



# SAINT MARIA GORETTI CATHOLIC MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

## October-November 2015 Newsletter

Webpage: [www.smgnola/catholicmensgroup](http://www.smgnola/catholicmensgroup)

Face Book: [www.facebook.com/smgcmf](http://www.facebook.com/smgcmf)

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### ABOUT US

The Saint Maria Goretti Catholic Men's fellowship is a group where men explore the faith together, help each to grow spiritually, learn from each other, explore what it means to be a catholic man in today's world, and enable men to mature spiritually and live a fuller expression of the catholic faith in the context of other like-minded men. The group meets bi-weekly and sponsors events throughout the year where men share and grow spiritually. The Saint Maria Goretti Catholic Men's Fellowship group is affiliated with the National Fellowship of Catholic Men.

### THE SACRAMENTS

Do we catholics take the sacraments for granted? Do we even think about the sacraments? We go to communion on Sundays, we Christen our babies, get married, and get anointed when we're sick. We even go to confession. In essence we receive the sacrament of the Eucharist, our babies receive the sacrament of Baptism, and we receive the sacraments of Matrimony and Anointing of the Sick. We receive the sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance) for the forgiveness of our sins. But how often do we think in these terms. Unfortunately, today many catholics don't think sacraments are necessary for our spiritual life.

In this issue and coming issues we'll explore the sacraments of the Catholic Church and the impact that they have on our spiritual lives. In each issue we'll summarize the Church's teaching on one of the sacraments. We'll begin our series with the sacraments of Christian Initiation (Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation), then the sacraments of healing (Reconciliation and Anointing of the sick) and conclude with the sacraments of vocation (Matrimony and Holy Orders).

Before we begin our journey, let's review what the Church teaches about the sacraments.

*The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are necessary for salvation. "Sacramental grace" is the grace of the Holy Spirit, given by Christ and proper to each sacrament. The Spirit heals and transforms those who receive Him by conforming them to the Son of God. (CCC 1129) This is why so many popes and priests stress the importance of receiving the sacraments; our salvation, our life after death in dependent of it. We know that reception is important but what are they? The sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. The visible rites by which the sacrament is celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each sacrament. They bear fruit in those who receive them with the required disposition. (CCC1131)*

#### BAPTISM

Baptism is the first sacrament that Christians receive in order to become members of the church. The catholic church recognizes all Christian baptisms, those using the formula of water and the

invocation of the trinity as valid. But, why is baptism administered first? *Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit (vitae spiritualis ianua), and the door which gives access to other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission. Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water and in the word. (CCC1213)*

*The essential rite of the sacrament follows: Baptism properly speaking. It signifies and actually brings about death to sin and entry into the life of the Most Holy Trinity through configuration into the Paschal Mystery of Christ. Baptism is performed in the most expressive way by triple immersion in baptismal water. However, from ancient times it has also been able to be conferred by pouring water three times over the candidates head. In the Latin Church this triple infusion is accompanied by the minister's words, "N, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit". The anointing with sacred chrism, perfumed oil consecrated by the bishop, signifies the gift of the Holy Spirit to the newly baptized, who has become a Christian that is one "anointed" by the Holy Spirit, incorporated into Christ who is anointed priest, prophet, and King. (CCC1239-1241) Too often we simplify Baptism by saying that we are "washed clean" of original sin, receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and become a member of the Church. Baptism does so much more. The Church teaches us that: *The fruit of Baptism, or baptismal grace, is a rich reality that includes forgiveness of original sin and all personal sin, birth into a new life by which man becomes an adoptive son of the Father, a member of Christ and a temple of the Holy Spirit. By this very fact the person baptized is incorporated into the church, the Body of Christ, and made a sharer in the priesthood of Christ. (CCC1279) It doesn't stop there. Baptism has an effect on our very souls for all eternity. The church tells us; Incorporated into Christ by Baptism the person baptized is configured to Christ. Baptism seals the Christian with the indelible spiritual mark (character) of his belonging to Christ. No sin can erase this mark, even if sin prevents bearing fruits of salvation. Given once for all, Baptism cannot be repeated. (CCC1272) The Holy Spirit has marked us with the seal of the Lord ("Dominicus character") for the day of redemption. Baptism indeed is the seal of eternal life. The faithful Christian who has "kept the seal" until the end, remaining faithful to the demands of his Baptism, will be able to depart this life "marked with the sign of faith" with his baptismal faith, in expectation of the blessed vision of God- the consummation of faith- in the hope of resurrection.**

As Christians and specifically as Catholic men, we must always strive to live up to our Baptismal commitments. As adopted sons of the Father we are called to obey all of the teachings and commands of His son Jesus. We must not allow sin to prevent us from bearing fruit for the Kingdom of God. We must ask the Spirit to reveal the gifts that He has bestowed upon us as we bring others to Christ. Through baptism we received God's grace and access to the other sacraments. It is up to us to receive them and bring our families to them for ours and their salvation. (For more information on baptism see CCC paragraphs 1210- 1284)

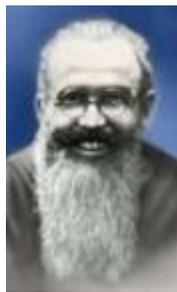
## What's Stopping Us?

