



Courage & EnCourage
228 North Walnut Street
Lansing, Michigan 48933-1122
517-342-2596
Facsimile: 517-342-2468
caverart@comcast.net

ENCOURAGE SUPPORT GROUP MEETING

Roman Catholic Diocese of Lansing Chapter

When: Sunday November 17, 2013 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.

We are featuring with our letter the most recent article by Dan Mattson, entitled *A Case of Mistaken (Sexual) Identity*. Dan, who is a Courage member, addresses the topic of sexual identity and, especially, the harm caused by 'coming out' at an early age. Dan describes himself "as a man who came back to the Catholic Church because of the Church's teaching on homosexuality and sexual identity." We note with greater alarm that the culture is pushing and promoting the gay agenda with impunity. Voices like Dan's are essential in this battle. We urge you to pray to our heavenly Father and to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and Our Blessed Mother for our children, grand children and for our nation.

On a more personal note, Susan and I are among the participants in a Courage/EnCourage workshop at the USCCB annual gathering in Baltimore on November 10th. We would greatly appreciate your prayers.

If you are able to attend the next EnCourage please reflect on the following question: *What seems to be the most difficult aspect concerning your loved one's SSA? How are you attempting to address this?* We have attempted to address this question for the last two months, but didn't get to it. As the holidays approach, and with them family gatherings, we think the question relevant.

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. Recently, one of our members amended the Chaplet in such a way that instead of praying each mystery reflection in one sitting, that each mystery is assigned to one day. The opening and closing prayer are prayed everyday along with just one mystery. 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*)

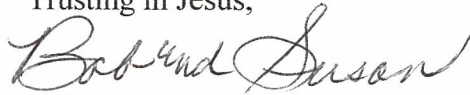
Please note: If you cannot attend the November 17th meeting, our next regular Diocesan EnCourage meeting is Sunday, December 15, 2013.

Our Diocese of Lansing, Michigan provides us with a modest budget and the staff support to make these communications possible as well as assisting with maintaining other essential services. We are very grateful. Any help you can give the Diocese is greatly appreciated.

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

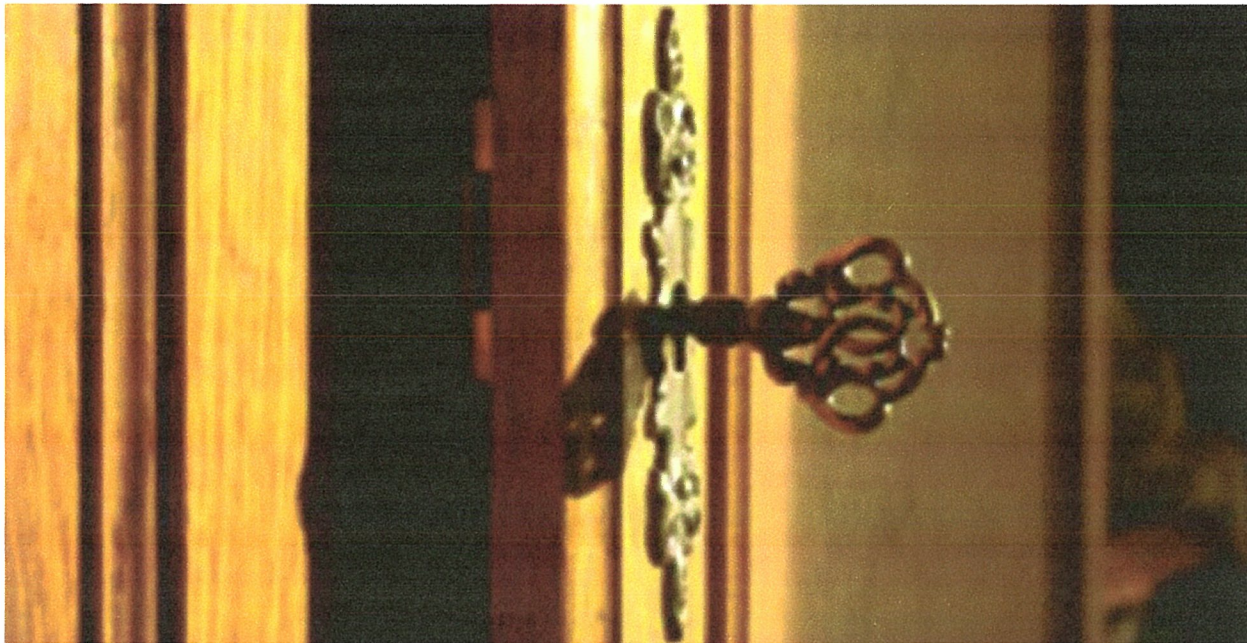
"When the heart is pure, it cannot help loving, because it has found the source of love, which is God himself."

