



Courage & EnCourage
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ENCOURAGE SUPPORT GROUP MEETING

Roman Catholic Diocese of Lansing Chapter

When: Sunday March 20, 2011 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.

Lent has begun, and we want to take this opportunity to wish all who receive our letter a blessed and holy Lent. We pray that this Lent will be for all of us a time of sacrifice, introspection and prayer.

Recently, we read a column by Sister Ann Shields, SGL entitled *Pollution of the Spirit*. In her column, Sister recounts a reflection by Pope Benedict in which he points out that "the press brings us a daily serving where evil is recounted, repeated, amplified, accustoming us to the most horrible things, making us more insensitive and in some ways even intoxicates us." The latest among the many assaults has been the recent attack on marriage and family life. Many with political power and a public voice are redefining marriage and making abortion more available internationally as well as nationally. We have enclosed two articles that address these important challenges to marriage, to family and to life. Both articles were reprinted from the *National Catholic Register*, and we thought were particularly relevant to these current issues. Our children and grandchildren are being inundated with toxic ideas and behaviors that rationalize this poison under the veil of tolerance and individual rights. We hope that you find the enclosures informative.

We have begun to include a book and/or media recommendation and, we thought we would continue to do so this month by recommending a book by Mary Jo

Anderson and Robin Bernhoft, M. D. entitled *Male and Female He Made Them* and is published by Catholic Answers. The book is thin and presented in a question/answer format. It really works especially well with young persons. We also want to continue to recommend the DVD *A Profile In Courage*. It is the biography of Fr. Harvey produced in 2009 and is as inspirational as it is informative. Contact the Courage International office in Connecticut at (203) 803-1564 for a copy. The life of this good and holy man will be a blessing to you.

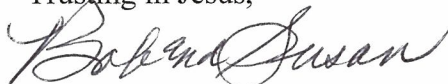
Remember please that we unite to pray each Thursday to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in reparation for our sins and the sins against human sexuality such as same-sex behavior and abortion. Reparation is making amends for the wrongs committed through our sinful condition. Additionally, we pray as intercessors 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. "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 20th meeting, **our next regular meeting is April 17, 2011** which also happens to be Palm Sunday.

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

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

"America, it is said, is suffering from intolerance. It is not. It is suffering from tolerance: tolerance of right and wrong, truth and error, virtue and evil, Christ and chaos."

Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen

DAILY NEWS

DOMA and 2012**A Register editorial**

BY THE EDITORS

| Posted 3/6/11 at 7:00 AM

It's not just DOMA. It's not just "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

The Obama administration is quickly distinguishing itself not only as the most pro-abortion administration ever, but also the most hostile to the traditional family.

President Obama said recently that he believes the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act, which defines marriage for federal purposes as being between one man and one woman, is unconstitutional. He instructed his Justice Department to stop defending the legislation against lawsuits.



In fact, he has spoken in support of repealing the act, but his directive to the Justice Department comes just two months after Obama signed a bill repealing the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy in which homosexuals serving in the U.S. military were barred from revealing their sexual orientation.

But there's more. Obama outlined his plans last spring when he proclaimed June 2010 as "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pride Month": "We must give committed gay couples the same rights and responsibilities afforded to any married couple and repeal the Defense of Marriage Act. We must protect the rights of LGBT families by securing their adoption rights, ending employment discrimination against LGBT Americans, and ensuring federal employees receive equal benefits. We must create safer schools, so all our children may learn in a supportive environment."

And recently, the U.S. State Department issued guidelines that state non-governmental organizations that receive funding from the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration must serve "vulnerable and underserved refugees and other persons of concern," including "lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender individuals."

And Obama can be credited for knocking down another precedent. His new White House social secretary, Jeremy Bernard, is not only the first man to hold that position, but also the first open homosexual to fill the role.

It does not help the cause of the traditional family one bit when the person in charge of the planning, coordination and execution of official social events in the White House, perhaps the highest-profile symbol of America, is a "gay activist."

What are Catholics and other people of good will who believe in the sanctity of marriage to do? Certainly pray, for one thing. Certainly do whatever needs to be done to uphold traditional marriage.

But also, it's not too early to start thinking about making this an issue in the next presidential election. We are entering a critical time period, with 2012 just coming up over the horizon. True, hardly anyone has officially announced his or her intentions to run for president yet. But of those who are thought to be interested, there seems to have been a lackluster response to Obama's recent announcement about DOMA.

This is our chance as Catholics. Catholics have tended in recent years to vote for the winning side. Since 2000, ours has become more and more a vote that is sought after. We helped Republicans take back the House of

Representatives last fall. We helped Obama win the White House in 2008. We helped the Democrats gain the majority in Congress in 2006. And we helped George W. Bush defeat challenger John Kerry in 2004.

Apparently, we're pretty bipartisan, but there are issues that are of enduring concern — and life and family must top that list. Are we willing to settle for an eventual nominee who is wobbly on those issues? Now is the time to identify and work for candidates who are strong supporters of life and family. Let's not miss the opportunity.

In the coming months, the Register will be profiling every declared candidate, looking at their backgrounds and beliefs — and stands they were willing to support and those they weren't perhaps brave enough to stand up for. We hope to provide the background Catholics need to make informed choices. The rest is up to you.

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NEWS

Bishop Cordileone Fights to Save Marriage

BY Sue Ellen Browder

February 27-March 12, 2011 Issue | Posted 2/21/11 at 10:20 AM

Bishop Salvatore Cordileone has been strongly involved in Californians' efforts to preserve the definition of marriage as the union between one man and one woman.

