

# Male Myth Busters

Debunking popular myths around male household leaders



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## New research indicates virtuous male leaders benefit all

At a time when popular culture demonizes male leadership and questions the basic composition of families, [a new study](#) suggests households lead by devout Catholic males not only benefit family members but could strengthen society at large. Researchers set out to test popular myths around male leaders, family and the impact of faithfulness to the Church:

**Myth #1** – Educated, successful men don't have large families

**Myth #2** – Men with traditional Catholic views are sexist

**Myth #3** – Traditionally minded men leave all the housework to women

**Myth #4** – Men are poor communicators

**Myth #5** – Church teachings are depressive and undermine personal confidence



### What do the facts say about these popular myths?

#### **Myth #1 – Educated, successful men don't have large families**

Today, larger family size is commonly equated with a lower quality of life, financial difficulty, even ruin. Comedian Jim Gaffigan notes that when he tells people he has five children, they look at him quizzically as if to ask, "why?" Some social anthropologists and historians tell us that while large families were necessary in the old days, modern couples need to be "responsible" with regard to reproduction i.e. have fewer children — 2.1 the recommended number. What did our survey of Catholic men who regularly practice their faith find?

- They are, indeed, more likely to have larger families. More than half of our respondents (57.87%) indicate they have three or more children, nearly 40% have more than four and some as many as ten.
- 83.33% report annual incomes above the U.S. median<sup>1</sup> of \$57,000, and nearly half (49.63%) report incomes of almost twice that, i.e. over \$100,000.
- 83% hold a college or graduate level degree, well above the national average of 33%<sup>2</sup>

*(Average among U.S. Catholics is 26% according to PEW Forum Survey 2015)*

#### **Myth #2 - Men with traditional Catholic views are sexist**

How often have we heard that men with traditional Catholic values are sexist? The Bible and the Church are out of sync with the times. They repress women and enable males to be lazy. Yet, our researchers found:

- 92% of men who practice their faith view their wives as equal in dignity and respect though they believe each has distinct gender based roles and gifts given to them by God.
- 84% of Catholic male leaders are more likely to be married compared to 52% of Catholics nationwide.<sup>3</sup>
- 64% report strong or very strong feelings of connection to their spouse.
- 62% indicate they are satisfied or very satisfied with the level of sexual activity in their life.
- Catholic male leaders are 40% less likely to divorce as compared to all Catholics.<sup>4</sup>

### **Myth #3 - Traditional men leave all the housework to women**

What about the stereotype that traditional men are domestically lazy and expect women to do all the housework? Our researchers found just the opposite:

- 64% of Catholic males who regularly practice their faith report they split household responsibilities evenly or personally do more of the chores.
- While only 4% report primary responsibility in the area of childcare or child supervision, 27% said they split childcare duties equally.
- It's also interesting to note that in households with a practicing Catholic male leader, the entire family is more likely to be involved in volunteering. Of the men surveyed, 68% report their entire family participates in their local parish volunteering at least weekly. Almost half of respondents (47%) indicate they are part of a dynamic men's group at their parish. This compares to 63% of all Catholics who report they "seldom or never" participate in parish activities.<sup>5</sup>

### **Myth #4 - Men are poor communicators**

How about the assumption that traditional men are poor communicators – the silent, brooding type.

Can a man be both virtuous and communicate well? Our survey found:

- 67% of Catholic men believe they are "always" or "in most cases" able to communicate their feelings, emotions and relationship needs.
- Fewer than 4% four percent say they feel disconnected from their spouse.
- 67.42% report a strong working relationship with their immediate supervisor at work.
- 78.81% say they enjoy good working relationships with coworkers.

### **Myth #5 - Church teachings are depressive and undermine personal confidence**

Today many believe that following the "rigid, antiquated" dogmas of the Catholic Church means surrendering the pursuit of happiness. Obedience to Church teachings leaves people feeling miserable, depressed, ostracized and longing for fulfillment. In fact:

- 77% of the Catholic men we surveyed say they are "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the quality of their lives at present. Fewer than 5% report being "unsatisfied" with their lives.
- 87% said they felt "highly" or "very highly" confident personally and capable of achieving life goals. Less than 1% said they had low self-confidence.
- Compared to national averages,<sup>6</sup> practicing Catholic men are twice as likely to be employed in business or legal fields and four times more likely to be in architectural or engineering fields, often in advanced executive or managerial positions.
- They are 40% less likely to abuse alcohol<sup>7</sup> and 60% less likely to have a member of their household use drugs or abuse prescription medication.<sup>8</sup>

**Learn more about this research project and the benefits of strong male leadership at**

**[www.menofchrist.net/impact](http://www.menofchrist.net/impact)**

#### **References**

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