



# SAINT MARIA GORETTI CATHOLIC MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

## Advent-Christmas 2015 Newsletter

Webpage: [www.smgcola/catholicmensgroup](http://www.smgcola/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

In our second installment of the sacraments we'll continue with the sacraments of initiation. Those sacraments that initiates us as members of the Catholic church and body of Christ.

#### Confirmation

First, let's dispel some of the "immaculate misconceptions" about confirmation. Confirmation is not graduation from CCD. Confirmation is not a rite of passage signifying adulthood in the church. Confirmation is not the end of sacramental life.

Confirmation is the second sacrament of Christian Initiation. Although in the Eastern Rite ( Eastern Orthodox) it is administered immediately following Baptism, in the Latin Rite (Roman Catholic) it is administered once the age of reason is reached. In our archdiocese, confirmation normally is administered in the eleventh grade. *The reception of the sacrament of confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. For "by the sacrament of confirmation, (the baptized) are more perfectly bound to the church and enriched with a special of the Holy Spirit, Hence they are true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed."* (CCC1285) Thus, confirmation is the beginning of our full membership in the church whereby we are obligated to practice the faith, continue to learn about the faith and yes, defend it. Confirmation has its roots in the early church when *Filled with the Holy Spirit the apostles began to proclaim "the mighty works of God", and Peter declared an outpouring of the Spirit to be the sign of the messianic age. Those who believed in the apostolic preaching and were baptized received the gift of the Holy Spirit in their turn. From that time on the apostles, in fulfillment of Christ's will, imparted to the newly baptized by the laying of hands the gift of the Spirit that completes Baptism.*(CCC 1287-1288) Very early in the church the anointing with perfumed oil (Chrism) was added to better signify the gift of the Holy Spirit. This anointing highlights the name Christian which means anointed. This practice continues today in the signs and rite of confirmation. *In treating the rite of Confirmation, it is fitting to consider the sign of anointing and what it signifies and imprints; a spiritual seal.*(CCC1293) Like Baptism, Confirmation leaves an indelible mark on the souls, a person can only receive the sacrament once

in life. Unlike Baptism, Confirmation requires preparation and intent. *A candidate for confirmation who has attained the age of reason must profess the faith, be in a state of grace, have the intention of receiving the sacrament, and be prepared to assume the role of disciple and witness to Christ, both within the ecclesial community and in temporal affairs.* (CCC1319) To this end, candidates must receive catechesis, that is instruction of church teachings in order to be more capable of assuming the apostolic responsibilities of Christian life. And, candidates must receive the sacrament of reconciliation to ensure that they are in a state of grace when receiving confirmation. Once this preparation is complete and requirements meet, one is properly disposed to receive Confirmation and are presented to the Bishop, who is the ordinary minister of the sacrament. That is, because the bishops are successors of the apostles, their administration of the sacrament clearly demonstrates that it is to unite those who receive the sacrament more closely to the Church, to her apostolic origins, and her mission of bearing witness to Christ. However, if the need arises, the bishop may grant faculty to priest to administer the sacrament, for example when catechumens receive the sacraments during the Easter Vigil. *The essential rite of Confirmation is anointing the forehead with chrism (in the East other sense-organs as well), together with the laying on of the ministers hands and the words: "Accipe signaculum doni Spiritus Sancti": (Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit) in the Roman rite; or "Sigaculum doni Spiritus Sancti" (the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit) in the Byzantine rite.* (CCC1320) Along with the supernatural effect of the indelible marking of the soul, is the special out pouring of the Holy Spirit as once granted to the apostles on Pentecost. *From this fact, confirmation brings an increase of baptismal grace;*

- *Its roots us more deeply in the divine filiation which makes us cry "Abba! Father"*
- *It unites us more firmly to Christ*
- *It increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us*
- *It renders our bond with the Church more perfect*
- *It gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action as true witnesses of Christ, to confess the name of Christ boldly, and never to be ashamed of the cross.* (CCC 1303)

While uniting us with Christ and His church, confirmation requires action from the confirmed. We are called to do more than go to mass on Sunday. We are called to live a live of faith, to pray, receive the sacraments, evangelize to others, live according to the commands of Jesus, and to bring others to the full truth of the church. As confirmed catholic men, we are called to lead our families to Jesus by the example of our faith. We are called to be the example for our brothers and lead them to or back to the church by the example of our Christian and sacramental lives. We are called to work for the glory of the Lord and become participants in the church not spectators. And we are called to us the gifts of the Holy Spirit by sharing our time and talents with the church. As Jesus taught, "to whom much is given, much is expected" Let's live up to Jesus'

Kid: What's a man?

Dad: A man is who loves unconditionally , cares about you and protects you.

Kid: When I grow up, I'll be a man like mom.

