



Courage & EnCourage
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ENCOURAGE SUPPORT GROUP MEETING

Roman Catholic Diocese of Lansing Chapter

When: Sunday February 19, 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.

We are barely into the new year and already so much has happened. Primarily, the most threatening event is the mandate given by the United States Department of Health and Human Services. Though hard to believe, the U.S. government has declared that the Catholic Church must provide health coverage for sterilization, contraception and all abortion inducing drugs. If this mandate is not defeated, Catholic organizations like hospitals and universities will cease to exist. Additionally, it is not too far reaching to extrapolate that ministries like Courage and Encourage will soon be forced to stop functioning or at least face censorship of the central tenets of the ministry. Truth is under assault.

We have enclosed with this letter a discussion by Pope Benedict with the U.S. Bishops on the "grave threats" facing the Catholic Church in America. We hope you read it and that you will be inspired to write those government officials calling on them to act responsibly.

The second enclosure is a very insightful article written by Gary L. Morella, a Professor of Mathematics at Penn State University. He very succinctly explains issues of same-sex behavior as they relate to natural law.

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

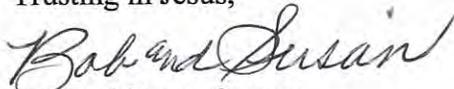
through our sinful condition. Additionally, we pray as intercessors for all our loved ones who will, like the prodigal, someday return home. We generally follow the model given to us by St. Margaret Mary Alacoque in the booklet *Holy Hour of Reparation* published by CMJ Marian Publishers. If you would 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 February 19th meeting, our next regular meeting is March 18, 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.

Trusting in Jesus,


Bob and Susan Cavera

"Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today.
Let us begin."

Blessed Mother Teresa

DAILY NEWS

Pope Benedict Discusses 'Grave Threats' to Religious Liberty With U.S. Bishops

Holy Father says young American Catholics' convictions should encourage all 'to renew our efforts to mobilize the intellectual and moral resources of the entire Catholic community in the service of the evangelization of American culture and the building of the civilization of love.'

BY DAVID KERR (EWTN NEWS/CNA)

| Posted 1/19/12 at 2:06 PM

VATICAN CITY (EWTN News/CNA)—Pope Benedict XVI warned today of a “grave threat” to religious liberty in the United States that requires American Catholics to respond with intelligence and courage.

“It is imperative that the entire Catholic community in the United States comes to realize the grave threats to the Church’s public moral witness presented by a radical secularism which finds increasing expression in the political and cultural spheres,” he said Jan. 19 in an address to a group of American bishops visiting the Vatican.

The Pope said he was particularly concerned with “certain attempts being made to limit that most cherished of American freedoms, the freedom of religion.”

Pope Benedict’s address was delivered to the bishops from the Mid-Atlantic states region, which includes the Archdioceses of Washington and Baltimore. They are in Rome this week on their regular *ad limina* visit to discuss the health of the U.S. Church with the Pope and Vatican officials. The two bishops from the Archdiocese for the Military Services are also participating in the meetings.

Pope Benedict said that over the past few days many of the bishops have expressed concern over attempts in the U.S. to “deny the right of conscientious objection on the part of Catholic individuals and institutions with regard to cooperation in intrinsically evil practices.”

Meanwhile, other bishops raised the “worrying tendency to reduce religious freedom to mere freedom of worship” without guarantees of respect for freedom of conscience.

At present, the Obama administration is considering imposing a contraception and sterilization mandate that would require all insurance companies to provide those services free of charge. The regulation has a religious-exemption clause, but it provides very few exceptions for Church organizations.

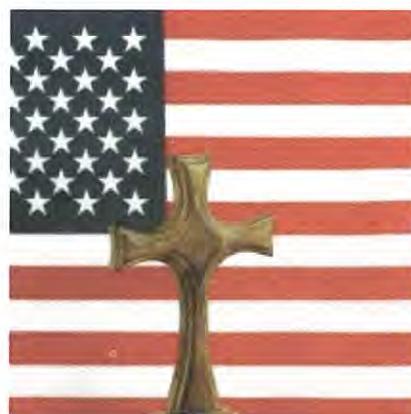
Some states are also pushing Catholic adoption agencies out of business or severely limiting their work because they refuse to compromise the Church’s beliefs on same-sex “marriage.”

Pope Benedict said these issues highlight the need for an “engaged, articulate and well-formed Catholic laity endowed with a strong critical sense vis-à-vis the dominant culture.” The American laity must have the “courage to counter a reductive secularism which would delegitimize the Church’s participation in public debate,” he said.

