail ourselves frequently of the life-giving and grace-giving Sacraments the Church offers us. We must find ways to strengthen and embolden one another for the task ahead. The time is now. Are you spiritually ready?

Tim Drake is an award-winning writer and former journalist with the National Catholic Register/EWTN. He currently serves as New Evangelization Coordinator for the Holdingford Area Catholic Community in the Diocese of St. Cloud, Minnesota. He resides with his wife and five children in St. Joseph, Minn.

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Men's Day of Faith Renewal 2014

By: Mike Allison

On June 7, two hundred men gathered at St. Mel Parish in Fair Oaks California for the Second Annual Men's Day of Faith Renewal.

This effort is done with the collaboration of a team of men in the parish working in a spirit of service and trust in God's providential care.

Working together on this event we are encouraged by one another in Christ and see one another as true brothers in Christ.

The day began with a rosary – what a powerful experience to pray this blessed prayer together as we then enter into the Sacred mystery of The Holy Mass. A couple of women who witnessed the example of so many men coming together expressed the hope it gave them to see men with a desire to come together for Christ.

Each man received Fr. Pinto's book called Steps in Littleness. We suspect that this gift that was given will bear much fruit for men as it was explained to them that Fr. Pinto once said that to follow the 50 steps in this book is a "short cut to sainthood". Unpacking these steps and following them leads one in to a deep relationship and closeness with Jesus.

The purpose of the Men's Day of Faith Renewal

Is to bring men closer to Christ.

(continued on page 10-11)



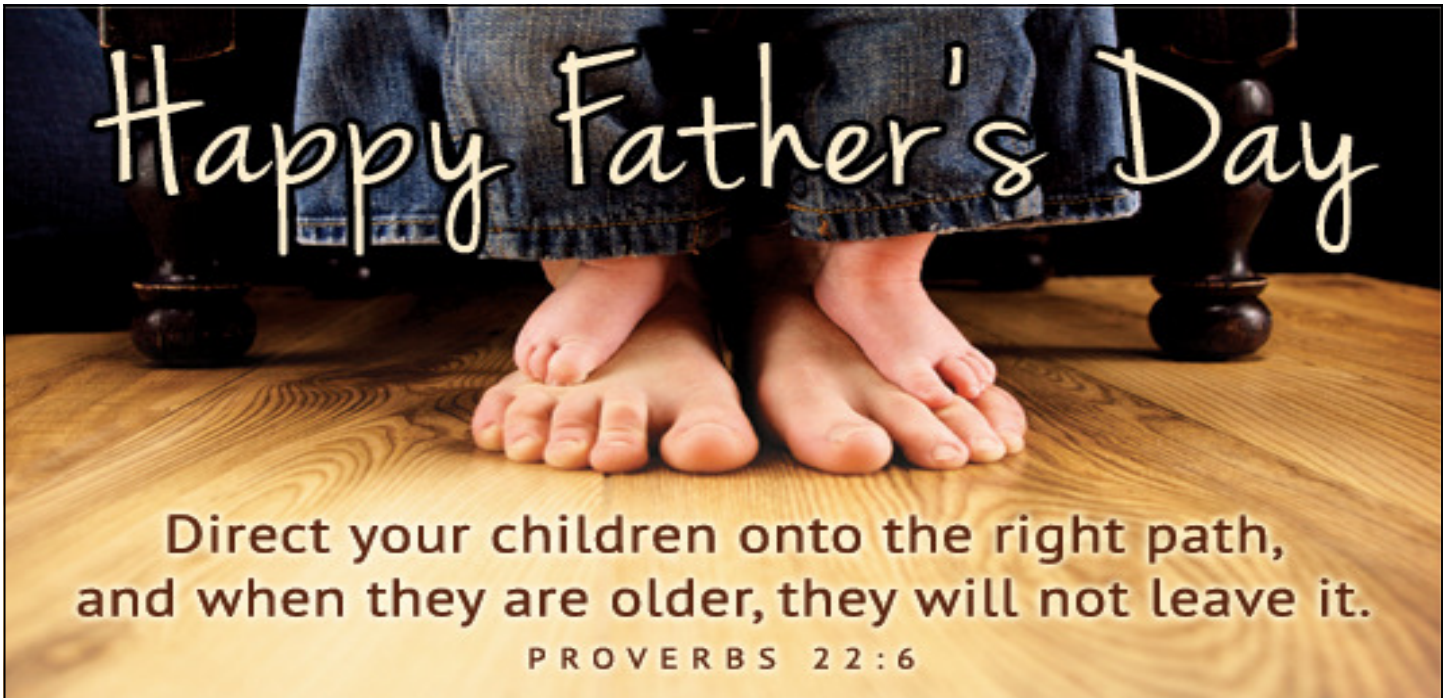
men's DAY OF FAITH RENEWAL 2014



*By the saving Blood
of Jesus, gain your
strength to be the man
God called you to be
from all eternity.*