St. John Vianney

OCTOBER 15, 2013

A Case of Mistaken (Sexual) Identity

by Daniel Mattson



My favorite novel of mistaken identity has always been C. S. Lewis's *The Horse and His Boy*. It's the perfect fairy tale, beginning with a miserable young boy, Shasta, growing up in Calormen, treated like a slave by Arsheesh, the man who he assumes is his father. When one of the lords of Calormen, a Taarkan, offers to buy Shasta from Arsheesh, Shasta learns how "his father" found him adrift in a river when Shasta was an infant. Lewis tells us that Shasta had never loved his father, nor felt like he belonged in Calormen, so this knowledge "took a great weight off his mind. 'Why, I might be anyone!' he thought. 'I might be the son of a Tarkaan myself—or the son of the Tisroc (may he live forever!)—or of a god!'" The rest of the book chronicles Shasta's adventures with the talking horse Bree and two other companions as they journey north, towards Narnia, where Shasta discovers his true identity: He is indeed the son of a king, heir to the throne of Archenland, the ally and friend of Narnia.

For Lewis, Shasta is obviously "Every Man," born into this world just as the writer

of Hebrews wrote of the Patriarchs who “acknowledged themselves to be strangers and aliens on earth,” desiring a “better homeland, a heavenly one.” Like Shasta, we know innately that something is wrong with the world and don’t realize our true identity as beloved sons and daughters of the King of Kings. Henri Nouwen said that “one of the enormous spiritual tasks we have is to claim that [identity] and to live a life based on that knowledge, and that’s not very easy. In fact, most of us fail constantly to claim the truth of who we are.” These words of Henri Nouwen have a deep significance for me, because as he did, I am a man who lives with same-sex attraction. As I have worked through my faith to claim my true nature as a beloved son of God, I have come to believe that the greatest case of mistaken identity in the world today concerns sexual identity. The contemporary litany of sexual identities come from Calormen, not Narnia and the North. They come from the world, not the mind of God.

As a man who came back to the Catholic Church because of the Church’s teaching on homosexuality and sexual identity, I have watched with great concern as I see “coming out” become more and more commonplace, particular at younger and younger ages, including in the Church. The USCCB wisely cautions against this in their 2006 document, [“Ministry to Persons with a Homosexual Inclination: Guidelines for Pastoral Care”](#):

For some persons, revealing their homosexual tendencies to certain close friends, family members, a spiritual director, confessor, or members of a Church support group may provide some spiritual and emotional help and aid them in their growth in the Christian life. In the context of parish life, however, general public self-disclosures are not helpful and should not be encouraged.

Though I’ve never “come out” in the world in which I live my daily life, I decided to write publicly about this part of my life because I have great concern for the way our culture negatively influences the young Shastas in the Catholic Church who may be confused about who they are after realizing they live with same-sex attraction, and decide to “come out” because the world teaches them that their sexual inclinations comprise one of the chief definitions of “who they are” and that in order to be truly “authentic” they need to reveal this about themselves. The counsel of the bishops to avoid public disclosures of homosexual attractions reflects the best interests for these young men and women who tragically have been conditioned to accept the modern concept of sexual identities, and to use phrases such as “I am gay” to describe themselves, which reveals the ease by which we can become imprisoned by the culture in which we live, in the way John Paul II wrote in *Veritatis Splendor*:

It must certainly be admitted that man always exists in a particular culture, but it must also be admitted that man is not exhaustively defined by that same culture. Moreover, the very progress of cultures demonstrates that there is something in man which transcends those cultures. This “something” is precisely human nature: this nature is itself the measure of culture and the condition ensuring that man does not become the prisoner of any of his cultures, but asserts his personal dignity by living in accordance with the profound truth of his being.

The best explanation for why so many people accept the world’s definitions of sexuality stems from St. Paul’s famous line that “for now, we see through a mirror, dimly,” but the mirrors of sexual identity aren’t merely dim and obscure; they are the crazed and distorted mirrors of a diabolical fun house, manipulated to the point of destroying any recognizable connection with the truth about man. They are created out of the imagination of the “Innovators” C. S. Lewis describes so well in *The Abolition of Man*, who say,

Let us decide for ourselves what man is to be and make him into that: not on any ground of imagined value, but because we want him to be such. Having mastered our environment, let us now master ourselves and choose our own destiny.

