



Courage & EnCourage
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ENCOURAGE SUPPORT GROUP MEETING

Roman Catholic Diocese of Lansing Chapter

When: Sunday June 22, 2014 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; located behind the cemetery. [Look for Encourage Meeting signs.](#)

Hopefully, you have noted that our June meeting is one week later than usual. Because Father's Day falls on the third Sunday (Happy Father's Day), **we have moved the June Meeting to June 22nd; the Fourth Sunday.** This necessary change occurs annually in June and occasionally when other important events happen to fall on the third Sunday. Additionally, and we are not trying to confuse you, we will **not be meeting in July.** The Annual Courage Conference this year is July 17, 18, 19 and 20. Our energies in July are devoted to preparing for our participation in the conferences itself. We would urge you to make plans to attend. A conference is like a special retreat. There is prayer, Eucharist, reconciliation, teaching, and fellowship. You will meet and interact with parents, loved ones and most especially faithful Courage members. We have enclosed a copy of Fr. Paul Check's annual conference and fund raising letter. Many of you have seen this, but we decided to offer it again as another little reminder that the donation you were thinking of sending; you will send.

Another recommendation that we wanted to offer to you is the book *Making Gay Okay: How Rationalizing Homosexual Behavior Is Changing Everything* Robert R. Reilly. In the book the author explains how homosexual behavior and the current thrust for 'marriage' flies in the face of thousands of years of philosophical truth and church teaching. He shares how this 'twisting' of truth threatens civilization and will destroy us. The book is available through Ignatius Press and should be on everyone's

reading list. We have also enclosed two other articles that encourage and support the undeniable truth of the complementary, unitive and procreative nature of heterosexual marriage. We hope you find them helpful. Furthermore, we would also ask you to remember, in your search for intercessors, St. Charles Lwanga whose feast day is June 3rd. He is a special patron of Courage/EnCourage.

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 is available upon request. "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 June 22nd meeting, our next regular meeting is August 17th. **Please Note: We are not meeting in July.**

This letter and enclosures come to you through the generosity of our Diocese of Lansing. We are grateful for any donation, large or small, that you could give to help with our costs. If you are no longer interested in receiving our communications, please email or phone us.

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 courage@dioceseoflansing.org

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 the Lord send forth the Spirit and renew the face of the earth!" Amen.
Ps 104:30



By His wounds you have been healed. (1 Peter 2:24)

Dear Friends in Christ,

A Blessed Easter to you! May the Risen Christ fill your hearts with His joy.

The God to whom we were pledged and united in Baptism is not a mere onlooker or spectator of the human condition. Though all-powerful and all-knowing, He does not view the human scene from afar, from a safe distance. His sympathy for us “poor banished children of Eve” draws Him close to us, so that He might share the effects of a fallen world with us. The Paschal Mystery—the salvific life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ—proves to God’s sons and daughters that their Heavenly Father’s compassion for them is never shallow or hollow. On the contrary, that Jesus suffered with and for us conveys hope, purpose and strength as we strive to love and serve our Savior with generous and self-forgetful hearts. His wounds, caused by our infidelity, have become the source of grace, of divine life.

“Love one another, even as I have loved you,” Our Lord instructed His new Church toward the end of His earthly life. (Jn 13:34) *...as I have loved you.* Charity Incarnate has healed the wounds of sin by self-giving. Not only has Christ the New Adam restored our lost identity as God’s beloved children, but He has also shown us by His example how that identity is fulfilled and indeed, how it flourishes: through the gift of self... a foundational principle of the Gospel and therefore, of Courage and EnCourage. Thus, neither will the disciples of the Master be mere onlookers or spectators where there is suffering or discomfort. We seek to be instruments of grace in building up the hearts of others in Christ.

Once again, I am pleased and proud to invite you to our annual national conference, **July 17-20 at Villanova University**, a familiar and welcome venue for us. This gathering of members of the apostolate, of clergy, religious and seminarians, of those who work in lay ecclesial ministry and of others is, in my experience, a unique event in the life of the Church. The conference unites a wide range of people and experience around the person of Jesus Christ, with the strong theme of service and sacrificial love, the path to healing and to peace. I want to express particular gratitude to the members of Courage Philadelphia, who have been a great assistance to the central office in preparing for this conference and who will serve as our hosts.

