

Fathers Team

Father's Team is a great ministry offered to any father of any age at St Mary. We meet on Friday mornings from 7-8 during the school year. We have a structured format that involves team signals, prayer, intentions and a topic that varies from week to week and covers the areas of Church, Community, God, Spouse, Children, Peers and is lead by a rotating team of individuals whose task is to introduce the topic with a little information and then to facilitate a discussion among the men present. Obviously, the secret sauce for a group like this is to sit in a circle with a dozen other fathers and dive deep into these topics as we explore our spirituality and faith and roles as fathers. So, what happens when a pandemic hits with mandatory quarantines and you can't sit in the same room and look each other in the eye and have those meaningful discussion or provide personal support to a father in need?

Well, you do the best you can, and you turn to Zoom—while you lose the personal connection that comes with being in a physical circle with a dozen other men, you can at least still look at each other and have a meaningful discussion. Other than the few weeks immediately after the quarantines were announced and once it became clear, this was going to last for a while, we started meeting virtually and we didn't really miss a beat. We covered a great range of topics including a robust discussion about the fact that Jesus knows us and has called us by name and put us on this earth now for a specific reason. We also had many discussions about the power of prayer and why do so many discussions about challenges always revert back to prayer being a great way to resolve it. We ended our year back in person for the last 4 weeks, wrapping up with a fabulous 45-minute Examen of Conscience while we reflected on the year we had just completed. We also sent a weekly reflection through email that summarized our discussion from the previous Friday and offered an insight into the coming week's topic or about a current event or current reading that prompted a response to something we had discussed or an event happening around us.

I do believe the virtual nature of what we had to do caused us to challenge our inner fortitude to keep going. This year was the 3rd year of this ministry, and we became much stronger; establishing a core group of men who faithfully attended our Friday zoom calls. What doesn't destroy you makes you stronger, right? I would say Father's Team really proved that this year---the energy and camaraderie we all felt when we were able to get back together was awesome; to the point that we plan to have a standing (or sitting) table at the Echo this summer on Fridays at 7 for anyone who wants to come and have breakfast or coffee or just chat.