Calling Men to Holiness

200 MEN
COMING CLOSER
TO CHRIST



A Fraternity for All Men

The Fraternity of Fatherhood is for men of all ages. Our desire is to serve the Lord in all areas of our lives and to especially model our gift and responsibilities as fathers after the example of God the Father and His goodness. We support men; meeting them where they are. We engage in one-on-one friendships and provide opportunities for group activity, support and formation.

We entrust the Fatherhood Fraternity to the patronage of Saint Joseph.

Our Mission

To serve as men dedicated to the Lord in all aspects of our lives. To encourage and support men / fathers throughout the world in their gift and responsibilities as fathers. To encourage and support fathers "to respond" to their vocation, to protect and remain strong carrying their families in their hearts. Our desire is to be united to The Lord and fulfill our holy mission as fathers.

What is it we hope to do?

Bring men / fathers, closer to God by inviting them to learn their faith, challenging them to live their faith and encouraging them to love and share their faith. In addition, we invite those not married as this is a time to discern their vocation and calling in the Church.

As Fraternity of Fatherhood members, we are committed to grow and be formed spirituality, to support each other, to be active and supportive in our parishes. We are committed to learn who we are as Catholic men, to be discovered through our life experiences, prayer, studying Scripture and the documents of the Holy Roman Catholic Church, obedience to the Holy Roman Pontiff, our Roman Catholic Bishops and our parish Pastors. The formation of "Fatherhood" takes place in our hearts. Being a father means understanding that it is a call. When Fatherhood is received as a gift, it is accepted in humility and gratitude. Humility comes from the fact that we are weak. The pressures of the world are strong and flesh seems to have its way. Gratitude comes from the fact that the Lord is our Shepherd and He is with us always. With Him all things are possible.

Fraternity of Fatherhood—Group locations & Area Coordinators

Fr. Pinto has encouraged us to grow and expand the Fraternity of Fatherhood all over the world. He has granted us his permission, his blessing and he guides us spiritually. It is with this confidence that we now move forward with humility, obedience and docile hearts. If you are interested in joining a Fraternity of Fatherhood group or if you would like to start a group in your city contact Ray Emnace, Mike Allison, Stacey Hill or Brendan McVicker.

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Fraternity Sacramento Men
....meet every third Wednesday
of the month.

**We meet at Denny's in Orange-
vale at 7:30 pm.**

**Please contact Mike Allison with
any questions at email address...
(meallison5@gmail.com)**

Hope you can join!

(left to right—Michael, Miguel, Mike
and Jack)

CARRY YOUR FAMILY IN YOUR HEART - A CALL TO HOLINESS

A husband/father's guide to his vocation and spiritual direction. Each Newsletter focuses on one of the Guidelines or Areas of Growth from the "Carry Your Family In Your Heart" book. These guidelines to our Fatherhood Vocation & Spiritual Formation have been formatted based on the Fatherhood Retreat Guideline Teachings & under Spiritual Direction of Fr. Santan Pinto, S.O.L.T.

RESPONSIBLE

As fathers, we have an obligation to live up to the responsibilities of our vocation. Too often we, feel like "walking away from it all". Our vocation calls us to be men of strength and courage. The Lord will challenge us but will never give us more than we can handle. If we are responsible with little things, He will then be open to make us responsible for greater things.

As fathers, we are depended upon, by our wives and children. We must show attentiveness to the need of our spouse, our children. One of the most powerful instructions we can give to our children as fathers is our example in fulfilling our daily responsibilities to our family. We pray to Saint Joseph for his help so that we do not omit these responsibilities, that we won't grow tired, that we won't feel like "walking away from it all".

Prayer To St. Joseph

Oh St. Joseph, whose protection is so great, so strong, so prompt before the throne of God, I place in you all my interest and desires. Oh, St. Joseph, do assist me by your powerful intercession, and obtain for me from your divine Son all spiritual blessings, through Jesus Christ our Lord. So that, having engaged here below your heavenly power, I may offer my thanksgiving and homage to the most loving of Fathers. Oh, St. Joseph, I never weary contemplating you, and Jesus asleep in your arms; I dare not approach while He reposes near your heart. Press Him in my name and kiss His fine head for me and ask Him to return the Kiss when I draw my dying breath. St. Joseph, Patron of departing souls -- Pray for me.

