



Courage & EnCourage
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ENCOURAGE SUPPORT GROUP MEETING

Roman Catholic Diocese of Lansing Chapter

When: **Sunday July 19, 2015 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 Musch Rd. Turn left or West on Musch Rd. to Holy Spirit Catholic Church. The Courage group meets in the new school that connects to the church in the Conference/Lending Library Room. The The EnCourage group meets in a school classroom. Look for Encourage and Courage Meeting Signs.

If we thought last month's letter that addressed the issues of transgenderism, the Irish vote, and the banning of counseling of persons with SSA was overwhelming, we now have the US Supreme Court's ruling on gay marriage to contend with. We also know that this is not the end, but actually the beginning. The ultimate goal, we believe, is the destruction of all moral standards. Our response is three fold. We must pray. We must pray for our loved ones involved in this struggle, and pray for our priests and deacons involved in ministry. We must pray for the triumph of truth. Secondly, we must support and encourage those in ministry. Many in ministry feel as though they are alone and are fearful that talking about the issue will only divide the parish. Finally, we must educate ourselves as to how best to respond. The topic will be brought up at work or at family gatherings and it is important to know how to speak the truth in love.

We would encourage you to attend one or both of the conferences mentioned below. If not, get the book being published at the "*Welcoming and Accompanying ...*" conference. Another valuable resource for you is the book *Making Gay Okay* by Robert R. Reilly through Ignatius Press. Remember, the devil's favorite tool is discouragement, but in Jesus is the victory.

Please also remember 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-

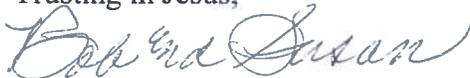
sex behavior and abortion. Reparation is making amends for the wrongs committed through our sinful condition. Additionally, we pray as intercessors for all our loved ones who will, like the prodigal, someday return home. We generally follow the model given to us by St. Margaret Mary Alacoque in the booklet *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. This beautiful chaplet has been modified to address the specific concerns of Courage and EnCourage members: We have chosen to add this powerful prayer to our Holy Hour of Reparation. Please remember, "that the necessity of reparation is especially urgent today and 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 July 19th meeting, our next regular Diocesan EnCourage meeting is Sunday, September 20, 2015 **Please also note:** We will not meet in August. The Courage Conference on July 30,31 and August 1 and 2 and the conference "*Welcoming and Accompanying Our Brothers and Sisters with Same-Sex Attraction*" that meets on August 10, 11 and 12 will consume our attention and energy. We hope to see you at one of them. Registration information is available on the Courage website.(www.couragerc.org)

For more information regarding our meetings, or to talk about the issue of same-sex attraction in your lives or the lives of loved ones, call our Diocesan office at 517-342-2596 or email us at courage@dioceseoflansing.org We might also mention that the Diocese of Lansing supports this ministry even though more than half of our letters go well beyond our borders. Any financial help you can give us is greatly appreciated.

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

"Put on the armor of God so that you may be able to stand firm against the tactics of the devil." (Eph. 6:11)

Daily News

Catholic Leaders Resolve to Hold Firm to Biblical Marriage Teaching Meanwhile, legal scholars weigh the decision's 'catastrophic' impact on the free exercise of religion.

BY JOAN FRAWLEY DESMOND

Posted 6/26/15 at 10:04 PM

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Supreme Court ruled Friday that same-sex “marriage” is a constitutional right, in a long-awaited decision that will have sweeping and unpredictable consequences for U.S. jurisprudence, cultural norms and religious freedom.

Catholic leaders, legal scholars and marriage experts reacted with dismay to the landmark ruling in *Obergefell v. Hodges* and three related cases.

But they also expressed resolve that the decision would not discourage their efforts to preach and teach the truth about marriage and to advance respect for the institution as a union of one man and one woman committed to the care and education of children.

“The Supreme Court’s 5-4 decision on marriage is not a surprise. The surprise will come as ordinary people begin to experience, firsthand and painfully, the impact of today’s action on everything they thought they knew about marriage, family life, our laws and our social institutions,” said Archbishop Charles Chaput of Philadelphia, in a [statement](#) marking the decision.

