

# What Does It Mean To Be A Catholic Man Today?

## Objective

Men and manhood seem to be attacked from all sides these days. Make no mistake about it, men have been privileged throughout history and enjoyed a disproportionate amount of fruits from their toil. The old "boys will be boys" culture will no longer be accepted. We don't want to have a generation of young, discouraged and angry boys struggling for relevance and acceptance. Many in our culture believe that now is the time to redefine what being a "real man" means. What is the difference between a man and a boy? And how do we guide and teach our boys to be men?

If being a man were not hard enough, the church itself seems to be under constant attack. Not that some criticism is not deserved, but the understanding of the Catholic Church as the world most powerful force for good seems to have been forgotten. As is often the case, modern problems are merely repackaged old problems. Ecclesiastes 1:9 "Nothing is new under the sun." How quick we are to throw out thousands of years of accumulated wisdom for something that feels good in the moment. When we lose our moral way as a society, we often need to look back to our foundations. There is Truth with a capital T and it has stood for over 2000 years.

What does it mean to be a "real man of faith" today?

**Song Suggestion:** They Will Know We Are Christians (Blue 476, Red 728, Music Issue 609)

## Bible & Catechism Readings

### **Pv 27:11**

"As iron sharpens iron, so man sharpens his fellow man"

### **1 Cor 13:11**

" When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I put aside childish things. "

### **1 Pt 5: 6-11**

"So humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your worries upon him because he cares for you. Be sober and vigilant. Your opponent the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion looking for [someone] to devour. Resist him, steadfast in faith, knowing that your fellow believers throughout the world undergo the same sufferings. The God of all grace who called you to his eternal glory through Christ [Jesus] will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you after you have suffered a little. To him be dominion forever. Amen.

### **Catechism 1704:**

The human person participates in the light and power of the divine Spirit. By his reason, he is capable of understanding the order of things established by the Creator. By free will, he is capable of directing himself toward his true good. He finds perfection "in seeking what is true and good."

## **Saint/Vignette:** St Joachim, Father of the Most Blessed Virgin, Feast: July 26th

Joachim, of the tribe of Juda and the family of David, was a shepherd of Nazareth. Stolanus, father of Saint Anne, gave him his pious daughter in marriage. The two spouses lived in the fear of the Lord and the practice of good works. They divided all their wealth into three parts: the first was regularly given to the temple, for its support and that of the ministers of religion; they gave the second part to the poor,

while the last and least excellent served for the needs of the family. Nonetheless, happiness had not come to this home — the spouse of Joachim was sterile.

For twenty years already they had prayed to God to deliver them from this opprobrium. The holy couple invariably went, according to custom at the Feast of Tabernacles, to the Holy City. There the high priest was immolating the victims when Joachim presented himself in his turn, bearing a lamb; Anne followed him. The high priest had only words of contempt and reproach for them, and in the presence of the people he rejected their offering.

Joachim did not have the heart to return to Nazareth; his grief prompted him to seek solitude and prayer. Anne returned alone to their residence, and he retired to a region near Jerusalem, where shepherds were pasturing their sheep. The silent calm of pastoral life, brought some relief to the wound of his heart. Who has not known how solitude brings one closer to God?

One day when he was alone in the fields, the Angel Gabriel came and stood before him. Joachim prostrated himself, trembling with fear. Do not fear, said the heavenly messenger. I am the Angel of the Lord, and it is God Himself who sends me. He has heard your prayers; your alms have come before His presence. Anne, your spouse, will bear a daughter whose happiness will be above that of other women; She will be blessed, and named the Mother of eternal blessing. You will name the Child Mary and consecrate Her to God when the time comes. The Holy Spirit, from the time She is in the womb of Her mother, will dwell in Her soul, and He will accomplish in Her great things. With those words, the Angel disappeared.

The Archangel's announcement and the Lord's promise were fulfilled. Joachim in his turn was faithful to the commands of the Lord. His daughter received the name of Mary, and when She was three years old, he and Saint Anne entrusted Her to the pious women who in the temple of Jerusalem brought up young girls consecrated to the Lord. Mary had lived there under the gaze of God for eight years, when Joachim died, laden with merits and virtues. Anne, his spouse, had him buried in the Valley of Josaphat, not far from the Garden of Gethsemane, and one year later rejoined him there.

## Questions for Large and Small Group Discussion:

What do you think the difference is between a man and a boy?

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Who are good examples of what it means to be a man, both in the Bible and amongst us?

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How do we transition our boys to men?

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What if you saw this in the relationship of a friend and her husband, or your adult child and their spouse?

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### **Reference material:**

The Five Marks of a Man – Finding Your Path to Courageous Manhood (2018) by Brian Tome

“No matter where you are in your life, no matter what you’ve done, you can choose today to be a man.”  
– Brian Tome

THE BIG IDEA: What differentiates a man from a boy is how he lives. These five biblical markers of manhood should inspire men to grow into who God created them to be.

The Five Marks:

1. “Men Have Vision,” men are focused on the long run, not the short term.
2. “Men Take a Minority Position,” men aren’t afraid to go against the flow.
3. “Men Are Team Players,” men make each other better and respect authority.
4. “Men Work,” men serve others and produce results.
5. “Men Are Protectors,” men use their strength to protect and their knowledge to teach.

### **Action Plan:**

1. Think about what makes a good man and measure yourself.
2. Reflect on why you are Catholic.
3. If there are certain Church teachings that you struggle with, learn more about what the Church teaches on that topic, starting with the Catechism.
4. Thank the Lord in prayer for your gift of faith, for your relationship with Him, and His Church.
5. Think about ways you can help mentor boys towards manhood, or men towards God.

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