"Let the children come to me and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of God belong to such as these." (Luke 18:16)

Grandfathers

*"Father to the fatherless,
defender of widows -
this is God,
whose dwelling is holy.
God places the lonely in families;
He sets the prisoners free
and gives them joy.
But He makes the rebellious
live in a sun-scorched land."
(Psalm 68:5-6, NLT)*

A person's concept of God is greatly influenced by the sort of father that person knew as a child.

Responsibility ... Response—Ability

The ability to respond to life with open eyes, open heart, open hands...

- to see life and the world with wonder and reverence
- to care about people because they matter
- to reach out to others and make a difference

Responsibility is a privilege, not a burden.

It is a bond we make in faith, a bridge of promise between the uniqueness of me and the uniqueness of you. Responsibility means giving myself in a “yes” to you with a firmness you can trust, because we have come to know God, Who has first pledged Himself to us.

Scripture Reading Luke 6:43-49

When we are responsible to our vocation and realize that our strength as fathers lies in the gift of our vocation then we are in fact a man listening to the Lord's words and acting on them. We are men who are laying a strong foundation, a foundation for our family that does not conform to the world but is transformed in Jesus Christ. Jesus is where the strength in our vocation comes from. He is our strength, our courage. But if you don't realize the gift of God, the gift, and responsibility of your vocation then we are simply a man calling Lord, Lord but not doing what He commands. If we do not have the strength of Jesus with us, then the foundation is weak, it falls, and we want to walk away from it all.

Scripture Reading Sirach 27:4-7

As men of God we are responsible to our speech. Our speech shows whether or not we are men of God. Our speech is a dead giveaway and shows whether we have conformed to the world or have worked to transform ourselves in Jesus Christ. The key word is “worked”. It is work to transform our self in Christ. If you don't want to work at it then you have automatically conformed yourself to the world because that is all it takes is to do nothing. Our children notice our words more than we give them credit. Think before we speak. In our words we are tested.



Portland, Oregon Men

....Our Fraternity meets every second Saturday of the month at St. Mary's Cathedral for 7:30AM Mass followed by our breakfast meeting at the Kingston Grill. We conclude at 9:30AM.

Our group consists of single and married men. Right now we are studying the “Carry Your Family In Your Heart” Fatherhood Guidelines. Contact Brendan 503-358-4963.

Come join us!

Men's Day of Faith Renewal 2014

(continued from page 4)

Our desire was to offer men throughout the diocese a day to come together in a community and gain encouragement and inspiration to serve God in our families, churches, workplace and community.

Men were invited to a renewal of the fire The Lord places in their hearts through the gifts and truths of the Catholic faith.

Our hope from the day is that men:

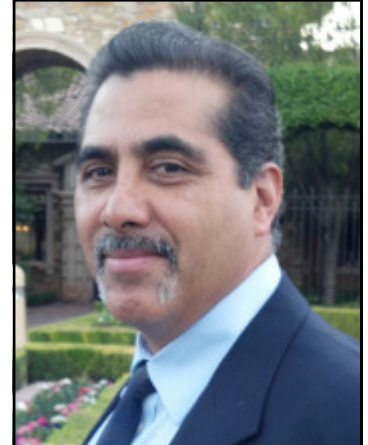
- Are encouraged
- Are inspired
- Are challenged and reassured in their faith
- Realize they are not alone
- Grow in Holiness
- Re-focus on the most important things in their lives
- Grow in virtue
- Bond as men in Jesus Christ
- Are strengthened in constant vigilance



Mr. Romero is a full time Catholic lay evangelist best known for his work in association with EWTN radio and television. He offered the men a very energetic expression of our Catholic faith and how to participate in the world as a Catholic man.

The following Saturday all the men were invited back to St. Mel Parish as the Holy Mass will be offered for them and their intentions.

We will continue to reach out to these men and invite them to various groups and activities for men, including The Fraternity of Fatherhood.





Four dynamic talks were given by speaker Jesse Romero titled:

- **"David & Bethshiba"** - Sexual sin and Confession
- **"David & Goliath"** - Power of prayer
- **"One More Round"** - Cultural demise & Catholic plan of action
- **"Love of the Father"** - Views of God our Father and how they effect our behavior (atheism, secular humanism, Islam, Christianity)





POSTAGE

Fraternity of Fatherhood

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY!

**We entrust the Fatherhood Fraternity to the patronage
of St. Joseph.**



St. Joseph ...Pray For Us.



This Fraternity of Fatherhood Newsletter is published every 90 days. Next edition: Sept 2014

To submit feedback and/or suggestions for future articles, please email the editors,

- | | |
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