We are blessed that **Archbishop Charles Chaput** has agreed to offer the opening Mass. I am especially thankful that my own bishop from Bridgeport, **Bishop Frank Caggiano**, will say the Mass on Sunday. You will recognize some of the names of our speakers like **Immaculée Ilibagiza** and **Helen Alvaré**. Saturday evening will be devoted to the first public showing of Courage’s new documentary, which will soon after be available for wide distribution in English and Spanish. You will find familiar workshops and new ones, as well as the opportunity to renew friendships at meals and the social. Please don’t hesitate...book your registration and travel soon and extend the invitation to others.

Progress continues on many projects that I trust will put Courage at ever greater and more fruitful service of the Church, both in the United States and internationally. The five-part catechetical series will be complete this summer, as will our new website. The Courage handbook and bylaws are being revised. We will republish pamphlets by our founding executive director, Fr. John Harvey, O.S.F.S., of happy memory.

Since I wrote to you at the end of last year, Courage has held its three annual regional retreats: at the Sacred Heart Retreat House in Alhambra, CA in Advent (Carmelites of the Most Sacred Heart), at the Villa Maria Guadalupe Retreat House in Stamford, CT in January (Sisters of Life), and at the Casa Maria Retreat House in Birmingham, AL in Lent (Sister Servants of the Eternal Word).

In January, Fr. Paul Scalia, chairman of the board of directors, and I made a trip to Rome to further along Courage's petition for canonical status under the Holy See. We had several good meetings and received sound advice from our allies in Rome about what additional steps will be necessary and helpful to attain this goal. We continue to enjoy excellent support from our episcopal board, chaired by Cardinal Timothy Dolan, for this project and for all the work of the apostolate.

Courage presentations since January: seminarians at the North American College, Rome; permanent deacons in the Diocese of Arlington, VA; seminarians at Mount St. Mary's, Emmitsburg, MD; presbyteral council, Diocese of Nashville; presbyteral council, Diocese of Owensboro, KY; clergy study day, Diocese of Lafayette, IN; clergy study day, Archdiocese of Detroit; pastoral ministers, Archdiocese of Detroit; "Argument of the Month Club," St. Augustine parish, Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis; Notre Dame Seminary, Archdiocese of New Orleans; students and faculty, Providence College, RI.

From the central office, we strive to share the charity and clarity of the Gospel and the teachings of the Church as widely as we can, because only truth leads to fulfillment. My opinion is that while some suffer for the sake of the truth, many others suffer for want of the truth. To that end, **we depend on your prayers and your financial support.** Our office is very small by comparison to the need, but I am very proud of our staff and the work they do. **Would you please write a check today for \$100, or whatever God's providence will allow you to give?**

I hope to see many of you at Villanova. To our group leaders, listserv moderators and my brother priests who serve as chaplains, I send my deep thanks and assurance of prayers at the altar each day.

In Christ,

Handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "(R.) P-N. Check".

Rev. Paul N. Check



The One-Flesh Union

The law written on our hearts can help us to understand the nature of marriage

by Sherif Girgis

The preparatory document for October's Vatican synod on the family asks what vision of the human person lies behind the natural law understanding of marriage. To help us think about this issue, we might first ask what natural law is.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, "The natural law, present in the heart of each man and established by reason, is universal in its precepts and its authority extends to all men" (1956). It is a participation in God's own law, allowing us to know moral truths by reason, even while Church teaching informs our conscience and guides us along the right path.

However, natural law is not just a Christian concept. Plato and Aristotle began to develop a tradition of moral philosophy long before the birth of Jesus. They came so close to Hebrew and Christian moral insights that some early Church Fathers wondered whether Plato had received private revelations. Since then, countless Christian thinkers have drawn from Greek philosophy to develop insights on natural law, even to this day.

It is important to understand that the moral law is not meant to limit us; it guides us in the way of truth and love. Far from being arbitrary, it reflects the truth about the human person and in this way helps build communion among people who share a human nature. To break the moral law is to invite confusion and division.

In response to the synod preparatory document's question about natural law and marriage, let's begin with the human person. We are not spirits in bodily costumes. As persons, we *are* our living bodies, either male or female. For this reason, spousal love — which seeks total union with the beloved — calls for a union of bodies, as well as hearts and minds.

But what makes for bodily union? It isn't emotion or pleasure alone — bonds of friendship can give us these. Rather, it requires bodily cooperation toward a single end. After all, you are personally "one flesh," one body, by the fact that your own physical systems cooperate together for a single end: your life.

