

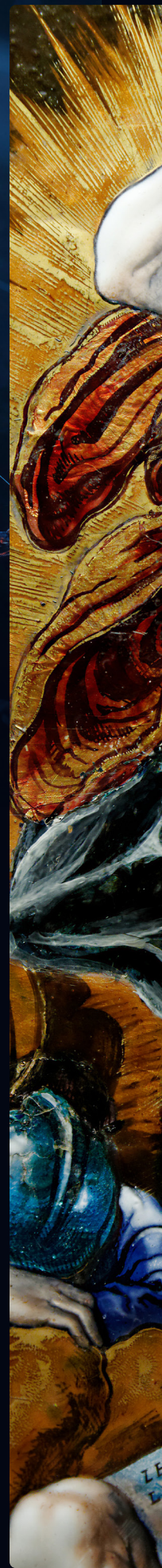


HEROIC MEN LAUNCHES 'HEROIC PLEDGE,' AIMING TO REACH 1 MILLION BY 2033

AN ALLIANCE OF CATHOLIC LEADERS IS CALLING ON MEN ACROSS NORTH AMERICA TO COMMIT TO A SIMPLE SPIRITUAL HABIT. They believe could ripple outward to families, parishes and communities: pray daily, and pray for 10 men, connect weekly with one, and invite one new man each month into the same commitment.

The initiative, known as the "Heroic Pledge," is the latest effort from Heroic Men, founded by the Catholic Men's Leadership Alliance. Its organizers say the pledge is intentionally simple—and deliberately scalable—with a goal of reaching 1 million men by the year 2033, the 2,000th anniversary of the Resurrection of Christ.

"We need an accelerating solution," said Dominic de Souza, from Heroic Men. "If we have an accelerating problem of the culture collapsing and falling apart, and families falling apart, and men unable to step up and be who God created them to be... well, we need an accelerating solution."





"We are the wealthiest, we're the best off that we have ever been as a species," Mann said. "America is just ridiculously wealthy. Food, shelter, water—yes, there are people who have challenges with those—but when you look at the macro level, we're better off than we've ever been. And at the same time, we're somehow more depressed, more lonely, more addicted, more medicated and more suicidal than we've ever been. It's not working."

He pointed to research on what has been described as a loneliness epidemic, citing studies from major institutions and federal health agencies that warn of the physical and psychological costs of isolation.

"This pledge is designed to be so simple to draw men in who are just ready to do something," Mann said. "You start orienting yourself toward the things that are truly going to make you happy and make a difference in your life."

The pledge rests on three tenets: daily prayer, brotherhood and outreach.

"Return to prayer every day," de Souza said. "It could be a single Our Father, but it's a return to the Father so that we're not just trying to solve these problems on our own."

Participants are asked to write down the names of 3 to 10 men important to them and pray for them by name each day. They are encouraged to connect with one man each week and invite one new man each month to take the pledge.

"We can't be connected by ourselves," Mann said. "You have to go out and invite other men."

SHIELD WALL' VISION. De Souza describes the group of 10 men as a "shield wall."

"When you take this pledge, these 10 men, they're your shield wall. You're locking arms with them. You're standing shoulder to shoulder with them," he said. "You're proactively stepping up on their behalf before the Father. You're offering them up, and you're daily asking for help and guidance and support for them, and their families."

He said that after personally practicing the pledge for two months, he has seen deeper conversations and more vulnerability among the men he prays for.

"They have been more confident to share the fact that they're going through something difficult — a loss, family difficulty," he said. "Suddenly they start saying things like, 'I don't feel so alone.'"

Cont'd page 28

Mann said even being told that someone is praying for you can have an impact. The pledge, he added, is "not performative, it's transformative. It's saying, 'Look who I am. I am a son of the Father. I am a man who looks out for my brothers.'"

AN ALLIANCE, NOT A COMPETITOR.

Heroic Men leaders stress that the pledge is not meant to replace existing men's ministries.

"There's a ton of groups out there who are doing great work," Mann said. "This isn't business, this is ministry. Why would you try to get somebody to stop doing something that's working so they can do your thing? We're workers in the same vineyard of the Lord."

He said successful ministries tend to share common principles centered on discipleship: closeness to God, real brotherhood and personal outreach.

"What if we all took this pledge?" Mann asked. "Whether I'm part of the Knights of Columbus, That Man Is You, Men of Christ, Man Up—group after group doing great work—what if we all came together on this central theme and made this commitment in our personal lives?"

De Souza said Heroic Men has spent years studying why some ministries

thrive and others struggle, especially since the pandemic.

"We think we've distilled it down to the three solutions that matter most," he said. "Daily prayer, building a brotherhood—no man goes through life alone—and then regular outreach."

Heroic Men provides a downloadable pledge form, a 30-day email series to help build the habit, and access to video content and training for men who want to start or strengthen local ministries.

"We're here to serve and support you to build up your ministries," De Souza said. "We're not asking you to come and build up Heroic Men."

A MILLION MEN BY 2033. The organization's goal is to reach 1 million men by 2033.

"To go from one man to a million men, it's only six steps," De Souza said, describing how each man praying for 3 to 10 others could eventually create exponential growth, if those men also take the pledge.

Mann acknowledged that exponential curves "are pretty flat to start with," but said the math "stacks quickly."

"It's one of those beautiful things where we can feel like the weight of the world's

not on our shoulders," he said. "Just own this pledge. You're going to see an avalanche of difference."

2033 MATTERS DEEPLY FOR MANY CHRISTIANS.

"As we head toward that year—2,000 years after the Resurrection of Christ as it's traditionally held—there's a lot of energy, a lot of momentum," Mann said. "What are we hoping to be able to say once we're there? Let's start working toward it now."

De Souza invited men to imagine the long-term effects. "What is it going to be like 7 years later after you've been praying for men for 10 years every single day?" he asked. "What kind of friendships are you going to have? What happens to your parish?"

The pledge is the beginning of a broader journey. "Every hero has a journey, because we do believe that life is an adventure," De Souza said. "Here's where you start."

At its core, he said, the commitment is small. "It literally starts with 30 seconds of prayer a day," he said. "That's it."



SEND IN YOUR THOUGHTS

We want to hear from you. The future needs you in it.

HEROICMEN.ORG/MAN

HEROIC PLEDGE

NAME

I pledge to take a stand for God, and to be a heroic man.
Every day, I will pray to draw closer to God, and will lift up 10
men by name. Every week, I will connect with one man. Every
month, I will invite 1 man to join me in this pledge.

THE MEN I WILL PRAY FOR:

DAILY PRAYER

Jesus, I offer to you these men and their families.
Help them, bless them, and may your will be done.
I trust in you, take care of everything.