The preparation of such “committed lay leaders,” he told the bishops, should be the “primary task of the Church in your country.”

He noted that his visit to the United States in 2008 afforded him an opportunity to reflect on America’s historical experience of religious freedom, “specifically the relationship between religion and culture.”

“At the heart of every culture, whether perceived or not,” he said, “is a consensus about the nature of reality and the moral good, and thus about the conditions for human flourishing.”



In the United States this consensus is "enshrined in your nation's founding documents," which are grounded in a worldview shaped by faith and a commitment to ethical principles, he observed.

Today, however, that consensus has been eroded "in the face of powerful new cultural currents" which are "not only directly opposed to core moral teachings of the Judeo-Christian tradition, but increasingly hostile to Christianity."

Despite such hostility, American Catholics are still called to proclaim "a Gospel which not only proposes unchanging moral truths, but proposes them precisely as the key to human happiness and social prospering," Pope Benedict stated.

He also responded to those who attempt to restrict Christians' voice in the public square or argue that their contribution should be ignored because of "majority rule." This is a threat not just to Christianity, but "to humanity itself and to the deepest truth about our being and ultimate vocation, our relationship to God."

Pope Benedict said that the Catholic Church's tradition of respect for both faith and reason means that it can play a critical role in opposing current trends which are based on "extreme individualism" and promote "notions of freedom detached from moral truth."

The Holy Father also touched on what he called the "legitimate" idea of separation of church and state. This does not mean, however, that the Church must be silent on certain issues or that the state can choose to ignore "the voices of committed believers in determining the values which will shape the future of the nation."

Pope Benedict said he appreciated the efforts of the U.S. bishops to maintain contacts with Catholics involved in political life and help them "understand their personal responsibility to offer public witness to their faith."

This is especially true when it comes to key ethical issues of today, which he identified as "the respect for God's gift of life, the protection of human dignity and the promotion of authentic human rights."

He concluded on an optimistic note by observing the rise of "a new generation of Catholics" in the United States whose "experience and convictions will have a decisive role in renewing the Church's presence and witness in American society."

The hope promised by this younger generation should be reason enough "to renew our efforts to mobilize the intellectual and moral resources of the entire Catholic community in the service of the evangelization of American culture and the building of the civilization of love."

THE LIE THAT SEXUAL ORIENTATION IS A CIVIL RIGHT

by Gary L. Morella

There is a lie being told that is so self-evident that there should be no requirement to expose same. However, in a world where wrong is right and vice-versa, moreover, where there is no concept of right and wrong, this lie is being propagated to such an extent that its frequency begins to give the aura of truth. Thus, it will be addressed. Simply put, "behavior is a civil right."

If this is the case, if we cannot discriminate against aberrant behavior, then our system of positive law collapses let alone any moral connotations. Implicit in the definition of behavior is the presumption that behavior can be categorized as good or bad, right or wrong. Without this gauge, anarchy exists with the freedom for the autonomous unencumbered self being the only concern. Nondiscrimination in this sense has no hope of leading to a "nurturing environment" as has been erroneously claimed by a member of the School Board in regard to "sexual orientation" which is another lie telescoped with the first.

Orientation implies a "lasting direction of thought, inclination, or interest." There are any number of references in the scientific literature which totally refute this definition in the context of a homosexual orientation. To say such a description is problematic is being kind given the wide disagreement in the literature with absolutely no definitive proof that anything resembling a "gay gene" exists.

Even if such a gene did exist, that would not change the fact that the behavior involved is still aberrant, against the natural law. There have been similar arguments put forth regarding alcoholism and even serial killing regarding so-called "gene" roots. Surely, no one would make the claim that those behaviors regardless of their cause are not objectionable.

Dr. Jeffrey Satinover In *HOMOSEXUALITY AND THE POLITICS OF TRUTH* reports that after purchasing the American Psychiatric Association membership, the National Gay Task Force (NGTF) sent out a fund-raising appeal to their membership. Activists then covertly lobbied the APA by sending out a letter to the entire thirty thousand membership calling for a change in homosexual classification without acknowledging the central role that the NGTF played in this effort which, per one signer's admission privately, would have been the "kiss of death." A majority of the APA members who responded voted to support the change in classification (by a vote of 6-4, hardly a ringing endorsement) of homosexuality as "not a psychiatric disorder." But in fact only one-third of the membership did respond. (Four years later the journal *MEDICAL ASPECTS OF HUMAN SEXUALITY* reported on a survey it conducted. The survey showed that 69 percent of psychiatrists disagreed with the vote and still considered homosexuality a disorder.) "The result was not a conclusion based upon an approximation of the scientific truth as dictated by reason, but was instead an action demanded by the ideological temper of the times." [Bayer, *HOMOSEXUALITY AND AMERICAN PSYCHIATRY: THE POLITICS OF DIAGNOSIS*].

