



Courage & EnCourage  
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## ENCOURAGE SUPPORT GROUP MEETING

Roman Catholic Diocese of Lansing Chapter

**When: Sunday April 18, 2010 from 2:30 to 4:00pm**

**Where: Holy Spirit Parish  
Winans Lake Road  
Hamburg, Michigan**

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 signs.

Susan and I wish you all a very Blessed Easter Season! As you well know, the Easter Season is a celebration lasting fifty days ending at Pentecost, and we pray that God richly bless you and your loved ones during this joyous time.

We have enclosed with this month's letter two articles that we thought appropriate for your consideration. The first is an article by Catholic writer George Weigel that appeared in a recent edition of Newsweek Magazine. He very succinctly addresses the recent accusations of sex abuse by Catholic priests, and debunks the media's view that the practice of celibacy is a major contributor to clergy sex abuse. The popular media has made it sound like the sex abuse scandals have started all over again, but Mr. Weigel places the number of cases in their proper perspective.

Our second enclosure is a repeat. Three years ago we enclosed this article by Dr. Jeffery Saitinover entitled *How Might Homosexuality Develop? Putting The Pieces Together*. We think the content of the article remains extremely relevant, and wanted you to have the opportunity to review it.

The 2010 Annual Courage/Encourage Conference is July 29, 30, 31 and August 1<sup>st</sup> at St. Mary of the Lake University, Mundelein, Illinois. We guarantee that your attendance at the conference will be one of the most spiritually enriching

experiences of your life. The location is isolated from the rest of the busy world, the grounds are beautiful and a picture can be seen on the Courage web site. Daily Mass, Morning Prayer and Eucharistic Adoration are planned around excellent presentations and quiet interaction with Courage and Encourage members. Plan now to attend! Mark your calendars, set the money aside and commit to participate. We can say without reservation that our first conference changed our lives and every conference since has been a significant event in our lives. If nothing else, it is a wonderful spiritual retreat.

Mea Culpa! Last month I wrote that Fr. John Harvey, OSFS had begun the Apostolate of Courage and Encourage in 1980 at the request of the late Cardinal Terrence Cook. I then mentioned that Fr. Harvey, while retiring from the directorship, will remain active while he approaches his, and I said his 91<sup>st</sup> birthday, but in reality Fr. John will be 92 on April 14<sup>th</sup>. Happy Birthday, Father!!

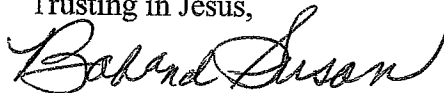
**Remember please** that we unite to pray each Thursday to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in reparation for our sins and the sins against human sexuality such as same-sex attraction and abortion. Reparation is making amends for the wrongs committed through our sinful condition. Additionally, we pray as intercessors 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 April 18th meeting, our next regular meeting is May 16, 2010. We hope to see you there.

For more information regarding our meetings, or to talk about the issue of same-sex attraction in your lives, call us at 517-351-3315 or email us at [caverart@comcast.net](mailto: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

"May your kindness, O Lord, be upon us who have put our hope in you."

Psalm 33:22

## What Went Wrong

By George Weigel  
Newsweek  
April 3, 2010

<http://www.newsweek.com/id/235885>



Don't blame celibacy. To fight the plague of sexual abuse, the church needs to become more Catholic, not less.

Throughout what U.S. Catholics called the "Long Lent" of 2002, when every week seemed to bring revelations of clerical sexual abuse and its mishandling by the church's bishops, some observers suggested that this crisis was the byproduct of some distinctive features of Catholic life: a celibate priesthood, a church governed by male bishops, a demanding sexual ethic. "Modernize" the church by changing all that, they argued, and these horrible problems would abate, even disappear.

