**Epilogue**

Whether biological or spiritual in nature, for a man, there is no better achievement in life than to be a successful father. There is no better reward in life than to see your faith-filled family living a peaceful life, nourished by God’s grace. But the masculine journey can be difficult. The world is scheming constantly to separate fathers from the one true God and Loving Father, and to fracture the foundation of faith that leads men and their families to true happiness.

Tools for the journey are many – and a father’s tool chest is his heart. When a father’s heart embraces God, the tool chest grows and overflows through grace, offering virtues that extend into and enliven the hearts of the family that the father leads to God. Much wisdom is gained by the intentional father who composes himself through humility and selflessness and who uses his trials and failures as opportunities to grow. This wisdom instills within him a moral compass that guides all his decision-making and begins to work unconsciously within the hearts of the family he nurtures. As he lovingly answers his call to action, and as he roots his character in fair and honorable decision-making, he begins to change the world around him. His efforts to hand on the faith-filled gifts of the New Covenant and the sacraments now form his family's foundation of faith, which cascades to the generations to come.

As fathers, we must understand and accept that every decision and position we take, through our words and actions, affect our families. If we become complacent to what society dictates as acceptable, then we separate our families from our foundation of faith. If we fail to challenge false truths, perceived as reality for those living in and of this world, and we fail to protect our families from the many worldly causes that try to capture their hearts, then they will lose their way as they face the world on their own.

Humility and composure are our go-to tools that must be sharpened constantly to reflect and instill virtue within the families we nurture. By taking our God-given place within our families, we become the loving authority that our families count on and turn to for direction. This contradicts what society dictates, where the father figure is devalued and diminished. By always putting our families first and by our selfless actions, we pull our families above this worldly view, and we rest in the truth seen through God’s grace as we love our families as Christ loves His Church.

There is no mistake in the repetitive nature of the terms used within the chapters of this book – terms such as competency, intent, and foundation of faith. Repetition is a tool that helps us learn. I challenge all fathers who have grown families to share their tools of experience and wisdom, gained through trials and failures, with young fathers. Help them understand the value of our foundation of faith; how it cascades throughout life; how true peace of heart and mind in this world comes only through the intentional application of these truths and faith-filled gifts within the families they nurture.

A prayer to strengthen my family’s faith is what guided me in sharing this journey with you. At first, my prayer stopped at that, my family. A moment of grace, however, revealed to me that God’s intent within my prayer, was to reach into and strengthen His entire faith-filled family. I felt an undeniable call to action to reach into the hearts of fathers building a foundation of faith within the families they nurture. I hope that the life lessons and competencies shared within this book will lead other fathers to a clearer understanding of their rightful place within their families and at the table of God.

Before we can lead, we must first follow…