“The mistakes of the court change nothing about the nature of men and women and the truth of God’s word. The task now for believers is to form our own families even more deeply in the love of God and to rebuild a healthy marriage culture, one marriage at a time, from the debris of today’s decision.”

Archbishop Joseph Kurtz of Louisville, Ky., the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, equated today’s decision with the court’s controversial *Roe v. Wade* ruling that legalized abortion on demand. And he vowed that Church leaders would not abandon the truth about marriage.

“Jesus Christ, with great love, taught unambiguously that, from the beginning, marriage is the lifelong union of one man and one woman,” said Archbishop Kurtz, in a [statement](#).

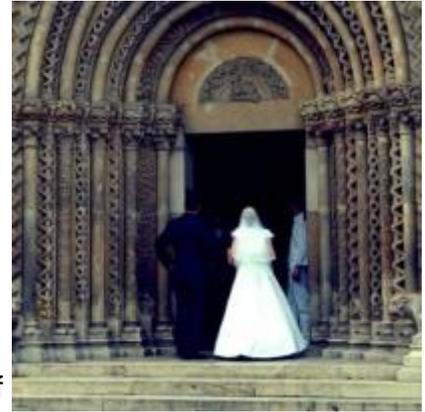
“As Catholic bishops, we follow Our Lord and will continue to teach and to act according to this truth.”

He said it was “profoundly immoral and unjust for the government to declare that two people of the same sex can constitute a marriage.”

Statements issued by Catholic leaders underscored a deepening anxiety that changes in the civil code will sow confusion about the meaning and purpose of marriage, the gift of masculinity and femininity and the rights of natural parents and their children.

Thus, the Archdiocese of Washington drew a bright line between religious/moral truths and civil law.

“Men and women are not interchangeable. Marriage is not ours to define. History, nature and revelation all profess these truths,” read the archdiocese’s [statement](#), which emphasized that the “court deals with civil law, not revealed truth or religious faith.”



'Catastrophic' Impact on Free Exercise

Last fall, as the high court signaled that a majority of justices were prepared to find a constitutional right to marriage for same-sex couples, the U.S. bishops and religious-freedom scholars expressed alarm that an imminent decision by the court might ignore free-exercise conflicts posed by "marriage equality." Months later, during the oral arguments in April, the U.S. Solicitor General Donald Verrilli Jr. [acknowledged](#) that religious schools, which oppose same-sex "marriage," might face an "issue" with their tax-exempt status, among other problems.

Today, in an interview with the Register, Archbishop William Lori, the U.S. bishops' point man on religious freedom, said it was too soon to judge how the ruling would likely affect free-exercise rights, though he took note of the solicitor general's remarks in the oral arguments and said Catholics must stay "vigilant."

"My sense is that the majority opinion written by Justice [Anthony] Kennedy recognizes the right of religious institutions and people to teach and advocate — that is free speech," said Archbishop Lori.

"But it does not recognize the right to free exercise — that is to say, to advocate in the public square, to try to affect public policy, to organize our ministries according to our teaching, or for business people to run their businesses according to that teaching.

"I did not see anything approaching [support for] free exercise in the majority opinion, but I did see it in Chief Justice [John] Roberts' [dissent, joined by Justices Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas]."

While Archbishop Lori said there was reason to worry that today's ruling could result in Catholic educational institutions losing their tax-exempt status, he was cautious about addressing a second issue that arose during the oral arguments — whether Catholic priests and deacons would be able to solemnize marriages in the eyes of the law.

"With regard to the civil effect of religious marriages, that is a matter not yet decided by anyone. It is too early," he said.

Gerard Bradley, a constitutional scholar at the University of Notre Dame Law School, reached a similar conclusion in his initial analysis of the court's opinions.

Bradley described Kennedy's murky treatment of free-exercise rights as "catastrophic."

Explained Bradley: "Kennedy speaks explicitly of those 'who adhere to religious doctrines' and thus oppose same-sex marriage 'by divine precepts.' He says that the First Amendment 'ensures' 'proper protection' for these folks and even for 'religious organizations.'"