Sexual abuse is indeed horrible, but there is no empirical evidence that it is a uniquely, predominantly, or even strikingly Catholic problem. The sexual abuse of the young is a global plague. In the United States, some 40 to 60 percent of such abuse takes place within families—often at the hands of live-in boyfriends or the second (or third, or fourth) husband of a child's mother; those cases have nothing to do with celibacy. The case of a married Wilmington, Dela., pediatrician charged with 471 counts of sexual abuse in February has nothing to do with celibacy. Neither did the 290,000 cases of sexual abuse in American public schools between 1991 and 2000, estimated by Charol Shakeshaft of Virginia Commonwealth University. And given the significant level of abuse problems in Christian denominations with married clergy, it's hard to accept the notion that marriage is somehow a barrier against sexually abusive clergy. (Indeed, the idea of reducing marriage to an abuse-prevention program ought to be repulsive.) Sexual abusers throughout the world are overwhelmingly noncelibates.

### Popes and their problems through the centuries

Too many of the church's bishops failed to grasp the drastic measures required to address the sexual abuse of the young—that's obvious, and has been admitted by the bishops of the United States and two popes. Yet it is hard to see what these failures had to do with gender. Like others, many bishops had a misplaced faith in the power of psychiatrists and psychologists to "fix" sexual predators, thinking these men could be "cured" and quietly returned to ministry without damaging the church's reputation. In his recent scathing letter to the Catholic Church in Ireland, Pope Benedict XVI denounced bishops who were more concerned with protecting the church's image

than with protecting vulnerable young people. It's a critique that was applicable decades ago in the United States—but the same criticism can be made of teachers-union leaders and state legislators today who ignore or try to bury reports of sexual abuse in America's public schools.

So, yes, aspects of clerical culture in the U.S. and elsewhere contributed to the problem, but that same deplorable circle-the-wagons instinct has warped the response to this plague in other sectors of society. The difference is that the Catholic Church in America has taken more rigorous action since 2002 to protect the young people in its care than any other similarly situated institution, to the point where the church is likely America's safest environment for young people.

There may be a grain of truth in the suggestion that women's perspectives on these issues would have helped mitigate the Catholic crisis of clerical sexual abuse and episcopal misgovernance: in the past the male clerical culture of Catholicism seems to have blunted in some Catholic clergy a natural and instinctive revulsion at the sexual abuse of the young—a revulsion, it is suggested, that a woman would immediately feel and act upon. But the sad, further truth is that there are no gender guarantees when it comes to sexual abuse: the physical and sexual abuse of young Irish girls in "Magdalene Asylums" decades ago was committed by religious sisters.

Nevertheless, it should also be noted that the U.S. church's handling of abuse and misgovernance since 2002 has been immensely strengthened by the insight and professional expertise of many women—just as we also ought to recognize that laywomen, single and married, are usually the teachers who make today's Catholic schools safe and successful. Moreover, women are the great majority of the volunteers and paid staff who make Catholic parishes both safe and vital. The notion that women don't have anything to do with how the Catholic Church operates confuses the Catholic Church with the higher altitudes of "the Vatican," and ignores how Catholic life is actually lived in America and Europe.

As for doctrine: what ought to be obvious about sexual abuse in the Catholic Church is that these grave sins and crimes were acts of infidelity, denials of the truths the church teaches. A priest who takes seriously the vows of his ordination is not a sexual abuser or predator. And if a bishop takes seriously his ordination oath to shepherd the Lord's flock, he will always put the safety of the Master's little ones ahead of concerns about public scandal. Catholic Lite is not the answer to what has essentially been a crisis of fidelity.

Since 2002, with strong support from then-cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (and from him still as Benedict XVI), the Catholic Church in America has developed and enforced policies and procedures to ensure the safety of the young that offer an important model for the world church. There were only six credible reports of sexual abuse of the young in the U.S. church last year. And while that is six too many in a church that ought to hold itself to the highest standards, it is nonetheless remarkable in a community of 68 million people.

