Forward! Into The Breach

A LEADERSHIP SEMINAR FOR MEN BASED ON

"INTO THE BREACH"

AN APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION FOR MEN Written by +Thomas J. Olmsted, Bishop of Phoenix

> Summer 2016 St. John Neumann Catholic Church Gaithersburg, MD

June 7th – Session 4

- Sharing
- Video/Highlights
- Self-Mastery/Asceticism
- Action Plan Items Review
- Context #3: Man and Woman are Complementary, not Competitors
- Question 1: What does it mean to be a Catholic Man?

June 7th – Session 4 How is this all Not Hopeless?

- How can I *possibly* make a difference?
- The Gift of Hope, the Relief From Hopelessness.
- Those who receive the Gift of Hope CANNOT Keep it to Themselves!
- What is something that has happened in your life that you CANNOT keep to yourself?

June 7th – Session 4 Video Highlights – Self-Mastery

- "Authentic love requires that we have self-mastery, that we own ourselves, so we can give ourselves away."
- "What makes a man a man, and separates him from all the other animals in the world is that he can order his passions. So man is always called to have selfmastery."
- "When passions take control of a man and has dominion over him. He ceases to be the spiritual head of his family."
- "A man's work of self-mastery is the foundational work of giving himself away. Of sacrificing himself for others."

June 7th – Session 4 Self-Mastery – Asceticism*

- "Intentional prayer during fasting helps remind us that fasting is not purely an ascetical practice."
- "We forgo food to grow closer to God, not to show how tough we can be on our bodies."

"The hunger we experience while fasting instills in us the truth that nothing in this world can satisfy us but God alone."

*SPIRITUAL WEAPONS: FASTING www.catholicgentleman.net/2014/04/spiritual-weapons-fasting/ *DENY YOURSELF: A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO FASTING www.catholicgentleman.net/2015/08/deny-yourself-a-practical-guide-to-fasting/

June 7th – Session 4 *Action Plan Item Review*

- How will you identify someone or a group of individuals to engage in fellowship with after June 28?
- What is your motivation to act in response to this calling? Has it hit the depth of your heart? Ask yourself: "Am I holding anything back?
- What will you do to "find your mission in Christ?"
- What steps are needed to fully comprehend how the Lord is calling you to engage in the New Evangelization. What are the ways you can engage?
- How can you best reveal the "Termites" that Bishop Olmsted discusses? How would you describe the "Termites" to someone else?
- How will I challenge others about the world's view of human sexuality?

June 7th – Session 4 *Three Lies of Satan – Gen 3:1-5*

- The first lie: Falsify reality. Distorting the truth that God reveals to us and that the Church presents to us is a primary tactic of Satan.
- The second lie: God is not telling you the truth. Satan presents God's command as a limit to our freedom.
- The third lie: In reality, truth is how you define it. Each person gets to decide for himself what is good and what is evil. There is no objective truth.

Workbook pg. 24

June 7th – Session 4 *Context #3: Man and Woman Are Complementary, not Competitors*

- "This may seem obvious, but in our world, there are many distorted images and much evidence of confusion regarding what is true masculinity."
- "We can say that for the first time in history, people have become either so confused or so arrogant as to attempt to dictate their masculinity or femininity according to their own definitions."

June 7th – Session 4 *Context #3: Man and Woman Are Complementary, not Competitors*

- "Herein lies the fullness of masculinity; each Catholic man must be prepared to give himself completely, to charge into the breach, to engage in spiritual combat, to defend women, children, and others against the wickedness and snares of the devil!"
- "Every man, particularly today, must come to a mature acceptance and understanding of what it means to be a man."
- "Yet we do not merely look to Jesus. We truly encounter Christ at Mass when we receive the very gift of Himself in the Eucharist."

