



THE FISH NET
The official Newsletter of
SAINT MARIA GORETTI CATHOLIC MEN'S FELLOWSHIP
November-December 2018



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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.

Journey Like The Magi This Advent



The Gospel of Matthew speaks of Magi from the east arriving in Jerusalem seeking the new king of the Jews because they saw his star and want to pay him homage. (Mt 2:102) These wise men traveled for many months, may even years to find Jesus. Many of us have spent months and years seeking Jesus, longing to have a relationship with him. As we prepare for the Solemnities of Christmas remembering the First Coming of Jesus it is also a time of preparation for His Second Coming at the end of time. As such, just as the Magi embarked upon a journey to seek Jesus, so too is our life. The difference is that we know who the King is, we know that He willingly died for our sins and arose from the dead conquering death so that we too can have eternal life with Him. However, given all that we know about him, we often feel that we don't know Him. This Advent we can change this and on Christmas Day celebrate the birth of our Lord, Savior, and Brother with a fervent love and personal knowledge of Him. Our Advent journey doesn't require our traveling over perilous terrain, encountering treacherous weather, or avoiding bandits as the Magi's did. All it requires is time and commitment. We must spend 10-15 minutes everyday, free of distractions and interruptions, reading scriptures especially the Gospels listening with our hearts to Jesus' words. We may even want to declare an area of our home as sacred space where once we enter everyone in the family knows that this time and space is for encountering Jesus. Our commitment to this time is imperative. Whether we commit to the same time of day or commit to spending this time as it comes available is irrelevant, what matters is that we spend this time everyday alone with Jesus in the scripture. This may also require a commitment from our families members to understand that it is important for us to spend these few minutes uninterrupted in the presence of Jesus. This year Advent let's take 10-15 minutes out of our day to seek Jesus and on Christmas day let us present Jesus with a gift as the magi did; the gift of ourselves.

With a Child's Heart

Ever notice how children approach Advent and Christmas? As each week of Advent passes their excitement and anticipation of Christmas builds up. Yes, they're excited about Santa and presents, but they're also excited about seeing the baby Jesus in the crèche of the Nativity Scene on Christmas morning. Their excitement seems to rub off on us too. What father among us had tears in his eyes as he saw the expression on his child's face as the child unwrapped presents, then trying to curtail the excitement as the child proudly and loudly exclaims, "look daddy, Baby Jesus is in the manger" as the priest begins mass. Yet through it all we are filled with the joy of seeing our children happy. Now imagine how happy our Heavenly Father is when we too approach His son Jesus, with the heart of a child. Jesus himself said that we must be as a child as we approach Him. Just as our own children look to us for love, protection, and to take care of their needs, so too should we look to our savior Jesus.. Even the strongest among us can't do anything unless the Father wills it. Yet, Jesus is waiting for us to turn to Him and He will lead us to the Father when we approach Jesus with a child's heart.



A New Christmas Slogan

For years we've all heard the slogan "Put Christ Back in Christmas" that was used to remind us that Christmas isn't about presents and shopping, but about Jesus. Now a new slogan is making its way into our consciousness via this meme on social media. After the events of the past couple of years this is a much needed reminder for those of us who profess to be Christians. We've seen self-professed Christians and Christian leaders spew vile vitriol against others who disagreed with their point of view or overlook and excuse behaviors that they once condemned others for. Some of our Christian brothers and sisters behavior has many of our young people decrying that if that's the Christians act I'd rather not practice any religion. Even atheists are saying that if Christians behave like that, there is definitely no God. It's as if we followers of Christ forgot the command that He gave us to love one another. Jesus said that they will know we are His by our love, but in the words of Roberta Flack, "Where is the Love" This Christmas season, when people try to be a little nicer to others, when people seem to smile a little more, and many seem a little more giving and tolerant, let each one of us think of the one whose birth we are preparing to celebrate and the love that he brought into the world. Let us remember who this child grew up and became and the sacrifice that He made for each of us. Then as we enjoy this wonderful time of year, let us remember that as Christians we must let the Light of Christ shine through us.