A "one-flesh" union is also possible between two adults in

one specific way. In the marital act, a man and woman are coordinated toward a single bodily end: new life. In this way, the life-giving act becomes the love-making act — a seal of their committed union of heart and mind by a true bodily union. In fact, marriage is uniquely deepened by family life precisely because the act that makes marital love is also the kind that makes new life. This all-encompassing union, and its orientation toward bringing new human beings to maturity, requires an all-encompassing commitment that is permanent and exclusive.

So many features of marriage — its commitment to permanence and exclusivity, openness to life and unitive significance — are grounded in our bodies, as male and female. But as polls indicate, many Catholics today — and many more outside the faith — doubt that a person's sexual embodiment as male or female matters much in marriage. They ask: Isn't it enough that two people are in love or emotionally attached? Yet those who ask this question should themselves ask a few more.

Why should a union based on certain feelings be pledged to permanence, as opposed to lasting only as long as the feelings do? Why should marriage be a union of two, if three can share love? Why should the spouses "forsake all others," if a sexually "open" union enhances emotional fulfillment? Why should the bond be sexual at all, if its promise lies in emotional satisfactions?

Answers to these questions may reveal more support for traditional marital norms than polls suggest. In the end, natural law shapes our thinking even when we try to deny it.

Plato and Aristotle knew that to honor marriage was to affirm the beauty and goodness of embodied love and new human life. We also know that honoring the natural law of marriage can lead us, by grace, to supernatural life, where all are made one body, one spirit in Christ. ♦



SHERIF GIRGIS, a law student at Yale and doctoral student in philosophy at Princeton, is coauthor of *What Is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense* (Encounter Books).

God's love letter to us Christ and his Church have given instructions on how we should live; it's up to us to follow them [Teresa Tomeo](#) [OSV Newsweekly](#)

4/30/2014



Many years ago, my husband and I heard a wonderful homily concerning the importance of Catholics and daily Scripture reading. The priest walked up and down the main aisle of our parish with a Bible in his hand. He lifted up the Good Book and said loudly and very clearly: "Think of the word Bible as an acronym; Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth."

He went on to remind us that the Bible is God's love letter to us, and when someone loves us they want what is best for us and want to help show us the way. I never forgot his homily, and it was one of the catalysts for my husband and me to take our Scripture reading seriously.

The words of that wonderful priest who has since passed away came to mind as I came across two beautiful letters concerning core teachings of the Faith: "The Language of Love" by Bishop James Conley of Lincoln, Neb., and "Bought with a Price" by Bishop Paul Loverde of Arlington, Va.

Bishop Conley's letter is a beautiful, gentle-but-direct message informing and instructing the faithful concerning marital love and fidelity with a strong emphasis on Church teaching regarding artificial contraception. Bishop Loverde's document is a follow-up to his previous and very poignant letters on the illness of pornography plaguing the nation and ravaging families.

It's never easy addressing these issues in our over-sexualized culture; a culture that has strongly influenced Catholics and other Christians into accepting what God has held as unacceptable and harmful. Just look at what happened in North Carolina when Sister Jane Dominic of the Nashville Dominicans spoke at a Catholic high school in Charlotte. She had given her talk regarding the Church teaching on human sexuality dozens of times at other Catholic schools or events, but some students took offense at her preaching the truth regarding the fallout from divorce, sexual promiscuity and attempts to redefine marriage.

Despite support from the local diocese, which affirmed her doctrinal accuracy, a firestorm of criticism and controversy ensued with some parents even writing letters to the Vatican to complain. And this is at a Catholic high school, proving that the message of God's love letter regarding his perfect plan for us does not often sit well even among many of those sitting next to us in the pews.

The truth, however, still needs to be spoken. That doesn't mean we go around hitting people over the head with the Bible and the catechism, but if we love someone, we want them to know what is best for them.

Most parents will discipline their children. While little Johnny or Susie might want to ride their bikes without a helmet in the middle of a busy street, a concerned parent is going to say "no." Why? Because they love them and want them to live healthy and productive lives.

And yet when it comes to those below-the-belt issues and our Faith, we often react like little children wanting what we want — now! — with little or no restriction, with no warning or discipline from our Father (God) or mother (the Church). We take the love letters and tear them to shreds or pretend they don't exist.

Certainly some will be like those who verbally attacked the sister speaking in Charlotte. They will throw temper tantrums to try and get their way. But acting as loving shepherds or guardians, Bishop Conley and Bishop Loverde did what they had to do by passing on God's love letter, hoping and praying we will be willing to take another look at those basic instructions before it is our time to leave this earth.

Teresa Tomeo is the host of "Catholic Connection," produced by Ava Maria Radio and heard daily on EWTN Global Catholic Radio and Sirius Channel 130.