



Fight the Great Fight

*Take these two steps to fulfill your vocation as a father
and lead your family to eternal life*

by Jared Zimmerer

In his award-winning novel *The Moviegoer*, Catholic author Walker Percy writes these memorable words about manhood: “In this world goodness is destined to be defeated. But a man must go down fighting. That is the victory. To do anything less is to be less than a man.”

In the battle of good and evil, we can only be in one of two places — on the front lines or AWOL. Too often, we men fail to fight to the end. We surrender to the culture, to social pressure and to the weakness within. We all need encouragement and guidance, so let’s look at two aspects of this ongoing fight: the interior life and the life of evangelization.

As St. Paul VI reminded us in his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, “Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity.”

Beset by the challenges in our lives and the troubles of the world, we can forget this. When the Church becomes sedentary in faith, a toxic type of spiritual arthritis sets in. Today, 25% of the U.S. population does not profess any religion — the ever-growing “nones” — and many other countries have similar numbers. It seems to me that now is the time to “go down fighting.”

The main field of evangelization for fathers is their own homes. Just as the universal Church is defined by evangelizing the world, so the mission of the family, the domestic church, is to hand on the faith from one generation to the next. One household at a time, we fathers can stem the tide of “nones” as we serve Christ and his Church.

Two key principles of evangelization identified by the Word on Fire Institute are especially relevant to our vocation as fathers and our mission as Knights of Columbus: *evangelization of the culture* and *a life grounded in the Eucharist*.

Evangelization of the culture requires an understanding of how to speak through and within contemporary culture. Fathers can practice this principle within the family

by finding out what their children and wives love. What movies do they watch? What music do they enjoy? What are their favorite video games or online platforms? One of the best ways to form a bond with others is to take an active interest in what they enjoy, yet so often fathers take a passive or dismissive view of their children’s interests.

Engage your family members by asking about the things closest to their hearts and minds. Love what they love, provided it is something good. Show them that

what they love matters to you — and what you love will matter more to them. Once you’ve earned the right to discuss their loves, you will find ways to sow the “seeds of the Word” through which the Gospel can be understood and lived.

To be *grounded in the Eucharist* means having a spiritual life based on the sacrificial offering of Christ, specifically a devotion to the Eucharist. How often do you attend Mass? How often do you spend time in eucharistic adoration? You cannot give what you do not have. If

you attempt to bring your family closer to Christ by your own human efforts, you will do more than fail. You will likely lead everyone astray.

To become the father and the man you are called to be, you must know, love and serve the greatest man who “went down fighting.” Jesus calls us to heroic virtue, and the Eucharist is our food for the fight.

Get to Mass as often as possible. Go to adoration and allow your child to see you on your knees, engaging in the fight. Be the sacrificial priest, prophet and king of your home. When it comes to the eternal life of your family members, don’t settle for an easy surrender.

“To do anything less is to be less than a man.” ♦

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