

Forward, Into the Breach!

An exhortation, a movement, a call to brotherhood

What does it mean to be a Catholic man? How does a Catholic man love? Why is fatherhood, fully understood, so crucial for every man?

*These, and other questions, are at the very heart of **Into the Breach**, the September 2015 apostolic exhortation to Catholic men written by Thomas Olmstead, the bishop of Phoenix. Inspired by this stirring document, Tony Castellano created a program that invites men to meet as brothers to discuss various aspects of the faith from a masculine perspective. Since 2016, **Into the Breach** has become a movement, touching and deepening the lives of men in the United States and Canada.*

*Tony Castellano will be the guest facilitator and the May 11 Tri-Diocesan **Into the Breach** Workshop in Winnipeg. (1)*



Tony Castellano a popular speaker to Catholic audiences, has been leading and participating in Catholic men's groups and conferences in the Archdiocese of Washington since 2005. Under the guidance of four consecutive pastors, he has established and led a seven-year biweekly men's group, an ongoing seven year monthly sexual purity group for men, and most recently, a four year 175-member weekly men's group. An Information Technology professional in the public sector for 30 years, Tony is also an Adjunct Professor of Computer Science, a Knight of Columbus, father of seven, and grandfather of three, Tony lives with his wife Ellen in the Washington, DC area.

In less than four years, *Into the Breach* has gone international. It's certainly seemed to have struck a chord...

Tony Castellano: Definitely. It's clearly a work of the Holy Spirit. Of course, there are many factors that have led to a greater *need* for Catholic men to band together. We

could talk about what is being promulgated by society, or poor catechesis, or what has been preached or not preached from the pulpit, as well as the net result of all these factors for an average man that comes to church on Sunday.

Because for too many men, Sunday means walking into a church, kneeling, standing, sitting, standing, walking up, walking back, kneeling, standing and walking out. That's harsh criticism, but for a lot of guys, that's been the modus operandi. And yet there's a hunger for more. Many men have woken up. The more they do, the more they encourage other men to step into the breach with them, by gathering as men of faith to be a power in the Body of Christ.

Of course, a husband will need a deep relationship and shared spiritual life with his wife. That complementarity is an essential part of married life. But men of all walks of life and vocations need brotherhood and male fellowship, just as women need a sisterhood.

To help foster that brotherhood, you created a study guide based on bishop Olmstead's apostolic exhortation...

T. C. Yes, originally at the behest of my pastor, who wanted me to create a summer program for our parish men's group. That was in January 2016. I then took the bishop's 28-page exhortation and turned it into a 98-page PowerPoint presentation. Which didn't work. It was like trying to reinvent the wheel. So, I sat in Eucharistic adoration, and asked the Lord what I should do? Then it came to me: the bishop has already done everything! All I was really being asked to do was to slice up the exhortation into 13 sections and add questions – mine and others' – at the end of each section. The study guide is free as a downloadable PDF file, for use by any parish or men's group that wants to use it. And to go through the guide typically takes between seven and nine sessions.

In the Archdiocese of St. Boniface, young husbands and fathers are quite stoked by the strong sense of fellowship they derive from Into the Breach sessions. They

no longer feel alone with their faith as Catholic men (To read their testimonials, [click here](#)).

T. C. That's a very encouraging reaction. Because society fosters isolation. And Satan wants to isolate men. Into the Breach is a call to brotherhood. When, as bishop Olmstead does, we are asked to reflect as men on who Jesus is, and what He died for, as well as what is He calling us to be, we break that isolation. When we explore the what it means to be a man and re-express together the truth of our human nature and sexuality, we break that isolation. And when we use Christ as our model and deepen our relationship with Him, we are no longer alone.

As a man, I am not called to sit on a couch, watch TV and drink beer. I am a son of the Father, made in the image and likeness of God, called to live a life with an individual discernable mission, living out what the Lord calls me to do.

So, a part of Into the Breach is to reflect, in a group, on our call to action as men...

T. C. Very much so. We look on our strengths, and our weaknesses and temptations, since we live in a fallen state. And we do it together, encouraging each other. Our common goal is to follow Christ, which means to be moved to action. But it's a group effort. When we get together, we're not simply "the guys", we are brothers who want to be together for Christ. And we support each other in our fallenness. And at the end of the day, we don't remain in our community; we move outward, into the world.

That takes confidence...

T. C. True. And confidence doesn't develop overnight. That takes time. What bishop Olmstead is trying to help us do as a group is to trust in the Lord. How does a man gain that confidence and the boldness to be able to step into the breach of life? With others, in discussion about the truth of ourselves, in sharing and in prayer. Then, as Saint John Paul II pointed out many times, we need no longer fear.

Because we're never alone. Our brothers are with us. Our guardian angels are with us. The saints are with us. There's tremendous strength there. Yes, of course, you can still walk away from that strength, but the Lord never walks away from us. So it's never too late to say yes to God. And yes again and again.

What is your hope, then, for the May 11 workshop?

T. C. My prayer is that God will lead men who need the workshop to gain spiritual strength for themselves or to be a strength for others. An that has nothing to do with me, really. I ask the Holy Spirit to give a little nudge to men so that they will attend, and for all men to participate in the **Into the Breach** movement.

(1) *Calling All Catholic Men! – “Into the Breach” Conference – May 11, 2019*

A call for husbands, fathers and sons, grandfathers and widowers, priests and deacons, young men in preparation for their vocation. Come engage in the spiritual battle and struggle for virtue and excellence. Develop your interior life of prayer needed to live fully as a Christian man. Learn to how a Catholic man loves.

*Join us for a full day workshop on **Saturday, May 11**, facilitated by Anthony (Tony) Castellano – author of the website forwardintothebreach.com. Archbishop LeGatt will begin the workshop with Mass at 9AM in the main hall of St. Boniface Cathedral. To register [click here](#), or call Tim Scatliff at 204-771-4947. To view poster, [click here](#).*

*To read or download **Into the Breach**, bishop Thomas Olmstead's apostolic exhortation, [click here](#). Visit the Into the Breach website: <http://www.intothebreach.org>. To read Tony Castellano's Into the Breach Study Guide, [click here](#). View a video about Into the Breach [here](#).*