



Courage & EnCourage
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ENCOURAGE SUPPORT GROUP MEETING

Roman Catholic Diocese of Lansing Chapter

When: **Sunday January 15, 2012 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 entrance marked with a sign for Holy Spirit Cemetery and Holy Spirit Rectory and School. Turn left. We meet in portable classroom number four. Look for Encourage Meeting signs.

May you have a Happy, Blessed and Wonderful New Year!

The holidays can be a stressful time for many families in dealing with a loved one with same-sex attraction. Sometimes persons with ssa seem compelled to create drama. The holiday becomes the stage from which he or she “comes out” and/or demands from the family acceptance or else threatens to sever the relationship.

In light of this, we decided to share with you in a presentation given by Dr. Phil Sutton. We have had the privilege of knowing Dr. Phil (the original) for many years, and have always been blessed by his wisdom and his dedication to our Lord Jesus Christ. This month we decided to share that blessing with all of you. In this portion of a much larger presentation, Dr. Phil shares with us valuable insights as to what families can do in response to a loved one’s same-sex attraction.

Remember please 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**

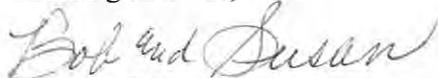
Reparation published by CMJ Marian Publishers. If you would like a copy of the booklet, we have a small supply in our office or you can order one by calling the publisher at 1-888-636-6799. Another beautiful prayer is the ***Chaplet of the Precious Blood*** that was enclosed in a previous letter. We would be happy to provide you with a copy. “That the necessity of reparation is especially urgent today 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 December 18th meeting, our next regular meeting is February 19, 2012.

For more information regarding our meetings, or to talk about the issue of same-sex attraction in your lives, call our Diocesan office at 517-342-2596 or email us at caverart@comcast.net. Your donation to help defray the cost of sending this letter and enclosure is always welcome and can be sent to the Diocese of Lansing.

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

Tusting in Jesus,



Bob and Susan Caver

“God grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the Courage to change the things I can, and the Wisdom to know the difference.”

What's a Parent, Family Member, or Pastor to Do?
Some Suggestions for Responding Wisely to Another's Unacceptable Behavior

We All Need Our "P's" to Travel the 7 "C's"!

Philip M. Sutton, Ph.D., LMFT, LCSW, LP

This portion of our talk covers what we as parents, other family members, friends and/or pastoral caregivers *can* do, *cannot* do, *may* do, and *ought not* do to respond in love to the knowledge that a loved one, or a person to whom we are ministering, desires or is engaging in behavior which we believe is unacceptable and which may be harmful to him or her, and others. (It also may help us to consider how to love (more) wisely someone afflicted with a chronic or terminal disease or other unwanted suffering.)

I. The Seven "C's" (please don't count too carefully!):

- We do not **Cause** *our loved one*'s unacceptable behavior. Things that we have or have not done may have **Contributed** to *our loved one*'s developing this desire for or habit of unacceptable behavior. Be wary of excessive or "false" guilt!
- We cannot **Cure, Control** or **Change** *our loved one*'s unacceptable behavior. Be wary of a false sense of (over-) responsibility!
- We may not **Condone**, excuse or enable behavior that is harmful to *our loved one*, ourselves, or others. "Misguided mercy" is not loving!
- We can **Communicate** our **Concern**(s) and feelings about- and when wise, lovingly **Confront**- *our loved one*'s – and if relevant, our own- behavior.
- We can show **Compassion** to our loved one and ourselves (especially over past hurts, weaknesses, and things they or we did or didn't do; and **Cry**, i.e. grieve or mourn, our sadness, anger, and fear over their- and our-actual or anticipated suffering).
- We can **Confess** what we did or did not do that may have harmed or been uncomfortable to our loved one, to God, *our loved one*, and supportive family, friends, etc. When necessary, our **Contrition**, wisely expressed, may lead to the giving and/or receiving of forgiveness, which may serve as the basis of re-**Conciliation**, if it is possible and wise to (re-)**Construct mutual trust**.
- We can **Care** wisely for *our loved one* and *ourselves* in a **Committed** way.

II. The "P's" we need to move from Pain to Peace (inspired by Bob and Susan Cavera's *Encourage* meeting handout):

- **Pray:** Both by ourselves and with others, e.g., supportive family members and fellow prayer warriors. Seek to deepen your relationship with Our Lord Jesus Christ. Daily pray for, love and surrender your loved one to the Lord. "Let go and let God" take care of him or her. As we Pray, remember that Jesus promises that the Father will *always* answer a prayer for the gift of the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13), and that receiving and growing in the "gifts" (Isaiah 11: 2-3) and "fruits"

(Galatians 5: 22-23) of the Spirit make possible loving our loved one- and ourselves- as Jesus did (John 13: 34).