However, Bradley pointed out that, throughout this portion of his opinion, one can hear Kennedy predicate this protection of advocacy, teaching, engaging with those who disagree and believers' "own deep aspirations to continue the family structure they have long revered." In contrast, Bradley applauded Roberts' critique of the majority's failure to properly engage free-exercise rights.

"The majority graciously suggests that religious believers may continue to 'advocate' and 'teach' their views of marriage," Roberts noted in his dissenting opinion. "The First Amendment guarantees, however, the freedom to 'exercise' religion. Ominously, that is not a word the majority uses."

While Bradley framed the "decision as an unprecedented threat to religious liberty," he warned that it was "not nearly the end of the social revolution instigated by the court."

"For standing in front of us now are an array of new challenges to faith, to fidelity in word and deed and to the possibility of living lives of moral integrity," he told the Register.

Judicial Activism Mirrors *Roe v. Wade*

Since last October, when the high court declined to hear appeals to rulings that overturned bans on same-sex “marriage” in five states, legal experts and marriage activists understood that the high court was poised to issue a definitive judgment. And a number of appellate courts quickly moved to embrace the new definition of marriage, boosting the number of states that legalized the practice from 19 to 24, with the number of states now at 36.

Yet, during oral argument for the four marriage cases this April, Justice Stephen Breyer, who ruled with the majority on Friday, acknowledged persistent questions about whether nine justices should decide this question, rather than the people’s elected representatives in Congress or at the state level.

In his opinion, the chief justice clearly signaled that the court had overstepped its role.

“If you are among the many Americans — of whatever sexual orientation — who favor expanding same-sex marriage, by all means celebrate today’s decision,” Chief Justice Roberts stated. “But do not celebrate the Constitution. It had nothing to do with it.”

Opponents of same-sex “marriage” applauded this expression of judicial restraint but were angered that a majority of the justices imposed their beliefs regarding marriage on the nation.

“The left has been preparing the culture for this ruling for years, evangelizing its own gospel of sexual freedom from the constraints of the Judeo-Christian understanding of sexuality and marriage,” Benjamin Wiker, an associate professor of political science at Franciscan University, told the Register.

“With the Supreme Court’s ruling, gay marriage has become the new abortion, yet another moral issue that remains unresolvable as long as Christians put up moral, cultural and legal resistance.”

Indeed, in recent years, support for “marriage equality” has emerged as a key Democratic policy position, just as legal abortion has been for decades. But commentators also pointed to the influence of generational cultural trends that transcend party boundaries and mark a clear break with Christian sexual ethics.

“The majority opinion defines freedom as anyone’s right to define and express his identity. That is the ‘religion of me,’” R.R. “Rusty” Reno, the editor of *First Things*, told the Register.

“This decision reflects the sad fact that this ‘religion of me’ has become our national religion.” On National Review’s website, David French [took note](#) of the striking emotional language that pervaded Kennedy’s opinion.

“This isn’t constitutional law, it’s theology — a secular theology of self-actualization — crafted in such a way that its adherents will no doubt ask, ‘What decent person can disagree?’” wrote French.

Legal experts who had argued against such a decision expressed frustration that the court embraced the confused values of this era and failed to exercise judicial restraint.

“The freedom to democratically address the most pressing social issues of the day is the heart of liberty,” said Jim Campbell, senior legal counsel for the Alliance Defending Freedom, in a statement.

“The court took that freedom from the people and overrode the considered judgment of tens of millions of Americans who recently reaffirmed marriage as the union of a man and a woman.”

[Ryan Anderson](#), a fellow at the Heritage Foundation and a leading voice on marriage, who has debated the issue at universities and on television, said the fight to defend marriage as a union of one man and one woman must continue in every forum available.

“We must work to restore the constitutional authority of citizens and their elected officials to make marriage policy that reflects the truth about marriage,” said Anderson.

“We the people must explain what marriage is, why marriage matters and why redefining marriage is bad for society,” said the scholar in a [statement](#) released today.

Like the U.S. bishops, Anderson has warned that the inclusion of same-sex couples in legal marriage would result in the redefinition of a central social institution, already weakened by no-fault divorce, fatherless homes and declining marriage rates among younger Americans. In his majority opinion, Justice Kennedy rejected this argument.