What is essential throughout the world, however, is that the church become more Catholic, not less. John Paul II's "Theology of the Body" proposed an understanding of faithful and fruitful human love as an icon of God's inner life. That vision is far nobler, far more compelling, and far more humane than the sex-as-contact-sport teaching of the sexual revolution, the principal victims of which seem to be vulnerable young people. Those who are genuinely committed to the protection of the young might ponder whether Catholicism really needs to become Catholic Lite—or whether the Augean stables of present-day culture need a radical cleansing.

Weigel, distinguished senior fellow of Washington's Ethics and Public Policy Center, is the author of *The Courage To Be Catholic: Crisis, Reform, and the Future of The Church* (Basic Books).

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## How Might Homosexuality Develop? Putting the Pieces Together

Excerpted from "The Complex Interaction of Genes and Environment: A Model for Homosexuality" by *Jeffrey Satinover, M. D.*

It may be difficult to grasp how genes, environment, and other influences interrelate to one another, how a certain factor may "influence" an outcome but not cause it, and how faith enters in. The scenario below is condensed and hypothetical, but is drawn from the lives of actual people, illustrating how many different factors influence behavior.

Note that the following is just one of the many developmental pathways that can lead to homosexuality, but a common one. In reality, every person's "road" to sexual expression is individual, however many common lengths it may share with those of others.

(1) Our scenario starts with birth. The boy (for example) who one day may go on to struggle with homosexuality is born with certain features that are somewhat more common among homosexuals than in the population at large. Some of these traits might be inherited (genetic), while others might have been caused by the "intrauterine environment" (hormones). What this means is that a youngster *without these traits* will be somewhat less likely to become homosexual later than someone with them.

What are these traits? If we could identify them precisely, many of them would turn out to be gifts rather than "problems," for example a "sensitive" disposition, a strong creative drive, a keen aesthetic sense. Some of these, such as greater sensitivity, could be related to - or even the same as - physiological traits that also cause trouble, such as a greater-than-average anxiety response to any given stimulus.

No one knows with certainty just what these heritable characteristics are; at present we only have hints. Were we free to study homosexuality properly (uninfluenced by political agendas) we would certainly soon clarify these factors - just as we are doing in less contentious areas. In any case, there is absolutely no evidence whatsoever that the behavior "homosexuality" is itself directly inherited.

(2) From a very early age potentially heritable characteristics mark the boy as "different." He finds himself somewhat shy and uncomfortable with the typical "rough and tumble" of his peers. Perhaps he is more interested in art or in reading - simply because he's smart. But when he later thinks about his early life, he will find it difficult to separate out what in these early behavioral differences came from an inherited temperament and what from the next factor, namely:

(3) That for whatever reason, he recalls a painful "mismatch" between what he needed and longed for and what his father offered him. Perhaps most people would agree that his father was distinctly distant and ineffective; maybe it was just that his own needs were unique enough that his father, a decent man, could never quite find the right way to relate to him. Or perhaps his father really disliked and rejected his son's sensitivity. In any event, the absence of a happy, warm, and intimate closeness with his father led to the boy's pulling away in disappointment, "defensively detaching" in order to protect himself.

But sadly, this pulling away from his father, and from the "masculine" role model he needed, also left him even less able to relate to his male peers. We may contrast this to the boy whose loving father dies, for instance, but who is less vulnerable to later homosexuality. This is because the commonplace dynamic in the pre-homosexual boy is not merely the absence of a father - literally or psychologically - but the psychological defense of the boy against his repeatedly disappointing

father. In fact, a youngster who does not form this defense (perhaps because of early-enough therapy, or because there is another important male figure in his life, or due to temperament) is much less likely to become homosexual.

Complementary dynamics involving the boy's mother are also likely to have played an important role. Because people tend to marry partners with "interlocking neuroses," the boy probably found himself in a problematic relationship with both parents.

For all these reasons, when as an adult he looked back on his childhood, the now-homosexual man recalls, "From the beginning I was always different. I never got along well with the boys my age and felt more comfortable around girls." This accurate memory makes his later homosexuality feel convincingly to him as though it was "preprogrammed" from the start.

