



Courage & EnCourage
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ENCOURAGE SUPPORT GROUP MEETING

Roman Catholic Diocese of Lansing Chapter

When: Sunday September 21, 2014 from 2:30 to 4:00pm

**Where: Rick and Cathie's House
9193 Evergreen
Brighton, Michigan 48116**

Directions are from the Holy Spirit Church meeting location: Turn right on Winan's Lake Road. Left turn on Whitmore Lake Road. Turn right on Silver Lake Road (6/10 of a mile East of the Expressway). Turn left on Evergreen.

Counting the house on Silver Lake Rd., Rick and Cathie are the third house on the left.

Please note the Change in Location: This month of September, (and this month only), we have changed the meeting location. Rick and Cathie, two long time EnCourage members, who live only a few minutes from Holy Spirit Parish where we normally meet, have invited us to their home for the meeting and a pot luck barbeque. The directions given above are from the usual meeting site at Holy Spirit. If you have any problem, contact Cathie or Rick at 810-599-3452. We hope to see you there. Cathie has asked that, if possible, you bring a dish to pass. Please call her or email her at ccbays@charter.net and let her know what you are bringing.

We have enclosed an article from Crisis Magazine by Arland Nichols entitled *The Meaning of "Objectively Disordered"*. A frequent misunderstanding of Catholic teaching as found in the Catechism of the Catholic Church is the phrase "objectively disordered". Some have taken offense thinking that the church is calling the individual disordered. Mr. Nichols gives a thorough and insightful explanation of the phrase as it applies to persons with same-sex attraction. We urge you to read it.

We have also included a book mark / holy card of Pope St. John Paul II with the words he spoke to Fr. John Harvey, the founder of Courage, at a private audience with the Pontiff. The prayer on the back is a scripture that is special to EnCourage, and that we thought appropriate for the card. The art work itself is a gift from the artistic talent of Gary Hoff, who is a creator of a number of spiritually themed works.

His work entitled *Our Lady of Courage* is another excellent example of his work. If you would like more information about Gary Hoff and his work, please contact us.

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* adapted for Courage and EnCourage 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*)

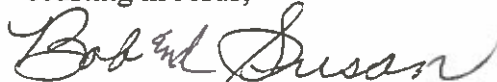
This letter and enclosures come to you through the generosity of our Diocese of Lansing. We are grateful for any donation, large or small, that you could give to help with our costs. If you are no longer interested in receiving our communications, please email or phone us.

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. If you find for some reason that you cannot attend the September 21st meeting, our next scheduled meeting will be October 19th. Mark your calendar now.

Let us remember, however, to always respect the right of each to complete confidentiality.

Trusting in Jesus,



Bob and Susan Cavera

"Courage is doing the work of God." Pope St. John Paul II

CRISIS MAGAZINE

AUGUST 27, 2014

The Meaning of “Objectively Disordered”

ARLAND K. NICHOLS

There is widespread misunderstanding about what the Catholic Church teaches with regard to same-sex attraction. Unfortunately, this misunderstanding—which often construes the teaching as “offensive”—tends to isolate men and women who struggle with their sexual identity. They often feel ostracized at a time in their life when they need love from the people of God. This reception to Church teaching can be avoided by proactively offering a clear explanation of the Church’s teaching concerning homosexuality, and in particular the judgment about the sexual attraction to persons of the same sex.

The Church’s document, *The Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons*, notes that sexual attraction to persons of the same sex is “ordered toward an intrinsic moral evil; and thus the inclination itself must be seen as an objective disorder.” The Catechism uses nearly identical language: “Exclusive or predominant sexual attraction towards persons of the same sex ... is objectively disordered.”

Chaste men who struggle with same sex attraction have conveyed to me that this choice of words, particularly the technical and precise phrase “objective disorder,” is “offensive,” “hard on the ears” or “disrespectful.” It makes many feel like a diseased outcast. I am sincerely empathetic to this reaction, as I know they face challenges everyday and do so with persistent faith and prayer. I am also sincerely convinced that the negative reaction to the Church’s language is primarily a case of misunderstanding. Therefore, we have an opportunity to bring clarity to others about the Church’s teachings regarding same-sex attraction and use of the term “objective disorder.”