- **Personalize:** Relate to your loved one and any of his or her companions as the unique person(s) who they are. As Pope Benedict XVI has said: “*Look into the face of the other and see that he (or she) has a soul, a story and a life: He (or she) is a person and God loves him (or her) as he loves me.*”
- **Prepare:** Educate yourselves about the truth about the prevention, causes, consequences and treatment for the *desire for and habit of unacceptable behavior*.
- **Partner:** Avoid trying to “do it alone” or isolating oneself. Connect with family members, friends, etc., with whom you can team up, receiving and giving support in confidentiality. Consider **Participating** in support groups for family and friends.
- **Petition** for the needs of others who experience difficulties similar to your loved ones, for those inclined to treat our loved ones with “misguided mercy,” for pastors and ministries who try to speak and live the truth in love, and for mental health professionals who offer genuinely helpful psychological care for dealing with such desires for or habits of unacceptable behavior.
- **Participate:** Remain or become involved in the life of your loved one, and his/her friend(s) if at all possible.
- **Principled Prohibition:** When on your own “turf,” be willing to set limits and voice reasonable expectations. It is right to expect and insist that people “behave” themselves. Quietly and peacefully, explain the rules of the house, including what behavior(s) will not be tolerated. It also is important for us and our loved one to *consider the witness that our loved one- and we- (will) give to pre-teen and teenage children and grandchildren.*
- **Persevere:** *Remember that every human being was created to be a child of God and, by grace, an heir to eternal life.* The challenge of living and loving our loved ones, our family/friends, and ourselves is lifelong. At times, and perhaps for extended seasons, the journey will last longer, require more effort, and be more uncomfortable than we ever imagined or wished.
- **Proclaim** the Truth:
 - In the words of Francis of Assisi: “*Preach the Gospel at all times. When necessary, use words!*”
 - Discern **prayerfully** *what, when and how* to share with *your loved one* who experiences a desire for and/or habit of unacceptable behavior. Learn to “speak the truth in love.” Sharing “truth” without love is harmful. Sharing “love” without truth deceives, misleads and condones.

- Once you have shared the truth and your concerns, avoid reminding them of what you've already said. It is then time to "Let go and let God." Just "love" them!
- Discern **prayerfully** *what, when and how* to share with, *other* family members. It is not uncommon that other concerned adults will treat the loved one with "misguided mercy," perhaps approving and enabling the loved one's same-sex behavior, and/or challenging our beliefs, actions, stands. "Tough love" may be necessary when responding to past or present unacceptable behavior, and may wisely be exercised differently depending on where (i.e., at who's house) a gathering is held, and who else is present.
- Use **Proper** language to describe the unacceptable behavior.
- Become **Proactive!** Share what you learn as you Prepare, with others who may help, especially family members, friends, and members of ones church congregation, as appropriate.
- Consider informing your loved one who is engaging in unacceptable behavior *before* speaking *about* them in **Public**, and empathically listen to their thoughts, feelings and wishes about what you feel led- or otherwise are inclined- to do.
- If **Prudent**, consider speaking the truth in other settings, such as schools (PTA and school board meetings), through newspapers, and at public hearings (e.g., city/county council meetings.) Decide if/when it is time to share in a support group or public meeting about your concerns about your loved one.
- **Patience** with all, including God, our loved one, all of our "neighbors," and especially *ourselves*, is essential.
- **Pun:** Keep your sense of humor alive. As often as possible, find, encourage, and appreciate the joy- and humor- in your life. Recall and live Philippians 4: 4, 8, 13 - "Rejoice in the Lord always! Think about- and be grateful for- whatever is *true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, gracious, excellent, praiseworthy,*" and to that list add "funny!"

A Prayer for Serenity

God, Wonderful Counselor, and Healer of Body, Soul, Mind, Heart and Relationships. Grant me the humility to accept what I cannot do, or ought not do, the courage to do what I can and ought to do, and the wisdom to know the difference. Help me learn to live one day at a time, take one step at a time, enjoy each moment at a time, and embrace any necessary or unavoidable suffering as my path to Your peace. Help me learn to let go of the good that I once had, or that I want to have, and to accept the good that You are offering me here and now. Help me learn to love, as You do, each person and myself as we are, and as You call us to be. And help me learn to trust that You will make all things work together for my good, if I keep trying to do Your will. May I experience a measure of Your peace and joy in this life, and the fullness of Your love, when I am finally at home, with You, forever. AMEN

(Based on the *Serenity Prayer* by Reinhold Niebuhr, adapted by Philip M. Sutton:
SuttonPhilip@gmail.com)