(4) Although he has "defensively detached" from his father, the young boy still carries silently within him a terrible longing for the warmth, love, and encircling arms of the father he never did nor could have. Early on, he develops intense, nonsexual attachments to older boys he admires - but at a distance, repeating with them the same experience of longing and unavailability. When puberty sets in, sexual urges - which can attach themselves to any object, especially in males - rise to the surface and combine with his already intense need for masculine intimacy and warmth. He begins to develop homosexual crushes. Later he recalls, "My first sexual longings were directed not at girls but at boys. I was never interested in girls."

Psychotherapeutic intervention at this point and earlier can be successful in preventing the development of later homosexuality. Such intervention is aimed in part at helping the boy change his developing effeminate patterns (which derive from a "refusal" to identify with the rejected father), but more critically, it is aimed at teaching his father - if only he will learn - how to become appropriately involved with and related to his son.

(5) As he matures (especially in our culture where early, extramarital sexual experiences are sanctioned and even encouraged), the youngster, now a teen, begins to experiment with homosexual activity. Or alternatively his needs for same-sex closeness may already have been taken advantage of by an older boy or man, who preyed upon him sexually when he was still a child. (Recall the studies that demonstrate the high incidence of sexual abuse in the childhood histories of homosexual men.) Or oppositely, he may avoid such activities out of fear and shame in spite of his attraction to them. In any event, his now-sexualized longings cannot merely be denied, however much he may struggle against them. It would be cruel for us at this point to imply that these longings are a simple matter of "choice."

Indeed, he remembers having spent agonizing months and years trying to deny their existence altogether or pushing them away, to no avail. One can easily imagine how justifiably angry he will later be when someone casually and thoughtlessly accuses him of "choosing" to be homosexual. When he seeks help, he hears one of two messages, and both terrify him; either, "Homosexuals are bad people and you are a bad person for choosing to be homosexual. There is no place for you here and God is going to see to it that you suffer for being so bad;" or "Homosexuality is inborn and unchangeable. You were born that way. Forget about your fairytale picture of getting married and having children and living in a little house with a white picket fence. God made you who you are and he/she destined you for the gay life. Learn to enjoy it."

(6) At some point, he gives in to his deep longings for love and begins to have voluntary homosexual experiences. He finds - possibly to his horror - that these old, deep, painful longings are at least temporarily, and for the first time ever, assuaged.

Although he may also therefore feel intense conflict, he cannot help admit that the relief is immense. This temporary feeling of comfort is so profound - going well beyond the simple sexual

pleasure that anyone feels in a less fraught situation - that the experience is powerfully reinforced. However much he may struggle, he finds himself powerfully driven to repeat the experience. And the more he does, the more it is reinforced and the more likely it is he will repeat it yet again, though often with a sense of diminishing returns.

(7) He also discovers that, as for anyone, sexual orgasm is a powerful reliever of distress of all sorts. By engaging in homosexual activities he has already crossed one of the most critical and strongly enforced boundaries of sexual taboo. It is now easy for him to cross other taboo boundaries as well, especially the significantly less severe taboo pertaining to promiscuity. Soon homosexual activity becomes the central organizing factor in his life as he slowly acquires the habit of turning to it regularly - not just because of his original need for fatherly warmth of love, but to relieve anxiety of any sort.

(8) In time, his life becomes even more distressing than for most. Some of this is in fact, as activists claim, because all-too-often he experiences from others a cold lack of sympathy or even open hostility. The only people who seem really to accept him are other gays, and so he forms an even stronger bond with them as a "community." But it is not true, as activists claim, that these are the only or even the major stresses. Much distress is caused simply by his way of life - for example, the medical consequences, AIDS being just one of many (if also the worst). He also lives with the guilt and shame that he inevitably feels over his compulsive, promiscuous behavior; and too over the knowledge that he cannot relate effectively to the opposite sex and is less likely to have a family (a psychological loss for which political campaigns for homosexual marriage, adoption, and inheritance rights can never adequately compensate).

