



THE FISH NET

The official Newsletter of

SAINT MARIA GORETTI CATHOLIC MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

JANUARY- FEBRUARY 2018

Webpage: www.smgcola/catholicmensgroup Face Book: www.facebook.com/smgcmf

Email: catholicmens@smgcola.com

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.

Living The Cross

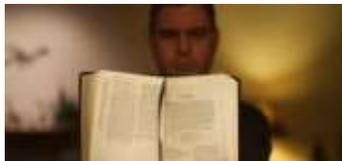
For all Christians the cross is representative of our faith. Protestants recognize the bare cross as symbolic of Jesus conquering death for our salvation. We Catholic recognize Jesus' crucified body as symbolic of His suffering and death on the crucifix for the remission of our sins. However, the cross is a representation of how all Christians are called to live in this world. Look at the cross; a beam reaching upwards with another stretching outward attached to it. That is our visual for living. The vertical beam calls us to reach up to God while the horizontal beam calls us to reach out to our fellow man. To live the cross we must strive everyday to strengthen our relationship with God. For us men of faith, this requires that we develop a strong prayer life spending time everyday in prayer and listening for God's response. We must spend time everyday reading scriptures to listen to God's word and the teachings of Jesus. We should strive to put aside at least one hour each week for a Holy Hour before the Blessed Sacrament in adoration as we pray and listen in silence to Jesus present in the Eucharist. And we must avail ourselves to frequent reception of the sacraments, especially Reconciliation and Eucharist. As we reach up to God we must simultaneously reach out to our brethren. This may seem like a formidable task in today's polarized and tribal society, but it is not impossible. The creed that espouse every week during the Mass reminds us that God is creator of all things visible and invisible, is our guide or marching order if you will. In believing that God created all things we must recognize that God created all of us in His image. In doing so, we recognize that we are all God's children regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, or political beliefs worthy of being treated with respect and dignity. Because we believe that God made man in His image, we must accept the fact that the same God that we worship is reflected in all that we meet. Therefore, mistreating, disrespecting, or dehumanizing those different from us is tantamount to doing these things to God. As Jesus commanded, we must love one another. This is not an option. As men of faith, we have the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy to guide us. We reach out whenever we instruct the ignorant, counsel the doubtful, admonish the sinner, comfort the sorrowful, forgive injuries, bear wrongs patiently, and pray for the living and the dead. We reach out whenever we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, visit the sick, visit the imprisoned, and bury the dead. As we begin this new year, instead of making resolutions, let's live the cross everyday for the betterment of our lives and all that we meet.



As 2018 begins, many of us have made resolutions, some of us are close to making resolutions, and some of us have broken resolutions. New Year's resolutions can be fun and when committed to bring change to our lives over the course of the year; then we make new ones. However, we all tend to make resolutions based upon what we want for ourselves. Consider this; in the book of Revelations, God says "Behold I make all things new". What if God wants to make a new you? What if God's plan for you in 2018 is to change you into an instrument of his grace? What if God's plan for you is to grow closer to his son, Jesus? What is God's plan for you is to bring peace to our house and reside with you and your family? What if God wants 2018 to be the year that you use your life's experiences to introduce others men to Him? The only way to know what His plan is, is to ask Him. That requires us to spend time with Him and to willingly submit to His will. Yes, time that we don't have in our busy lives. But, God is patient and loves us so much that He'll accept whatever time that we make. Can you give God five minutes a day? If so, try this: one minute to thank Him for all that's he's done in our life, one minute to pray for others, then three minutes of silence to feel God's love and listen for Him to speak to your heart. Don't be afraid to say "God, make me anew; show me you plan for me." In conjunction with our prayers we must also give ourselves completely to God. In doing so we offer all that we are and all that we have to God for use in the ways that He wishes to use us for His glory. This may seem difficult to do after a lifetime of forging our own paths in life, but, once done, life becomes less complicated. The trust that we place in the Father to provide relieves us of the stress and anxiety of life because we know that His plan is far better than ours. We know that regardless of the hardships and setbacks, He has better days and situations ahead for us because He loves us and wants to give the best to us just as He did for Job. For us men of faith, 2018 promises to be pivotal year in our lives with the hope of being an instrument of God's grace and a blessing to others. For us the New Year offers a new start in our spiritual journey. For us the New Year offers an opportunity for transformation to break free of the cocoon of this world as we soar towards living in God's grace. For us, men of faith, 2018 is the year of What If I Live Everyday For God. If we do, we'll end 2018 as new creations made by the Father, for His glory.

Contemplation

BY REV. JOHN H. HAMPSCH, C.M.F 12/19/2017 11:00:11 AM



Oliver Cromwell, the Puritan Lord Protector of England, had his own quaint form of grace that he piously recited before each meal: “Some people have food but no appetite; some people have an appetite but no food. I have both. The Lord be praised!”