June 7th – Session 4 *The Damaging Impact of "Gender Ideology"*

- "I ask myself, if the so-called gender theory is not... an expression of frustration and resignation, which seeks to cancel out sexual difference because it no longer knows how to confront it. Yes, we risk taking a step backwards. The removal of difference in fact creates a problem, not a solution." – Pope Francis
- "I exhort you, my sons and brothers in Jesus Christ, to embrace more deeply the beauty and richness of the sexual difference and to defend it against false ideologies." - Bishop Olmsted

June 7th – Session 4 *The Damaging Impact of "Gender Ideology"*

- The rapid advance of a "gender ideology" has **infected** societies around the world. This ideology seeks to set aside the sexual **difference created by God**, to remove male and female as the normative way of understanding the human person, and in its place, to add various other "categories" of sexuality. This ideology is destructive for individuals and society, and it is a lie.
- It is harmful to the human person, and therefore, a false concept that we must oppose as Christians. At the same time, however, we are called to show compassion and provide help for those who experience confusion about their sexual identity.
- This confusion is not unexpected when the poison of secularism reaches such critical levels: "When God is forgotten, the creature itself becomes unintelligible."

Question 1: What does it mean to be a Catholic Man? *Ecce Homo – Behold the Man*

- "The Father sent his Son to reveal what it means to be a man, and the fullness of this revelation becomes evident on the Cross."
- "He tells us that it was for this reason that He came into the world, that it is his earnest desire to give himself totally to us."
- "Herein lies the fullness of masculinity; each Catholic man must be prepared to give himself completely, to charge into the breach, to engage in spiritual combat, to defend women, children, and others against the wickedness and snares of the devil!"

Questions?

Prayer to St. George

"St. George, Heroic Catholic soldier and defender of your Faith, you dared to criticize a tyrannical Emperor and were subjected to horrible torture. Faithful servant of God and invincible martyr, favored by God with the gift of faith, and inflamed with an ardent love of Christ, thou didst fight valiantly against the dragon of pride, falsehood, and deceit. Neither pain nor torture, sword nor death could part thee from the love of Christ.

I fervently implore thee for the sake of this love to help me by thy intercession to overcome the temptations that surround me, and to bear bravely the trials that oppress me, so that I may patiently carry the cross which is placed upon me; and let neither distress nor difficulties separate me from the love of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Valiant champion of the Faith, assist me in the combat against evil, that I may win the crown promised. Amen."



June 7th – Discussion Questions Session 4

Workbook Page 22 – questions 21-22

21. Bishop Olmsted quotes Pope Francis as saying, "Man and woman are the image and likeness of God. This tells us that not only is man taken in himself the image of God, not only is woman taken in herself the image of God, but also man and woman, as a couple, are the image of God." The Bishop also says that the struggle between the sexes is not the fault of God's creation; it is the result of sin. How can a couple find relief from this struggle and together return to the image and likeness of God?

22. In Context #3, Bishop Olmsted discusses the "rapid advance of a "gender ideology" [that] has infected societies..." That is, an attempt to remove male and female as identities and replace them with various categories of sexuality. He clearly states the destructive nature of such and its harm to human persons. He ends this section with an exhortation to men to "embrace more deeply the beauty and richness of the sexual differences [between men and women] and to defend it against false ideologies." What are ways in which you can defend the truth and meaning of man and woman as created by God?

June 7th – Discussion Questions Session 4

Workbook Page 25 – question 23; Page 26 – question 25

23. Bishop Olmsted starts this section with, "Every man must come to a mature acceptance and understanding of what it means to be a man." Men cannot ride out their lives and take what comes. We need to become who we are! To find out what that implies, we just have to look to Jesus. He is our model of masculinity in the true being of the Father, and Jesus lived that role every day of his life. "Herein lies the fullness of masculinity; each Catholic man must be prepared to give himself completely, to charge into the breach, to engage in spiritual combat, to defend women, children, and others against the wickedness and snares of the devil!" What is your reaction to such a bold statement? How can it possibly be achieved?

25. As we strive to build our masculine foundation on the rock of Jesus, we are called by Bishop Olmsted to encounter Jesus in the Eucharist at Mass. What are some ways that you can come to a greater encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist?