



Courage & EnCourage
228 North Walnut Street
Lansing, Michigan 48933-1122
517-342-2596
Facsimile: 517.342.2468
caverart@comcast.net

ENCOURAGE SUPPORT GROUP MEETING

Roman Catholic Diocese of Lansing Chapter

When: Sunday March 15, 2015 from 2:30 to 4:00pm

**Where: Holy Spirit Catholic Church
9565 Musch Rd.
Brighton, Michigan 48116**

Directions: US-23 to Silver Lake Rd. Exit (exit #55) West on Silver Lake Rd. to Whitmore Lake Rd. (a short distance). South on Whitmore Lake Rd. to Winans Lake Rd.(a three way stop). West on Winans Lake Rd. approximately one mile to Musch Rd. Turn left or West on Musch Rd. to Holy Spirit Catholic Church. We meet in the new school that connects to the church in the Conference/Lending Library Room. Look for Encourage Meeting Signs.

We pray that you are all having a holy Lent. The weather has certainly cooperated keeping us indoors and close to the fireplace, thus enabling us to have more time for prayer and meditation. We thought to add to your reading list with this single but lengthy enclosure "Is "Gay" Just Another Adjective?" The author, Dan Mattson, who by the way also appears in the DVD *Desire of the Everlasting Hills* available from Courage, addresses an issue that is beginning to be presented in essays and in topics at conferences. It is the "gay celibate Christian" movement, and it deals with how one identifies himself or herself by his or her behavior, as juxtaposed to our identity in the eyes of God, our Creator and Lord. On the surface it may seem rather trivial or inconsequential, but as Dan points out, it is not. We encourage you to read it.

We again urge all of you to unite in prayer for our nation's Supreme Court. Pray that the Justices will decide that marriage is, indeed, a life-long covenant between one man and one woman and that no other arrangement can be identified as marriage.

Please also remember that we unite to pray each Thursday to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in reparation for our sins and the sins against human sexuality such as same-sex behavior and abortion. Reparation is making amends for the wrongs committed through our sinful condition. Additionally, we pray as intercessors for all our loved ones who will, like the prodigal, someday return home. We generally follow the

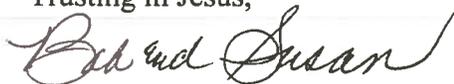
model given to us by St. Margaret Mary Alacoque in the booklet *Holy Hour of Reparation* published by CMJ Marian Publishers. If you would like a copy of the booklet, we have a small supply in our office or you can order one by calling the publisher at 1-888-636-6799. Another beautiful prayer is the *Chaplet of the Precious Blood* that is available upon request. This beautiful chaplet has been modified to address the specific concerns of Courage and EnCourage members. We have chosen to add this powerful prayer to our Holy Hour of Reparation. Please remember, “that the necessity of reparation is especially urgent today and must be evident to everyone who considers the present plight of the world, ‘seated in wickedness’. The Sacred Heart of Jesus promised to St. Margaret Mary that He would reward abundantly with His graces all those who should render this honor to His Heart.” (Pope Pius XI Encyclical *Miserentissimus*)

Please note: If you cannot attend the March 15th meeting, our next regular Diocesan EnCourage meeting is Sunday, April 19, 2015.

For more information regarding our meetings, or to talk about the issue of same-sex attraction in your lives or the lives of loved ones, call our Diocesan office at 517-342-2596 or email us at courage@dioceseoflansing.org We might also mention that the Diocese of Lansing supports this ministry even though more than half of our letters go well beyond our borders. Any financial help you can give us is greatly appreciated.

We look forward to meeting with you. Let us remember, however, to always respect the right of each to complete confidentiality.

Trusting in Jesus,



Bob and Susan Cavera

St. Richard taught: “Whether our mind be oppressed by pain or disappointment, whether it overflow with holy joy, it finds in the Sacred Heart of Jesus what it needs, everything it could desire, the salve for its wounds and the comfort for its hurts, the confirmation of its hopes, the strength to persevere...”

Crisis Magazine

A Voice for the Faithful Catholic Laity
February 20, 2015

Is “Gay” Just Another Adjective?

[Daniel Mattson](#)



In the current debate about the wisdom of the proposals being made by those who call themselves “gay celibate Christians,” many find a problem with their self-identification as being gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer or anything other than their God given male or female natures. The usual response they give to their critics is that those who criticize them simply don’t understand what they are saying when they say “I am gay.”

Spiritual Friendship is ground central for the “gay celibate Christian” movement. Ron Belgau, one of the blog’s founders recently responded to those critical of their use of the phrase “gay” about themselves in an essay called [“What Is ‘Gay’?”](#) In his essay Belgau dismisses this criticism as merely a misunderstanding that is easily settled, since he seems to believe it is just a question of grammar:

English speakers say, “I am X” all the time without meaning that “X” is either a defining or constitutive element in their identity. As far as I can tell, our critics are missing this basic grammatical point. And this is at the root of much of their confusion about the way we speak. But I submit that the fault for this failure to communicate does not lie primarily on our side. This

is not the first time we have tried to point this out, nor are we talking about a particularly confusing point of English grammar.

Belgau quotes another of their authors, Chris Damian, who tries to make the same point by giving a list of all sorts of things we might use to describe ourselves, as if those critical of anyone saying “I am gay” don’t understand the way language works:

We create words for things, even though words have a danger of confining things. People will always be bigger than the words we use to describe them, and words will always have the tendency to give us narrow views. But this danger shouldn’t keep us from using words. I am a man; I am American; I am single; I am 5’10”; I am hungry; I am tired; I am happy; I am sad; I am studious; I am foolish; I am fallen; I am sinful; I am hopeful; I am inquisitive; and I am gay. I’m not just any one of these things, but I am all of these things. You could ask me to not categorize myself in terms of my sexual identity because I am not just my sexuality; but if you’re going to do that, you might as well not ask me to categorize myself at all.

The whole argument crumbles to the ground however after just a moment’s examination.

Imagine a boy of fifteen. He wonders if he might be different than all of the other boys he knows. He often lies awake at night, crying himself to sleep in anguish about it. He fears his parents might reject him if he tells them. Could God still love him, if it’s true? And why would God allow this in his life anyway?

He’s depressed and doesn’t know how he can survive and so he finally steels his resolve to tell his parents.

He waits for a moment when they’re all alone.

“Mom and dad, I don’t know how to tell you this, so I’ll just say it: I think I might be *hungry*.”

You see the point.

Replace “hungry” with any of the other adjectives in Chris Damian’s list of identifiers and only one of them is a label that causes a young person to question the sort of person he is at the very core of his nature. This difference is obvious to everyone. “Gay” is far more than just one adjective among many a man might say about himself. It’s not a question of grammar—it’s a question of identity and one’s self understanding of the sort of person one is. No one has ever agonized about coming out as *inquisitive*. I never suffered sleepless nights in adolescence because of wondering if I was *studious*.

I was recently speaking with a 24 year old man about his attractions to men. He told me he first realized these attractions when he was around twelve or thirteen and it was then that he realized *he must be gay*.

After listening to his story I asked him a question. “Once you realized that you were attracted to other guys, did you ever have the freedom to consider yourself as *not* being gay?”

He reflected for a moment, and said, “No. You know, I really didn’t.”

Wesley Hill, the cofounder of Spiritual Friendship and author of [Washed and Waiting](#) shares a similar moment of recognition in his book:

The homoerotic attractions I had been conscious of since waking up to the strange new universe of sexuality remained so constant and unbroken that I came to realize I was experiencing what was usually called “homosexuality.” I had a homosexual orientation. I was gay.

Contrast Hill’s recognition with a conversation I recently had with a woman who came of age in the 1950s. She recalled a time in adolescence when she had a close attachment to one of her female friends. The strong feelings of affection between them led for a time to sexual experiences between them.

Unlike Wesley Hill, or my 24-year-old friend, this woman had no concept or awareness of the category of a “gay” person, or of “being a lesbian” or a “bisexual.” Her encounter with her friend didn’t cause her to think of herself as a different sort of woman than every other woman who had ever lived because she was fortunate to live in a world that still believed that the only sexual division that existed was the line separating men from women.

Alas, the world has since been remade.

Today, a young person who finds himself attracted to the same sex is automatically a certain sort of person. He has a label, an identifier, a state of being, a category into which he fits—all courtesy of the culture around us. Our world’s language of sexual orientation is a pernicious trap: the boy who even has a passing attraction to another boy now has likely lost the freedom to view himself as he truly is: a boy who is the same sort of boy as all other boys that came before him. Rather, he will likely question his “sexual identity,” or wonder about his “sexual orientation” since the world tells him that if he’s attracted to another boy, he is necessarily—and by *definition*—something other than “straight.” The dividing line of sexuality is no longer male and female. It is “straight” and “something *not* straight” where that “something” is whatever [a mind might imagine](#).

So of course, the thinking doesn’t end with merely gay, straight, bisexual, or lesbian.

Not long ago I spoke to a Catholic high school about the Church’s teaching on homosexuality and why I find it liberating. One of the handwritten comments I received was from a girl who said, “I consider being straight overrated. I view myself as pansexual.”

What answer does the Church have for this poor girl who can no longer delight in being a girl, as God created her? Is her salvation found in the thinking of “gay celibate Christians”: accept your sense of your own sexuality, and embrace some sort of mysterious good gifts it brings you that are unavailable to “straight” people—but just be sure to realize that it’s the “having sex” that is the problem? If as a Church, we accept the notion of “gay celibate Christians,” where does it end? Will we someday speak of “pansexual celibate Christians?”

This is not merely a question of abstract philosophical musings. I recently heard from a Catholic mother who was devastated because her daughter came out at age eighteen as a “celibate lesbian.” She did so because of those who call themselves “gay celibate Christians.” Her primary inspiration came from the writings of Eve Tushnet and the blog [A Queer Calling](#), written by two women who refer to themselves as a “Celibate, LGBT, Christian couple.” They consciously have chosen not to refer to themselves as a “chaste lesbian couple” because only one of them views herself as a lesbian. The other member of the couple hasn’t decided yet what her sexual identity *is*. She seems to believe that [“Choosing A Letter Is Complicated.”](#)

Such is the world as it is today: one can adorn oneself with whatever sexual identity one would like; Choose another tomorrow if this one today doesn’t *feel* quite right.

This is *madness*.

That sort of thinking cannot be the model for our children. A woman who believes she has the freedom to choose a sexual identity does not know who she is. We can just as easily choose our sexual identity as we can deny the existence of gravity. We may call ourselves something other than what we are, and find others who will go along with our self-deception, but they are the flatterers who will not tell the Emperor the truth—that the New Clothes he is wearing were manufactured by weavers in the employ of the Father of Lies. It should come as no surprise that Pope Francis has called [gender ideology demonic](#).

Where, then, is truth and freedom to be found?

In [Veritatis Splendor](#), St. Pope John Paul II tells us that the answer is found in our human nature:

It must certainly be admitted that man always exists in a particular culture, but it must also be admitted that man is not exhaustively defined by that same culture. Moreover, the very progress of cultures demonstrates that there is something in man that transcends those cultures. This “something” is precisely human nature: this nature is itself the measure of culture and the condition ensuring that man does not become the prisoner of any of his cultures, but asserts his personal dignity by living in accordance with the profound truth of his being.

This, then is the crux of the problem: Those who call themselves “gay celibate Christians” are not living in accordance with the profound truth of their being. They are receiving a hearing in the Church because they are focused on “good behavior,” yet they are trying to proclaim a message of liberation without realizing they are living behind the walls of a prison, still in need of freedom themselves. They are trapped in our cultural confusion concerning sexuality and they fail to see the world and themselves as they truly are: as sexual beings, we are solely, and completely, male and female, ordered towards our sexual opposite, and have been such since the beginning of Creation. Sadly, in their own confusion, they are leading young people down a path of confusion as well.

The model for the Church isn’t “gay celibacy.” The model it needs to follow comes from the experience of people who finally know who they truly are. People like [David Prosen](#).

In his essay [“I am not gay . . . I am David”](#) he writes, “By defining myself as a ‘gay’ male, I had taken on a false identity. Any label such as ‘lesbian,’ ‘bisexual,’ or even ‘homosexual’ insinuates a type of person equivalent to male or female. This is simply not true. One is not a same-sex attraction, but instead experiences this attraction.”

In the book [Out Of A Far Country](#), Christopher Yuan writes about his dramatic conversion from a sexually active life of homosexuality. He writes, “I really believed that God had created me this way—gay. I had told myself over and over, *I am gay. I was born this way. This is who I am. I never chose to have these feelings.*” After searching the Bible, he came to the conclusion that “my identity was not ‘gay’ or ‘homosexual,’ or even ‘heterosexual,’ for that matter. But my identity as a child of the living God must be in Jesus Christ alone.”

A man named [Kevin writes about](#) his own wrestling with the ideology of LGBT identities. He says, “When I hear many people use such terms today, I know deep down that I have immense worth as a child of God, which gives me freedom from using those terms. I think that freedom applies to everyone. Even someone I know who considers himself an LGBT activist, recently admitted that he admired me for holding this position, which I explained as just one of the many amazing truths taught by the Church. He had said that the teaching itself was quite ‘progressive,’ the more he thought about it.”

That is what true freedom looks like. And notice—truth that comes from God always rings right through any fog of confusion. We are made for the truth: his LGBT activist friend saw this view of man’s identity as quite *progressive*.

This then is the only way forward: proclaiming the profound truth of man’s nature created by God as part of the good news of the Gospel. The notions of “gay celibacy” or of “chaste LGBT couples” are no answer to the pastoral questions facing the Church. At best this thinking can only be seen as a halfway house to freedom, a stopping point for people who are almost free, but not yet. It is good that these writers have embraced and promote sexual continence, but their notion of “gay celibacy” is far too meager a vision of what human freedom and flourishing is all about. That begins with understanding who we *are*: that every human being is either male or female, a beloved daughter or son of the Most High, both made gloriously in the image and likeness of God. Those trapped in the morass of the ever-expanding litany of sexual identities will only ever be fully free when they accept the truth of who they really are.

I am grateful that I have learned this. I know who I truly am by the grace of God and the pastoral ministry of the Church. The Church has taught me who I truly am, and thus, I choose to follow the wisdom the Church sets before me. Every day I assert my personal dignity by living in accordance with the profound truth of my being.

I am not gay. I am a man.

Editor’s note: The image above is a detail from “Vitruvian Universal Man” drawn by Leonardo DaVinci.

Tagged as [gender identity](#), [homosexuality](#), [Ron Belgau](#), [The New Homophiles](#)



By [Daniel Mattson](#)

Daniel Mattson lives in the midwest, where he has a career in the arts. He is featured in the Courage Apostolate's documentary [Desire of the Everlasting Hills](#) and is often invited to share his testimony to clergy, schools and parishes. He blogs at [LettersToChristopher.wordpress.com](#). Other writings may be found at [Joyful Pilgrims](#).