## PERCEPTION OF MEN

Beginning in the 1980s, we welcomed the image of the hapless, bungling, fool dad into our living rooms. We laughed at Tim “the tool man” Taylor and Al Bundy and even the dumb man jokes. Children all over America began to think that dads are supposed to be fools. Then about 2010 Hallmark introduced the “Happy Father’s Day Mom” cards implying that dads are not important to the family dynamic or child rearing. These cards were embraced by single mothers of all stripes. Now we have children thinking that women can be fathers and men are not needed. Now we have this, further denigrating men to the point that women are interchangeable with men and provide the example of what a man is.(see the picture above) Although the media never recognizes those men who provide for their children and take care of their families, we men share the blame for this predicament. Go to any church on a Sunday and count the number of men in attendance with their families, or count the number of women in attendance alone with their children. Go to any school on report card conference day or PTA meeting and count the number of men there. Our numbers are very low. We bought into the idea that the women are responsible for teaching children the faith and educating the children. Our job is to work and pay bills or child support only. Some men won’t even pay child support to care for their children. No wonder, children begin to look at women for examples of manhood or fatherhood. Many a man works all week then spend the weekend pursuing his own interest at the expense of his family. How many of us knows a man who lives by the motto “ it’s a poor rat who has only one hole”? We all know at least one man who proudly says that’s my girlfriend, my wife is home. How many of us has told that friend to remember the old Johnny Taylor song Who’s making love to your old lady while you are out making love? It’s our responsibility to change these perceptions. We start with ourselves first. We have to make sure that we submit our will to God and live as He instructed us to live in His word. The book of Sirach provides instruction for every situation in this life. The gospels give us Jesus’ commands that leads us to the next life. Then we help our brothers, especially young men who are beginning families and are new to fatherhood. We have to evangelize to them as only a man can to another man. We have to invite them to participate in the mass dispelling the perception that mass is geared towards women. We have to invite them to fellowship, pray, and worship with other men to strengthen each other in faith. We have to mentor younger men and be honest with them not fearing to offer advice and correction in charity and love. We have to be mindful that we set the example of manhood for all the children that we come in contact with and must act accordingly. Last but not least, we must remember that through Jesus we are all children of God, therefore brothers in Christ and we must be our brothers’ keepers.

**Win a copy of the inspirational novel *Conceived Without Sin*. Be the first to email the correct answer to [catholicmens@smgnola.com](mailto:catholicmens@smgnola.com) to win. *What miracle did Jesus perform that began His public ministry?***



## THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND BEAR A SON

Advent is defined by Webster’s as the coming of Christ in the Incarnation or on judgment day. Yet because the coming of God’s son is an event of such immense importance, God willed to prepare for it over centuries. All of the prophecies of the old testament point towards the coming of the Messiah. We catholics celebrate Advent as a liturgical season over four weeks prior to Christmas. We see that Advent Wreath lit during mass every Sunday during Advent sometimes using it as a countdown clock to Christmas. We spend time shopping for the perfect presents for our families, look forward to attending the office, club, or organization Christmas party. We say that this is the Holiday Season; a time to be merry. Our attention is focused on all of the trappings of making ourselves and families happy during the “holidays”. Yet, we only celebrate advent at mass on Sunday. Shouldn’t we also spend time preparing ourselves spiritually to welcome Jesus our Savior into the world on Christmas? Webster’s also defines advent as a period of four Sundays before Christmas and observed by some Christians as a season of prayer and fasting. When was the last time that you fasted during Advent? When was the last time that you spent additional time reading the word of God or time in prayer during Advent? As catholic men we must make a concerted effort during this time of Advent to keep ourselves and families focused on the true meaning of Christmas. We have to do more than putting the “Keep Christ in Christmas” signs on our lawns. Here’s a few suggestions for celebrating this Season of Advent.

- Fast one day a week offering it up to the Infant of Prague
- Read one of the prophetic books and meditate of the prophesy
- Spend a Holy Hour one day a week
- Hold an Advent Wreath ritual with the family
- Pray and meditate on the Joyful Mysteries
- Pray the Angelus daily
- Receive the sacrament of Reconciliation
- Do a retreat or morning of spirituality

As we celebrate the “Holiday Season” let’s keep in mind that Advent is a time of preparation and Jesus is the reason for the season.

## CATHOLIC MEN WEBSITES

<http://www.goodconfession.com>

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

<http://realmenpraytherosary.org>

<http://thosecatholicmen.com>

## COMING EVENTS

November 18, 2015- Meeting; 7:00pm - Center library

November 30, 2015- Radio Rosary 6:00pm –Rooms 3-4

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

December 29, 2015- Radio Rosary 6:00pm rooms 3-4

January 6, 2016-- Meeting; 7:00pm - Center library

January 20, 2016- Meeting; 7:00pm - Center library