Before clarifying the meaning of the term it should be noted that one reason such language is received as harsh is because we live in a society that no longer sees human nature as universal,

intrinsic, and immutable. Rather than recognizing an intelligible *telos*, or inner aim of man, today it is claimed that our human nature consists of whatever individual feelings come "spontaneously," are "genuine" or what feels "natural to me." Most are unfamiliar with natural law and thereby reject the traditional western and Biblical belief that as humans we have a law written upon our hearts, and to abide by that law ensures our flourishing. To flaunt that law does harm. The reaction to Church teaching in the area of homosexuality is, in part, symptomatic of a deeper and fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of the human person. The misunderstanding of the Church's teaching is further complicated by the fact that we live in a sound-bite culture, where nuanced technical terms are underappreciated. Therefore, it is incumbent upon Catholics to explain thoroughly and with sensitivity the eternal truth conveyed by the language of the Church.

So how do we make sense of this phrase, "objective disorder"?

First, we need to be very clear that this phrase does not refer to the person himself. The Church proclaims a deep respect for every person as being made in the "image of God" and this absolutely includes persons who experience same-sex attraction. Such men and women reflect God's image, share in the same dignity, and are precious in God's sight. They should never be subject to unjust discrimination, ridicule, or hatred. Such actions are deplorable.

Second, the phrase indicates what is explicitly [stated elsewhere](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p3s2c2a6.htm) (http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p3s2c2a6.htm), that sexual acts between persons of the same sex are an "intrinsic moral evil" and "intrinsically disordered." The Church describes such an act as a sin "gravely contrary to chastity" and an offense to natural law and Revelation, especially Scripture.

Third, we can address the inclination itself which is described as "objectively disordered." This phrase and the whole of Church teaching indicate in the first place that a person experiencing same sex *attraction* is not necessarily sinning. One need not feel guilty on account of the inclination alone. Instead of being harsh, this is freeing, a relief.

At the same time, the attraction cannot be described as good or neutral because it is ordered toward an act that is, by definition, immoral. Consider a young college male who is sexually attracted to a female classmate. Though this attraction can be directed toward sinful thoughts and actions, his attraction in itself is capable of being and is naturally ordered toward particular goods (i.e., mutual complementarity, marriage, and procreation). His attraction to a female classmate is naturally directed toward his (and society's) flourishing and his happiness.

However, if the same male college student finds himself sexually attracted to a male classmate, such an attraction itself can never be directed toward any particular goods such as mutual complementarity, marriage, and procreation. This attraction, if acted upon, is incapable of leading to his flourishing and happiness.

Grounded in the natural law, the Church notes that while the sexual attraction to the female classmate can be (and is naturally) ordered toward his good, the sexual attraction to his male classmate cannot be ordered toward his good. This is what the Church means when it uses the term, "disorder."

Concerned with "overly benign" interpretations of her teaching and obliged to seek the good of persons, the Church has described the attraction to persons of the same sex with carefully chosen language that, as it turns out, conveys two statements of love: those who simply experience same-sex attraction need not feel guilty for their attraction and their happiness and flourishing cannot be accomplished by embracing it.

The Church affirms that every human being is "wonderfully made" in God's image, that moral guilt is not necessarily incurred by one who experiences same-sex attraction, and it offers the roadmap for flourishing through the inner freedom of a life of chastity, genuine friendship and a resolute embrace of holiness.

Editor's note: The image above was taken at the "La Manif Pour Tous" demonstration for traditional marriage in Paris, May 5, 2013. (Photo credit: AFP Photo / Loic Venance)



By Arland K. Nichols

Arland K. Nichols is the founding President of the [John Paul II Foundation for Life and Family](#).

St. John Paul II



“Courage
is doing
the work of
God.”

“Be not afraid.”
JPII

“Praise be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation! He comforts us in all our afflictions and thus enables us to comfort those who are in trouble, with the same consolation we have received from Him. For as Christ’s sufferings overflow to us, so through Christ does our encouragement also overflow.”

2Cor. 1:3-5