As Christians, we have a boundless supply of food for the soul in the revealed Word of God, but we may be lacking in the appetite department. Those who have learned to find the boundless source of “soul food” and who have a ravishing appetite for the spiritual nourishment that it offers are truly blessed. They see the Lord as the loving Provider and marvel at his sustained providence. Each prayerful reading or meditation on God’s Word is like participating in one of those premiere events of Jesus’ public life--the feeding of the multitudes with the miraculously multiplied loaves and fish. For such contemplative souls, “their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law they meditate day and night” (Ps 1:2).

Faith-saturated prayer in its deepest form—contemplation--penetrates God’s mysteries with an inexpressible insight that faith itself cannot articulate: “On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate” (Ps 145:5). The psalmist alludes to the ineffable soul security, and even the release of physical tension, that sustained contemplation provides: “I keep the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, *I shall not be moved*. Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; *my body also rests secure*” (Ps 16:8, emphasis mine).

This resting in the embrace of the Creator elicits a trust in his love, a love that the enlightened soul recognizes and experiences as unflinching and steadfast, and hence trustworthy. This pondering looks to the past and marvels at the Lord’s unflinching goodness; he is worshipped as “abounding in steadfast love” (Ps 145:8). Peering into the future, the soul anticipates God’s unflinching supply of its needs, as it revels in trust and in the warmth of God’s love: “We ponder your steadfast love, O God” (Ps 48:9).

The Lord has provided the spiritual food for us. If we lack the appetite, we must ask him to provide that too--and trust him to do so.

This excerpt is from the book Pathways of Trust, by John H. Hampsch, C.M.F., originally published by Servant Publications

PRAYER CORNER

Prayer of Self-Dedication to Jesus Christ

Lord, Jesus Christ, take all my freedom, my memory, my understanding, and my will. All that I have and cherish you have given me. I surrender it all to be guided by your will. Your grace and love are wealth enough for me. Give me these, Lord Jesus, and I ask for nothing more.

Champaign, King Cake, and Ashes

It was just a few days ago that we celebrated the birth of our Savior and seemingly hours ago that we popped the cork on a bottle or two of champaign to ring in the New Year. Many of us have consumed the first piece of king cake, dry cleaned the tux in anticipation of the Mardi Gras Balls ahead, and begun to map out our Mardi Gras celebration strategy. The year is shaping up to be a six week continuous party that started with Christmas and is forging ahead until Fat Tuesday in six short weeks. Laissez Le Bon Temps Roulez!! This is our time of year, especially with an early Mardi Gras. We’ll party, and party, go to a few balls, go to a few parades, and finish with an all day celebration. We won’t think about repentance or faith much until we have the ashen cross placed on our foreheads. But should we wait until then? Do have to put our faith on hold until Ash Wednesday? The answer is no. We can enjoy all of these celebrations and remain true to our faith. Our faith is not a faith of joyless gloom. After all, even Jesus celebrated and enjoyed life. So much so, that his first miracle was changing water into wine at the wedding feast in Cana. It’s safe to assume that as a Jewish man attending a wedding, that we ate, drink wine, and joined in the celebration along with the other guests. Some has claimed that the reason for the miracle was because he and the apostles attended the wedding. Yes, Jesus joined in many celebrations as any first century Jewish man would, but, He continued to live His purpose of spreading the good news. It is the same for us. We can and should enjoy the season’s celebrations keeping in mind that it is by the grace of our heavenly Father that we are alive and able to celebrate. Yes we must thank Him for this grace to be alive that we too often take for granted. In doing so we acknowledge that we are not in control of our lives, but our creator is. Even in the midst of our celebration we can be a witness to our faith in the most minute but powerful ways. For instance, how many times have we heard our elders say “By the grace of God, I’m making it” or “I’m blessed” when asked how they were doing? This short response bears witness to how God is working in that person’s life. Now, most people will regard this as merely a standard response to a question, but, sometimes the Father is using that reply as a sign of hope for the person asking the question. Often times, we are placed where the Father needs us the most in order to help one of His children; be it by the words we say or merely a smile. By opening our hearts up and offering our lives up to the Father for His glory, we experience the joy of living; even through tough times, willing to help our brothers and sisters in need. Just as popping the cork on a bottle of champaign is a sign of celebration, king cake is a sign of the beginning Mardi Gras, and ashes are a sign of repentance of the faithful, the way that we live is a sign of our faith. So enjoy the champaign, king cake, and even the ashes, but above all enjoy living this life in Christ for the glory of His Kingdom.

CATHOLIC MEN WEBSITES

<http://www.goodconfession.com>

<http://thosecatholicmen.com/>

<https://www.romancatholicman.com/>

<http://catholicfamilymen.com/blog/>

COMING EVENTS

January 3, 2018 - Meeting; 7:00pm - Center library

January 5, 2018-Men’s Rosary for Peace; 6:00pm- Chapel

January 17, 2018- Meeting; 7:00pm - Center library

January 27, 2018-Men’s Summit; 8:30am - Center

January 31, 2018- Meeting; 7:00pm - Center library

February 2, 2018- Men’s Rosary for Peace; 6:00pm- Chapel

February 14, 2018- Meeting; 7:00pm - Center library

February 28, 2018- Meeting; 7:00pm - Center library