However much activists try to normalize for him these patterns of behavior and the losses they cause, and however expedient it may be for political purposes to hide them from the public-at-large, unless he shuts down huge areas of his emotional life he simply cannot honestly look at himself in this situation and feel content.

And no one - not even a genuine, dyed-in-the-wool, sexually insecure "homophobe" - is nearly so hard on him as he is on himself. Furthermore, the self-condemning messages that he struggles with on a daily basis are in fact only reinforced by the bitter self-derogating wit of the very gay culture he has embraced. The activists around him keep saying that it is all caused by the "internalized homophobia" of the surrounding culture, but he knows that it is not.

The stresses of "being gay" lead to more, not less, homosexual behavior. This principle, perhaps surprising to the layman (at least to the layman who has not himself gotten caught up in some pattern, of whatever type) is typical of the compulsive or addictive cycle of self-destructive behavior; wracking guilt, shame, and self-condemnation only causes it to increase. It is not surprising that people therefore turn to denial to rid themselves of these feelings, and he does too. He tells himself, "It is not a problem, therefore there is no reason for me to feel so bad about it."

(9) After wrestling with such guilt and shame for so many years, the boy, now an adult, comes to believe, quite understandably - and because of his denial, needs to believe - "I can't change anyway because the condition is unchangeable." If even for a moment he considers otherwise, immediately arises the painful query, "Then why haven't I...?" and with it returns all the shame and guilt.

Thus, by the time the boy becomes a man, he has pieced together this point of view: "I was always different, always an outsider. I developed crushes on boys from as long as I can remember and the first time I fell in love it was with a boy, not a girl. I had no real interest in members of the opposite sex. Oh, I tried all right - desperately. But my sexual experiences with girls were nothing special. But the first time I had homosexual sex it just 'felt right.' So it makes

perfect sense to me that homosexuality is genetic. I've tried to change - God knows how long I struggled - and I just can't. That's because it's not changeable. Finally, I stopped struggling and just accepted myself the way I am."

(10) Social attitudes toward homosexuality will play a role in making it more or less likely that the man will adopt an "inborn and unchangeable" perspective, and at what point in his development. It is obvious that a widely shared and propagated worldview that normalizes homosexuality will increase the likelihood of his adopting such beliefs, and at an earlier age. But it is perhaps less obvious - it follows from what we have discussed above - that ridicule, rejection, and harshly punitive condemnation of him as a person will be just as likely (if not more likely) to drive him into the same position.

(11) If he maintains his desire for a traditional family life, the man may continue to struggle against his "second nature." Depending on whom he meets, he may remain trapped between straight condemnation and gay activism, both in secular institutions and in religious ones. The most important message he needs to hear is that "healing is possible."

(12) If he enters the path to healing, he will find that the road is long and difficult - but extraordinarily fulfilling. The course to full restoration of heterosexuality typically lasts longer than the average American marriage - which should be understood as an index of how broken all relationships are today.

From the secular therapies he will come to understand what the true nature of his longings are, that they are not really about sex, and that he is not defined by his sexual appetites. In such a setting, he will very possibly learn how to turn aright to other men to gain from them a genuine, nonsexualized masculine comradeship and intimacy; and how to relate aright to woman, as friend, lover, life's companion, and, God willing, mother of his children.

Of course the old wounds will not simply disappear, and later in times of great distress the old paths of escape will beckon. But the claim that this means he is therefore "really" a homosexual and unchanged is a lie. For as he lives a new life of ever-growing honesty, and cultivates genuine intimacy with the woman of his heart, the new patterns will grow ever stronger and the old ones engraved in the synapses of his brain ever weaker.

In time, knowing that they really have little to do with sex, he will even come to respect and put to good use what faint stirrings remain of the old urges. They will be for him a kind of storm-warning, a signal that something is out of order in his house, that some old pattern of longing and rejection and defense is being activated. And he will find that no sooner does he set his house in order that indeed the old urges once again abate. In his relations to others - as friend, husband, professional - he will now have a special gift. What was once a curse will have become a blessing, to himself and to others.

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