With football season upon us, we look forward to watching the NFL on Thursday night, going to watch a high school game on Friday, watching college football all day on Saturday, the Saints and all of the other games on Sunday, and then its Monday Night Football. Nothing can stop us from watching the game. We'll juggle our schedule to make sure that we're sitting in front of the TV, with a beer in hand just in time for kick off! We'll go to great lengths up to and including making sure that our seat at a restaurant on a dinner date with our wives is facing the TV. We make sure that we go to a restaurant that broadcasts the game. Yet, when have an opportunity to grow spiritually or to gather in prayer with other men or to spend just a few minutes sitting with Jesus present in the Blessed Sacrament we give in to a wall of resistance. We have the rationale memorized; I can't do Saturday mornings-that's when I run errands with the wife; my wife has plans for then; my boy said he's going so he can share the information with me; men just don't get together to talk about their spiritual life or problems; I pray every now and then so how much more can I grow in the Spirit; and I go to church every Sunday so I don't need to spend any other time at church. We give in without a fight. What's really stopping us from growing stronger in our faith and knowing our Lord better? Some would say that we have been socialized to believe that manly behaviors involved only hard work, sports, no showing emotions, or only "hanging" with the boys for a cold beer. After all we're manly men. We have to set the example for our sons and grandsons, nephews, and the generation of manly men to follow us. Some would say that a real man handles his business and doesn't need anyone for anything.

Then why don't we handle our spiritual business? Some will say that there's no time when trying to balance work, family time, and "me" time. Some might even say that is the powers and principalities of the enemy that suggests reasons that stop us from growing in our faith and closer to Jesus.

All of these reasons may sound good; but are they valid? Just as Jesus called the apostles to follow Him; He calls us to do the same. The apostles left families and jobs to follow Jesus and became his friends. He isn't asking us to leave everything to follow him, although we are grateful for the men who do and become our priests. But He does ask us to spend time with him in prayer and the scriptures. All too often other priorities take precedence before prayer and scriptures Jesus has given us the great gift of his presence body, blood, soul, and divinity in the Eucharist and is available for us to spend time with Him in adoration. Yet, we're so busy that we can't give him one hour a week. Jesus told the apostles that he would make them fishers of men and told Peter that He prayed for him to stay strong in faith and strengthen his brothers. Yet we are hesitant to talk about our faith to others or spend time with other men strengthening each other in faith. At the end of our lives when Jesus asks us "What have you done for me?" how will we answer? What's stopping us today from growing closer to Jesus and serving Him? One word comes to mind; **ourselves!**

**OCTOBER IS THE MONTH OF THE ROSARY.  
PRAY THE ROSARY DAILY.**



**SAINT MAXMILLIAN KOLBE**

**MARTYR OF CHARITY**

St. Maximilian was born Raymond Kolbe in Poland, January 8, 1894. In 1910, he entered the Conventual Franciscan Order. He was sent to study in Rome where he was ordained a priest in 1918. Father Maximilian returned to Poland in 1919 and began spreading his Militia of the Immaculata movement of Marian consecration (whose members are also called MIIs), which he founded on October 16, 1917. In 1927, he established an evangelization center near Warsaw called Niepokalanów, the "City of the Immaculate." By 1939, the City had expanded from eighteen friars to nearly 900, making it the largest Catholic religious house in the world.

To better "win the world for the Immaculata," the friars utilized the most modern printing and administrative techniques. This enabled them to publish countless catechetical and devotional tracts, a daily newspaper with a circulation of 230,000 and a monthly magazine with a circulation of over one million. Maximilian started a radio station and planned to build a motion picture studio--he was a true "apostle of the mass media." He established a City of the Immaculata in Nagasaki, Japan, in 1930, and envisioned missionary centers worldwide.

Maximilian was a ground-breaking theologian. His insights into the Immaculate Conception anticipated the Marian theology of the Second Vatican Council and further developed the Church's understanding of Mary as "Mediatrice" of all the graces of the Trinity, and as "Advocate" for God's people.

In 1941, the Nazis imprisoned Father Maximilian in the Auschwitz death camp. There he offered his life for another prisoner and was condemned to slow death in a starvation bunker. On August 14, 1941, his impatient captors ended his life with a fatal injection. Pope John Paul II canonized Maximilian as a "Martyr of Charity" and "Patron Saint of our difficult century" in 1982. St. Maximilian Kolbe is the patron of journalists, families, prisoners, the pro-life movement and the chemically addicted

For more information about Saint Maxmillian Kobe and the Militia of the Immaculata, go to <http://consecration.com>.

## CATHOLIC MEN WEBSITES

<http://www.goodconfession.com>

<http://2232men.com/2232menstrengtheningsummit/>

<http://realmenpraytherosary.org>

## COMING EVENTS

October 3,2015-Five First Saturdays Devotion Challenge- 1:00pm - Monsignor Gauthreaux Center library

October 7, 2015-Meeting; 7:00pm - Center library

October 17, 2015-Men's Prayer Walk for Peace; 8:30am -Monsignor Center

October 21, 2015 - Meeting; 7:00pm - Center library

November 4, 2015- Meeting; 7:00pm - Center library

November18, 2015- Meeting; 7:00pm - Center library

December 2, 2015- Meeting; 7:00pm - Center library

December 5, 2015-Men's Morning of Spirituality- Center

December 16, 2015- Meeting; 7:00pm - Center library