

If the Avengers can assemble, why can't we?

I don't know about you, but I'm pumped for The Avengers movie that's coming out May 4.

I've seen every one of the Marvel movies, so the pairing of Iron Man, The Incredible Hulk, Thor, Captain America, Black Widow and Hawkeye is too much for this geek. Each of the heroes - outside of Thor - is uniquely human and gained their powers through extraordinary circumstances.

Captain America (Steve Rogers) is a shy guy held back by his size and illness. Only through an injection of serum does he become the muscle-bound Captain America. Tony Stark - the genius millionaire behind Iron Man - is often brought down by his penchant for excess and arrogance. Bruce Banner, the man restraining the Hulk, is a scientist trying desperately to suppress the rage that bubbles up within. If he controls the anger, but unleashes the beast within, he's unstoppable.

They're all flawed, but capable of doing great things when presented the opportunity. They are motivated for good, in the end, by compassion and love. Even the other-worldly Thor is made more heroic the more he embraces the best of humanity. He becomes a more well-rounded person as he, too, learns to love.

I've been thinking a lot lately about how great comic book movies - such as The Dark Knight, Spider-Man 1 and 2, Superman 1 and 2 - are awesome because they get the essence of the characters correct. No one asks to be a superhero, but they accept the call and the responsibility that comes with power.

Heroes inspire the characters that surround them and us, the viewer.

In real life, heroes don't dress up in costumes (well, if you're the Route 29 Batman you do) or robotic suits, they rise up. Just ask Patrick Dempsey, who pulled a teen out of fiery car crash. Like any hero, Dempsey's brushing off questions, choosing instead to be out of the spotlight.

As Catholics, one of the things we're hearing at Mass lately is how Christ was never who people expected him to be. His humble life as a carpenter's son threw off expectations. His resurrection stunned even his most ardent followers.

Christ came as an ordinary man, the son of a carpenter, and did extraordinary things. After his death, the church rose up and set off a revolution. We're here because people did extraordinary things and made extraordinary sacrifices.

Far too often we're obsessed with our differences. The Avengers undoubtedly will, too, during the movie. If they weren't battling for leadership early, we'd have a pretty short flick on our hands. Like them, it's when we realize that we're powerful together that we start accomplishing good.

It was a theme I heard at the ServeFest rally at Church of the Nativity this past weekend and during the Gospel reading at Mass at St. Paul's in Ellicott City.

As Christians, we have been handed thousands of years of tradition to continue and grow. It's incumbent upon us to change the world for the better and, just like The Avengers, protect it.

It's time to start accepting the hero within and work together.