Now, the bishop of Oakland, Calif., has become chairman of the U.S. Bishops' Ad Hoc Committee for the Defense of Marriage, and he will be working to promote traditional marriage in the face of legislative efforts to legalize same-sex "marriage."

You have called marriage and the family "the most vital and defining issue of our day." Why?

For a society to be thriving and strong, it has to rely on citizens who are honest, virtuous, industrious and able to fulfill their promises. And where do people get their education, in the full sense of education, not just in the sense of imparting knowledge? Primarily in their families. So solid marriages and families are essential to a thriving society.

What's the cornerstone of marriage between a woman and a man?

The reality of marriage as the union of a mother and a father is grounded in our very biology. A child comes into the world by the union of a man and a woman. That's a basic biological fact that cannot be denied. There's a mother and a father for every child.

What do Catholics most need to understand to enter reasonably and effectively into the public debate over marriage in our society?

Our people need to understand what's really at stake here, and that's the very concept of marriage itself. Is it a relationship to be defined by adults for their mutual benefit and enjoyment? Or is it a relationship to bring children into the world and to provide them with the best possible context for their well-being and education?

If it's first and foremost about children, then we'll want children to be connected to their mothers and fathers.

The definition of marriage as a relationship that exists "solely for the benefit of adults," you point out, is an extremely recent development. In an interview on EWTN, you cited it as "the greatest error of our times."

It's a completely novel concept. From the beginning of the human race, up until a few years ago, marriage has been understood as the best possible context for raising children, for giving children what they need, so they can be protected and nurtured.

Why exclude people of the same sex as heads of a family?

Because children need, deserve and long for a mother and a father. The optimal situation for children is to be raised by the man and the woman who brought them into the world in a loving, committed, stable relationship.

Many studies show the role of the father figure — just the presence of the father figure in the family — is especially critical. Children need that. When they don't have it, they long for it.

As someone wiser than I put it, when a child is born, the mother is sure to be nearby. There's no guarantee the father will be nearby. Society needs a cultural mechanism to connect fathers to their children, and that mechanism is marriage.

Where does this error of thinking about marriage as "solely for the benefit of adults" come from?

Well, if you trace it back far enough, I'm convinced it comes from the contraceptive mentality.

The Church has always understood that the two ends of marriage are: first, the procreation and education of offspring and, second, the union of the man and the woman for the mutual good of the two spouses. They're inseparable. The contraceptive mentality, however, attempts to separate those two.

When contraception became much more available and prevalent because of marketing, as well as technology in the '60s, we began to see much more sexual promiscuity. With more promiscuity, you have more children born out of wedlock. Because contraception is not perfect — it misfires, so to speak — children are conceived, so now we need abortion as a backup. We also see a rise in divorce.

What's essential to the definition of marriage?

The Church has long understood the three "goods" of marriage as defining what is essential to marriage. Those three "goods" — the language comes from St. Augustine — are procreation, fidelity and permanence.

So how has the contraceptive mentality eaten away at this essential definition?

With the contraceptive mentality, we saw sexual promiscuity, which led to the novel concept of so-called "open" marriages. That strikes down the good of fidelity in marriage. Then we saw couples entering into marriage without any intention of having children, so that strikes down procreation. And in the early '70s, we had states passing laws allowing for no-fault divorce. When we're in a divorce culture rather than a marriage culture, that strikes down the permanence of marriage.

So, this erosion of the meaning of marriage has been going on for a very long time.

And now we're facing same-sex "marriage."

It's the latest and, I would say, most drastic, episode in this long-term erosion of the meaning of marriage.

What's the result of emotionally changing the definition of marriage away from the way it has been reasonably understood since the beginning of the human race?

The result of changing its definition is that marriage becomes drained of all meaning, because it can be defined in any way the people involved want to define it. If we start changing what is essential to marriage in its definition, then there is no end to it. If it doesn't have to be a man and a woman, why does it have to be two people? Can't there be several partners, male and female, in a marriage? Who's to say it should be limited to two? So what is the point of government giving benefits to married people?

When we defend marriage between a man and a woman, our opponents say we're just imposing our religion on everyone else. What's the answer to that?

This is not a matter of religion. This is how every society has understood marriage in all of human history. The truth is: They're imposing their new idea of marriage — an idea no society has ever had before — on everyone else. This is a very serious social experiment that will have dire consequences.

The Church plainly has the clarity of thinking we need to build a new marriage culture. How are we going to work together to get the word out?

The pulpit is one key means, and I would hope to see homily resources for catechesis on marriage. The U.S. bishops' conference is currently working on a video series that can be used for catechesis called "Marriage: Unique for a Reason."

We also need to look into getting this into the curriculum, especially in our high schools and religious-education programs. Stand With Children, a marriage-advocacy program started in California by Catholics for the Common Good, is a great place for lay Catholics to begin.

You said we need a massive educational effort to defend marriage. Where should that begin?

We need to start with young people, teaching them the basic facts of life. The whole way man and woman are designed in nature, all the changes that take place in our bodies — especially the woman's body — are geared to conceiving a new life and then nurturing that life to birth and even after birth.

Beginning with biology will help our young people better respect their own bodies, and it will lay the groundwork we need to teach them all the other reasons behind the Church's teaching: the psychology, sociology, developing the virtue to be able to sustain a lifelong committed relationship, the benefits people derive from that relationship personally and the benefits to society. Then we can move out to the theology underlying marriage, the mystical marriage between Christ and the Church. It's all interconnected. We need to begin with the biology and move out from there.

Sue Ellen Browder writes from Ukiah, California.

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