“The limitation of marriage to opposite-sex couples may long have seemed natural and just, but its inconsistency with the central meaning of the fundamental right to marry is now manifest,” stated Kennedy.

Anderson countered: “Manifest to five unelected judges that is. Not to the majority of American citizens, who voted to define marriage correctly.”

Weighing *Obergefell*'s Impact

Meanwhile, the Ruth Institute, which addresses the impact of the sexual revolution on women and families, [warned](#) that the landmark ruling shifted the issue of same-sex “marriage” from a matter of public debate to a constitutional mandate, with serious consequences for the rights of natural parents and their children.

“The *Obergefell* decision tacitly declares that invented rights of adults take precedence over natural rights of children,” said Ruth Institute founder and president Jennifer Roback Morse.

“The policy of the United States government will henceforth be to take sides with ‘intended parents’ in disputes with natural parents and against the legitimate interests of children to their own genetic and cultural heritage.”

“The Supreme Court has surreptitiously redefined parenthood as a side effect of redefining marriage,” Morse charged.

In the months and years ahead, the full impact of today’s ruling will be understood, not only by legal and marriage experts and religious leaders, but by ordinary Americans.

For now, Catholic bishops, who have already been on the front lines of the marriage wars and the battle for religious freedom, expressed a calm resolve about staying the course.

During a press call today, Archbishop Timothy Broglio of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, acknowledged that Catholics could face penalties for their belief in marriage as a union of one man and one woman, but he reminded his audience that American Catholics had experienced marginalization in previous centuries, and they persevered.

In his interview with the Register, Archbishop Lori recalled the words of Jesus Christ: “Be not afraid.”

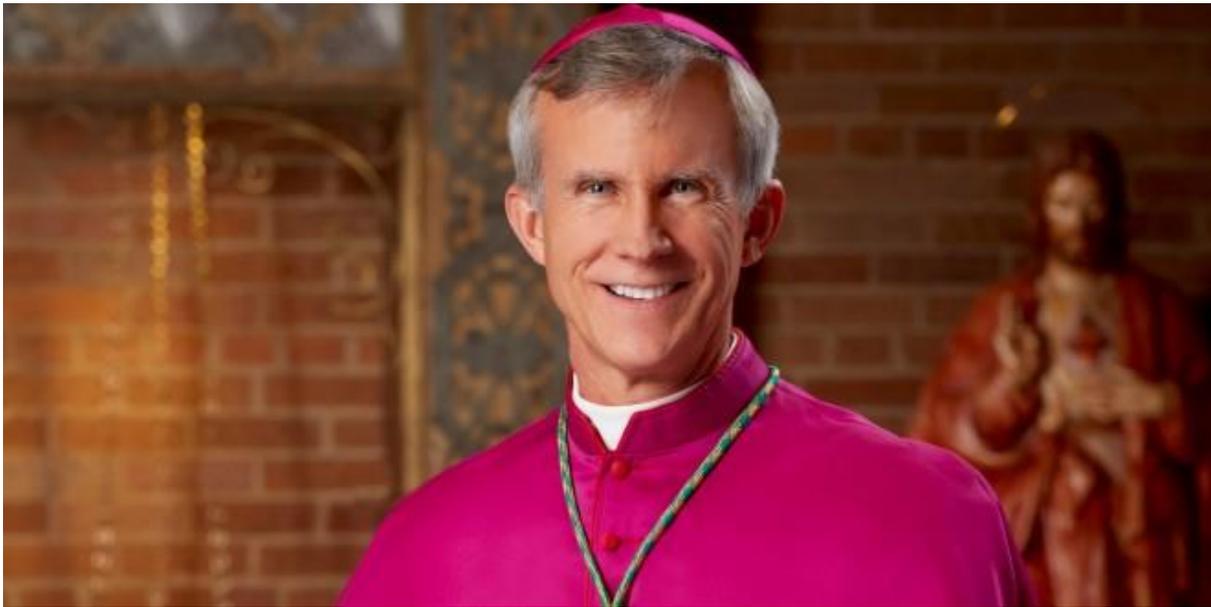
“We need to be serene; we need to be firmly rooted in our relationship with Christ and in the teaching of his Church,” said Archbishop Lori, who explained that he found inspiration in [the courage and canniness of St. Thomas More](#).