Two years later the American Psychological Association following the questionable lead of the APA voted to follow suit.

Twenty years later, militant homosexual activists were defeated in an attempt to make it a violation of professional conduct for a psychiatrist to help a homosexual patient become heterosexual **EVEN AT THE PATIENT'S REQUEST**. Had the change been approved, it would have opened the door to malpractice suits and ethics charges against psychiatrists who help homosexuals change - in accord with the patients own wishes, one of the association's own professional standards. The chairman of the APA Gay and Lesbian Task Force made it clear that the activists had in their sights not only psychiatrists who undertook reparative therapy, but eventually psychologists, social workers, and even pastoral counselors and ministers.

There is something very wrong with the attempt to force the acceptability of lifestyles upon a populace whose beliefs won't allow same. This is called coercion and begs the question, how can an "amoral" belief system (religion) be endorsed by the state to the exclusion of all others? This would seem to be a violation of the first amendment's establishment clause which is exactly what is happening at Penn State through the Vice Provost Office of Educational Equity's blatant promotion of the homosexual lifestyle.

The Church speaks strongly to this issue.

"Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, tradition has always declared that "homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered." They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved.

"Although the particular inclination of the homosexual person is not a sin, it is a more or less strong tendency ordered toward an intrinsic moral evil; and thus the inclination itself must be seen as an objective disorder.

"Therefore special concern and pastoral attention should be directed toward those who have this condition, lest they be led to believe that the living out of this orientation in homosexual activity is a morally acceptable option. It is not."

Social scientists agree that if people hear a lie often enough, they will believe it is the truth. The lie in question is that Homosexuals do not enjoy rights like other citizens and therefore need minority status and special civil rights.

As Americans, homosexuals are entitled to equal rights, not special rights. Their behavior-based lifestyle does not qualify for privileged minority status under the U.S. law.

All individuals; good, bad, homosexual, or whatever, are protected under the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights. As a class, the courts have repeatedly denied homosexuals their claim to "insular and discreet" minority status, quotas and affirmative action. Homosexuality is a behavior, not a race. Homosexuality is defined by the act of sodomy (sex with members of the same sex). This behavior is not constitutionally protected. The U.S. Supreme Court in *Bowers v. Hardwick* rules that sodomy is not constitutionally protected behavior.

"Skin color is a benign, non-behavioral characteristic. Sexual orientation is perhaps the most profound of human behavioral characteristics. Comparison of the two is a convenient but invalid argument." - General Colin Powell

"To equate homosexuality with race is to give a death sentence to civil rights. No one is enslaving homosexuals ... or making them sit in the back of the bus. Injustice is being done to family values." - Alveda Celeste King, niece of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Employment Non-Discrimination Act of 1997 was introduced on June 10th in the 105th Congress by Senator Jim Jeffords (R-VT). The purpose of ENDA is to include "sexual orientation" as a protected class under employment discrimination laws. But ENDA is really bad business. It grants homosexuals the benefits of minority class status -- based solely upon their behavior.

Historically, protected class status is determined by the courts and civil rights authorities by three standards. They are:

1. As an entire class, they exhibit obvious, immutable, or distinguishing characteristics, such as race, color, gender, or national origin, that define them as a discrete group.

Essentially, homosexuals, bisexuals and lesbians, by their own admission, share only one attribute on which they base their claim to protected class status: They choose to perform sexual acts with members of the same gender. Behavior alone is not a compelling reason to reward protected, minority, or ethnic class status with all the attendant entitlements.

2. As an entire class, they have suffered a history of discrimination evidenced by lack of ability to obtain economic income, adequate education, or cultural opportunity.

Homosexuals are enormously advantaged relative to the general population. According to the Institute for International Research in New York City, a survey conducted by Simmons Market Research Bureau claims that homosexuals have an average household income of \$63,100.00 versus a general population income of \$36,500.00. By contrast, the average income of a disadvantaged African-American household is somewhere between \$12 - 13,000.

