

# Embrace leadership with an eye on God's purpose, men advised

What is a real man?

In today's society, the definition of manhood has become all the more critical in light of recent sexual harassment allegations against politicians, celebrities and other influential figures, as well as the #MeToo hashtag movement on social media that began in the fall of last year.

For Catholics, the true definition of manhood is leadership with an eye on God's purpose, says Matt Dalton, an internationally recognized speaker on marriage and family.

"A lot of us men don't have a mission, we fly by the seat of our pants," said Dalton, who spoke at the recent Men of Integrity conference.

"If we have a mission, that's godly, because we're made in God's image and likeness; then it's easy for our brides to support that mission."

Dalton and his wife Mindy are co-founders of Marriage Missionaries, which provides marriage and family coaching, workshops and retreats. They also teach future deacons and their wives in the Diaconate Formation program at the Archdiocese of Denver.

True leadership as a man is not controlling or dominating another person, Dalton said. Instead, it involves freely and totally giving one's heart to God in prayer, and sharing that heart with one's wife and children.



Terrance Wagner

"The whole culture seems to be pushing away from the fatherhood figure," added Terry Wagner, who has been attending the Men of Integrity Conference for more than eight years with his local men's group from Lloydminster.

“You don’t realize until you come to events like this, that there’s other people out there that are searching and struggling with their faith, and may have the same concerns and questions.”

To be real men, Dalton said Catholics must follow the example of the biblical King David, ‘a man after God’s own heart,’ known for his deep faith and love for God.

“The world is starving for brotherhood. To grow in manhood, men should come to conferences like (Men of Integrity) and learn that they’re not alone.”

Over 400 men and teenage boys took up that challenge at this year’s conference, spending the Feb. 3-4 weekend together at Holy Trinity Parish in Spruce Grove, talking about what it means to be a man.

“It’s pretty rewarding to stand in a room full of faithful men who want to be good husbands and fathers,” said Steven Defer, the coordinator of the Office of Life and Family for the Archdiocese of Edmonton, who attended the conference with his youngest son.

Defer said becoming a man involves a “conversation of faith,” which he defines as a man taking the time to discern who he is and who he wants to become.

“Ask yourself, ‘What kind of man do I want to be?’ The answer to that includes many things, and a whole lot more than what you see in the mirror or the bank account,” he said.

“It involves who I am before God, in my family, my community, my church, all of it.”

The conference also featured Sean Dalton, the co-director of YDisciple, an initiative of the Augustine Institute in the U.S., as well as Father Miguel Irizar, pastor of St. Peter Parish in Villeneuve, and Father Paul Moret, pastor of St. Matthew’s in Edmonton.

Father Moret is also the spiritual director of Catholic Family Ministries, which sponsors the Men of Integrity conference and similar events for women and families each year.