“We have to be vigilant because we have already faced challenges in states where same-sex marriage exists,” he continued.

“We will have to ask ourselves, on a state-by-state basis, and even the level of municipalities: What is the right thing to do?”

“We need to be as creative as we can be. We must make sure the rights of everyone are respected, not just the rights of some. We have a lot of hard work to do.”

[Joan Frawley Desmond](#) is the National Catholic Register’s senior editor



Bishop Strickland's Statement on U.S. Supreme Court Decision

[Diocese of Tyler Communications](#) June 26, 2015 [Marriage & Family](#)

Joseph Edward Strickland
By the Grace of God and the Apostolic See
Bishop of Tyler

TO THE PRIESTS, DEACONS, CONSECRATED RELIGIOUS AND CATHOLIC FAITHFUL OF THE DIOCESE OF TYLER, OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF OTHER FAITH TRADITIONS, AND ALL PEOPLE OF GOOD WILL IN THE THIRTY-THREE COUNTIES OF NORTHEAST TEXAS THAT MAKE UP THE DIOCESE OF TYLER:

On the morning of June 26, 2015, the Supreme Court of the United States handed down a 5-4 decision establishing the legal right of two individuals of the same sex to legally marry in all 50 states. By doing so, the Court has acted in contradiction to their duty to promote the common good, especially what is good for families. I join with the Bishops of the United States in calling this decision a “tragic error.”

Let me unambiguously state at the outset that this extremely unfortunate decision by our government is unjust and immoral, and it is our duty to clearly and emphatically oppose it. In spite of the decision by the Supreme Court, there are absolutely no grounds for considering unions between two persons of the same sex to be in any way similar to God's plan for marriage and the family. Regardless of this decision, what God has revealed and what the Church therefore holds to be true about marriage has not changed and is unchangeable.

Marriage is not just a relationship between human beings that is based on emotions and feelings. Rather, our Sacred Scriptures and Sacred Traditions tell us that God established true marriage

with its own special nature and purpose, namely the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of children.

While taking a strong stand for marriage is the duty of all who call themselves Christian, every type of unjust discrimination against those with homosexual tendencies should be avoided. We must treat these individuals with loving kindness and respect based on their dignity as human persons. Christ rejects no one, but he calls all of us to be converted from our sinful inclinations and follow the truth He has revealed to us. Nevertheless, our continued commitment to the pastoral care of homosexual persons cannot and will not lead in any way to the condoning of homosexual behavior or our acceptance of the legal recognition of same-sex unions.

While some of us may have family members who have same-sex attraction, and there are even some who are members of our local churches, this decision to require the legal recognition of so-called marriage between homosexual persons should in no way lead us to believe that the living out of this orientation or the solemnizing of relationships between two persons of the same sex is a morally acceptable option.

We know that unjust laws and other measures contrary to the moral order are not binding in conscience, thus we must now exercise our right to conscientious objection against this interpretation of our law which is contrary to the common good and the true understanding of marriage.

Given this and recognizing my responsibility and moral authority as the shepherd of this Church of Tyler, I will shortly issue a decree in this Diocese establishing, as particular law, that no member of the clergy or any person acting as employee of the Church may in any way participate in the solemnization or consecration of same-sex marriages, and that no Catholic facilities or properties, including churches, chapels, meeting halls, Catholic educational, health or charitable institutions, or any places dedicated or consecrated, or use for Catholic worship, may be used for the solemnization or consecration of same-sex marriages.

Finally, I call on the Catholic faithful of the Diocese to turn in prayer to the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, asking their intercession for our nation that all of us may come to a greater understanding of the beauty, truth and goodness that is found in marriage as revealed to us by our Savior.

I instruct that this letter is to be publicly read by the priest-celebrant following the proclamation of the Gospel at all Masses of obligation in the parishes, missions and chapels of Diocese of Tyler on the weekend of July 4-5, 2015. *

Given at the Diocesan Chancery
On the 26th day of June
Friday of the 12th Week in Ordinary Time
In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Fifteen

Most Reverend Joseph E. Strickland
Bishop of Tyler