This Comes to Pass

"A ray of hope flickers in the sky. A tiny star lights up way up high. All across the land, dawns a brand new morn. This comes to pass when a child is born." This first stanza of the song, This Comes to Pass, beautifully paints the picture of the world awaiting the birth of the savior in a world filled with hope. As we approach the celebration of Christmas, the birth of Jesus, the Savior of the world, we too have a hope flickering inside of our psyches. Our daily lives are bombarded with images of suffering, strife, divisiveness, and tribalism' and that's just the daily news. Our social media news feeds are littered with negativity and hate. At the end of the day many of us are exhausted and mentality drained. Yet, as we ponder the image of a baby lying in a manger in ancient Bethlehem, and the angel's message that the Christ, the messiah is born, the hope for a better world begins to flicker and burn brighter in our hearts. We mustn't let the flicker burn out. Instead we must feed it with the love that we have for each other until it becomes a raging fire inside of us that brings light to the darkness around us. As men of faith we proclaim our belief in Jesus, but, often times we fail to live up to His command. Jesus told us that they will know that we are His disciples by the way we love. As believers we must love our brethren as Jesus loves us. This time of year as the world prepares to celebrate Christmas, it seems easier because the majority of the people that we come in contact with are more respectful, considerate, and just nicer to each other. Now is the time for us to stoke the fire of Jesus' love inside of us and be a light to the world. Now is the time to refuel that fire enabling it to burn brighter throughout the coming year as we spread love where hate once festered, positivity where negativity consumed the environment, and hope where despair once ruled. As the song continues, there's a narrative that says, *"The world is waiting for a child, black white, yellow, no one knows. But a child that would grow up and turn tears to laughter, hate to love, war to peace, and everyone to everyone's neighbor, misery and suffering would be forgotten"*. This child, a child born nearly 2000 years ago, is the same Jesus that we profess to love. So, this year, on the anniversary of his birth, let each of us, resolve to become the purveyor of the love of Christ that we are called to be so that this comes to pass.

Merry Christmas from the St. Maria Goretti Catholic Men's Fellowship

PRAYER CORNER

Prayer Before Holy Communion

Come, Sweet Jesus and nourish my soul with Your Body and Blood. Enkindle in my heart the flame of Your Divine Love. Enlighten the darkness of my mind, make me obedient to Your Holy Will, heal the weaknesses of my body and soul and unite me to Yourself. Mary, my Mother, prepare me to receive Jesus my Savior in Holy Communion. Amen

Let Every Heart Prepare



It's that time of year again when we're preparing for the much anticipated and stressful Holiday season. We're preparing our Thanksgiving feast menu and guest lists. We're checking our Christmas lights and lawn decorations and preparing our plans to light up the house and neighborhood with Christmas cheer. We're preparing our Christmas list to make sure that our spouse, children, grandchildren, and family get the presents that they are longing for. We even spend time plotting out which Christmas parties we'll go to! Yes this joyous time of the year is a time of endless preparation.. Yet with all of the preparation that we do we often forget to, as the song Joy to the World says, prepare our hearts to make Him room. Yes we put all of our effort in providing the happiest time for our families and friends and forget about preparing ourselves for the Saviors birth. Imagine looking into the face of the new born Jesus seeing Him smile at you and feeling his love pierce your heart. Imagine looking into the eyes of the baby in the manger and feeling His divinity burn brightly in your soul as you present yourself to the Messiah. We can experience these feelings if we prepare our hearts to receive the Savior. All it takes is a little time and effort on our part to spend time with the Lord in prayer and scriptures or even on of the many Advent programs available, and to avail ourselves to the grace of the Sacrament of Reconciliation where through Jesus' mercy our sins are forgiven and our souls cleansed as we prepare to meet our Savior. As we prepare for the upcoming holiday feasts and celebrations let everyone of us prepare our hearts to greet our Savior.

Advent Resources

<https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/advent>

<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-year/advent/lectio-divina-for-advent.cfm>

<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-year/advent/upload/advent-calendar2018-interactive.pdf>

<https://dynamiccatholic.com/best-advent-ever>

COMING EVENTS

November 2, 2018- Men's Rosary for Peace; 6:00pm- Chapel
November 3, 2018- Lord Teach Me To Pray- 8:00am-Rm 3-4
November 7 2017- Meeting; 7:00pm - Center library
November 10, 2018- Lord Teach Me To Pray- 8:00am-Rm 3-4
November 14, 2017- Meeting; 7:00pm - Center library
November 17, 2018- Lord Teach Me To Pray- 8:00am-Rm 3-4
November 24, 2018- Lord Teach Me To Pray- 8:00am-Rm 3-4
December 1, 2018- Lord Teach Me To Pray- 8:00am-Rm 3-4
December 5, 2018- Meeting; 7:00pm - Center library
December 7, 2018 - Men's Rosary for Peace; 6:00pm- Chapel
December 15, 2018- Lord Teach Me To Pray- 8:00am-Rm 3-4
December 19, 2018- Meeting; 7:00pm - Center library