The answer to the insanity of sexual identities is to refuse to look through the mirrors of the world, and to realize, as St. Paul tells us, that we are *already* “fully known.” In order to live lives that correspond with that objective reality, we need to discover the truth of what it means to be “fully known” by God and to remember that what we see in a mirror is a reflection of a reflection, as Aquinas said in his opening lines discussing moral theology in the *Summa Theologica*: “Because man is created as the image of God it now remains—after His archetypal image has been dealt with—to speak of his reflection: namely man.” We need someone else to tell us if what we see reflected back at us in the mirrors around us is actually true, as Pope Benedict wisely [told the youth of the Italian organization Catholic Action](#):

In adolescence we pause in front of the mirror and we notice ourselves changing. But if you only look at yourself, you never grow up! You grow up when you no longer let the mirror be the only truth of yourselves but when you let your friends tell you the truth.

There is no greater friend to man than the Church, and She lovingly tells us the truth: the only sexual identity that applies to anyone is what the Catechism tells us in paragraph 2333:

Everyone, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual *identity*. Physical, moral, and spiritual *difference* and *complementarity* are oriented toward the goods of marriage and the flourishing of family life. The harmony of the couple and of society depends in part on the way in which the complementarity, needs, and mutual support between the sexes are lived out.

In recent years, a growing number of men and women with same-sex attraction have embraced the sexual morality of the Catholic Church, and yet consciously refer to themselves as gay, lesbian, queer or homosexual. As someone who sees freedom from these manmade sexual identities in the teachings of the Church, this has long confused me. In 2011 I had the opportunity to ask one of the princes of the Church, [Raymond Cardinal Burke](#) what counsel he would give to those who think this way. He responded by saying,

I would encourage them if they've attained a certain continence, sexual continence—chastity in that sense—that now they deepen this chastity and see it in the context of the love of Christ which respects fully our human nature, and in that regard, one sees this condition—which is not my identity and therefore but an aspect of my life, which I need to address, which is out of sync with the way God *has* made me, called me into being—with that chaste love of Christ that I am striving to deepen.

I think that this can be a kind of mistaken approach: If one takes the approach in a narrow way, that, “it’s all simply about avoiding unchaste behaviors” (which clearly is essential and fundamental) ... one is not going to grow in the spiritual life. That avoidance of unchaste behaviors and so forth has to become more and more an expression of a deep love of Christ, and therefore it becomes very fruitful. The person who holds onto the idea that [his] deepest identity is same-sex attraction and the homosexual condition is effectively blocking himself from an authentic spiritual development.

Pope Francis’s new encyclical *Lumen Fidei* tells us how important language is in understanding who we are: “Language itself, the words by which we make sense of our lives and the world around us, comes to us from others, preserved in the living memory of others. Self-knowledge is only possible when we share in a greater memory.”

The Church has the deepest memory of man. Just as Shasta needed the memory of his father and of the royal household of Archenland to know his true identity as a son of a king, all those who refer to themselves with a sexual identity other than

being male or female are in great need of the memory of the Church to tell them the truth of who they are and what it means to be a child of the King of Kings.

The youngest generation is in great need of escape from Calormen. Sadly, the loudest voices concerning sexual identity come from the culture around them; if they find themselves attracted to members of the same sex, they are trapped into thinking that they “must be gay.” The propaganda machine of the sexual revolution makes them aware of no other option, and one of the great missions of the Church in today’s world is to proclaim the truth of our sexual identities as being solely male and female and to tell the Shastas of the world that their identity is not rooted in their sexual desires or inclinations, as the [USCCB website proclaimed recently](#) in speaking about the “deeply flawed anthropology” of sexual orientation:

What the language of “sexual orientation” does, anthropologically, is separate one’s identity from one’s bodily nature as a man or woman, placing a premium on one’s desires and inclinations. The body then becomes a “bottom layer”—essentially meaningless matter—over which one’s “real” identity—comprised of desires and inclinations—is super-imposed.

The Church, and all men and women of good-will, should challenge the world’s notions of sexual orientation and of sexual identities other than male and female, and realize, as the same article from the USCCB declares, that “Christian anthropology, rightly understood, is a message of freedom for every person.” The truth of his identity is what Shasta needed to be free—so too the same-sex attracted young men and women in the Church who conclude that they must be gay, because they have no other answer than what they see reflected back at them in the world around them.

The views expressed by the authors and editorial staff are not necessarily the views of Sophia Institute, Holy Spirit College, or the Thomas More College of Liberal Arts.



By Daniel Mattson

Daniel Mattson lives in the midwest, where he has a career in the arts. He takes great interest in the Church’s teaching on homosexuality and is often invited to give his personal testimony to groups around the country. He blogs at LettersToChristopher.wordpress.com.
