

Coffee & Doughnuts with Mark Teixeira

The Catholic Review sits down with Mark Teixeira, five-time MLB Gold Glove first baseman and 1998 graduate of Mount St. Joseph High School.

CR: What, and where, are your Catholic roots?

Teixeira: I grew up in a Catholic home; we went to Our Lady of the Fields in Millersville. One of my biggest influences was my Uncle Chuck (Canterna), a priest of the Archdiocese of Baltimore. He is truly led by God and fed by the Holy Spirit; some of my best memories are sitting around the dinner table talking about our faith with him and my family. My wife, Leigh, and I have three children: Jack, 11; Addison, 9; and William, 6. Jack and Addison are altar servers in our home parish, St. Michael in Greenwich, Conn.

CR: You have made substantial gifts to your alma mater, Mount St. Joseph High. In what ways did it reinforce the values you learned at home?

Teixeira: I learned from my parents at a young age that giving is better than receiving. I won a school raffle my senior year at Mount St. Joe; my Dad gave all the money back to the school as a donation. He taught me a great lesson: we are already blessed and the school can use it more than we can. Being able to give back to my community is the most rewarding part of having success on the baseball field. Mount St. Joseph was a great place for me to learn and grow, because God was front and center. I had a lot of great teachers and coaches.

CR: Describe an occasion when you have most leaned on your faith.

Teixeira: Faith is tested the most when you lose people close to you. My good friend, Nick Liberatore, was killed in a car accident in high school and my mother (Margy) passed away suddenly two years ago. Both events made me realize that God has a plan for us all and death is necessary to get to heaven. Knowing my loved ones are with God in his Kingdom gives me great peace; although I will always miss them, I understand that God is ultimately in control of all of our lives.

CR: You're a family man, an ESPN analyst and have a growing list of acting credits. Why add talks at St. Philip Neri Sept. 23 and the 2018 Maryland Catholic Men's Conference to a busy schedule?

Teixeira: We should never be too busy for God. Worship, prayer and spreading the Good News are things that all Christians are called to. I'm blessed that people want to hear me speak about my faith and I try to take advantage of those opportunities. I enjoyed hosting Bible studies during my playing career; now, I get a chance to reach out to a lot of different people. Jesus' disciples are my best example. I try to spread his message not only in words, but in my actions.

The theme of my (CMC) talk is "Don't Put God in a Box." Sometimes we separate God from our daily lives and only go to him on Sunday or when we need him.

CR: Favorite saint?

Teixeira: St. Paul, his letters are my favorite chapters in the Bible. No matter what happens in life, Paul has a story or a message. He was the "anti-Christian," but saw the light and gave his life to spread the word of Jesus Christ.