In fact, homosexuals do far better financially than most Americans families. According to Overlooked Opinions, a homosexual polling firm, the annual income of homosexual households is 41 percent higher than the national average. In addition, nearly half of all gay households include someone holding a professional/managerial job. And Businessweek noted that homosexuals are five times more likely than the average American to earn \$100,000 a year.

3. As an entire class, they clearly demonstrate political powerlessness.

During the 1996 elections, the Humans Rights Campaign Fund, a homosexual political advocacy group, raised more than \$1.4 million. This put it in the top 1 percent of political action committees (PAC's) nationwide.

To further illustrate the point that homosexuals as a class are not politically powerless, Vice President Al Gore wrote in a letter to one of CWA's (Concerned Women for America) members:

"This Administration has taken more steps than any previous to bring the gay and lesbian communities to the table. We have more openly gay and lesbian individuals serving in appointed positions, and their impact -- through both their expertise and their efforts to advocate for the concerns of gay and lesbian Americans -- has been significant."

In November of 1997, President Clinton agreed to give the keynote speech at the Human Rights Campaign fundraising dinner. This was more than the rubber chicken fundraising circuit, however. He is the first president to address a homosexual advocacy group. Leaders of the homosexual movement say that by speaking at this dinner, President Clinton recognized the power of the homosexual vote and validated its civil rights issues -- one of which is the ENDA bill. President Clinton's remarks at the dinner included calling for a redefinition "of the immutable ideals that have guided us from the beginning" to include acceptance of gays and lesbians. With this kind of exposure, it is difficult to validate a claim of political powerlessness.

In other words, homosexuals are upwardly mobile, politically powerful citizens who have chosen to involve themselves in sexual behavior that is neither inborn nor unchangeable. Now, they are clamoring for protected class status -- special legal standing and advantages historically applied by governments in the United States to classes of people sharing distinct and immutable characteristics.

Homosexuals are not a model of a disadvantaged minority class. Disregarding the standard gay rights rhetoric, their movement is nothing more than a powerful special interest lobby intent on using their money and political influence to "piggyback" on legitimate gains of the truly disadvantaged. They can only gain these special rights and privileges at the expense of others.

Homosexual "rights" are not about equality under the law, which homosexuals already possess, but about special privileges and legitimation of their lifestyle. Clamoring for this protected status borders on the ridiculous when seen in the light of logic.

ENDA would be seen as an extension of the laws on civil rights; it would bring an extension of the federal power over hiring and firing in private firms; and it would bring into play the same apparatus of legal remedies applied by the federal courts. And so, while the backers of the bill insisted that there would be no quotas for the hiring of homosexuals, Orrin Hatch pointed out that the courts would apply the same remedies they applied in cases of racial discrimination. If a company is found at fault in its pattern of hiring, it will be compelled then by a court to show its good faith by setting out a plan to hire more members of the victimized class. In this case, it would mean the explicit hiring of gays and lesbians by order of the court. As Hatch observed, the claim that this bill would not produce a system of favoritism in hiring for homosexuals would be as empty as the avowals made by Hubert Humphrey that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 could never produce a system of hiring on the basis of race.

Homosexuals who decline to listen to the good advice of those who genuinely care about them ultimately pay the consequences for this "choice". However, when they enter the public square and attempt to get the blessing of society for this "choice" they must recognize that they will be opposed in an uncompromising fashion by those who see a lie for what it is.

A civilized society, while not downgrading individual people, must "discriminate" in favor of health over disease, right over wrong, moral over immoral, discriminate use of sexuality over indiscriminate sexual expression. The death and dying statistics speak to the consequences of nondiscrimination in this context.

Traditional minority status has always been reserved for skin color and ethnicity which CAN'T be changed as opposed to behavior which CAN. Civil rights laws arose from the disadvantaged status of the former group in regard to the ignorance of their inalienable rights defined under the founding documents of this country. Given the inordinate influence of the latter group relative to their size in relation to the total population, i.e., their considerably higher than norm average salaries, influence at all levels of government and in the media, one would be hard pressed to equate them with disenfranchised minorities of color and ethnicity in a historical context.

No one is infringing upon the basic civil rights of heterosexuals with homosexual tendencies. But this group expects everything to be on their terms. No one is denying their presence in society. What is being denied is the propagandizing of their lifestyle as normal. If it was the norm, the human race would have died out long before sexual orientation would have been confused with civil rights. Nations would have been unable to reproduce themselves.