



Courage & EnCourage
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ENCOURAGE SUPPORT GROUP MEETING

Roman Catholic Diocese of Lansing Chapter

When: Sunday December 19, 2010 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.](#)

As we prepare for this final meeting of the year, we want to begin by taking the opportunity to wish you all a very **Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year**. We have enclosed with the letter a special Christmas wish to you from us. You may have heard before an explanation of the 'Twelve Days', but if you are like us---you forget. We hope you enjoy it.

We have also enclosed a letter and holy card from Bishop Thomas Paprocki, Bishop of Springfield, IL. The Bishop tells us the story of Mary Stachowicz, whose cause for sainthood he is sponsoring. Bishop Paprocki has been a longtime friend of Courage and Encourage, and his letter expresses his commitment to this ministry and urges us to deepen our commitment.

The move of the Courage/Encourage office has finally been accomplished. The new information is as follows:

**Courage/Encourage International Ministry
8 Leonard Street
Norwalk, CT. 06850
(203) 803-1564**

The web address (www.couragerc.net) and the email address (nycourage@aol.com) will remain the same for the time being. The Business Manager is Jerry Lambert, who in

addition to his duties in the office, is in formation to become a permanent Deacon in June. Please continue to pray for the transition and for all those involved in both New York and Connecticut.

Again, this month we want to recommend two books that have recently come to our attention. *The Complete Christian Guide To Understanding Homosexuality* by Joe Dallas and Nancy Heche addresses among other things the church, the truth, gay theology and rebutting pro-gay theology. Richard Cohen's book *Straight Talk About Homosexuality* is a small book that gives clear and concise information on the origins of SSA and a loved one's response. Both are available through Amazon.com.

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. "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 December 19th meeting, **our next regular meeting is January 16, 2011.**

For more information regarding our meetings, or to talk about the issue of same-sex attraction in your lives, call our Diocesan office at 517-351-3315 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

"May the peace of God which passes all understanding guard our hearts in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

(Philippians 4:7)



For this I was born, for this I came into the world, to bear witness to the truth.
(Jn 18:37)

Dear Friends in Christ and in Courage and EnCourage,

Our Lord's peace to all of you.

Good mother that she is, the Church always returns our attention during the holy season of Advent to the beginning of our Catholic Faith: the birth of the Savior. Thirty-three years after His Nativity, Our Lord Himself stated plainly to Pontius Pilate *why* He was born: to bear witness to the truth. At the Last Supper, Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me." (Jn 14:6)

This is the heart of the mystery of the Incarnation, that Truth is a person: Jesus Christ. Only Jesus, the Word of God, can save us from our sins, and He reveals to us our nobility as children of the Father, disciples of the Son, and temples of the Holy Spirit. And so, our mother the Church invites us to focus our minds and hearts during Advent on the coming of the mystery of "the Word made flesh."

At the annual Courage conference this past summer at Mundelein in Chicago, it was my pleasure to offer Mass for the participants and to recount the story of a heroic woman who bore witness to the truth at the cost of her life. Her name was Mary Stachowicz, and she was brutally murdered when she urged a co-worker, a 19-year-old man, to leave the gay lifestyle. Mary was a gentle, devout 51-year-old Catholic mother of four, and I knew her personally. She was my secretary at the parish where I was pastor before I was named a bishop.

I believe that Mary is a martyr for the Catholic Faith, and I ask your prayers in support of her cause for canonization. Fr. John Harvey and Fr. Paul Check agree with me that Mary could one day be a patron saint for Courage, but we must pray first for God's will to be done. The promotion of Mary's cause requires a group of people who recognize her Christian sanctity and pray not only for the official recognition of her sainthood, but also pray through her intercession for assistance in obtaining divine favors. Please use the enclosed prayer card for this purpose, and to ask Mary Stachowicz to implore God's graces to fortify you in your struggles as members of Courage and EnCourage.

Prior to his election as our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI warned that our current culture is captive to a "dictatorship of relativism", a doctrinal and moral chaos that is the very opposite of truth, and that can only lead to sadness and ultimately, misery.

“To bear witness to the truth.” By virtue of our Baptism and Confirmation, with the strength provided by the Holy Eucharist and regular reception of the Sacrament of Penance, and most especially out of love for the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, we must all testify to the truth by striving to live holy lives and by our fidelity to Church teaching. But because of the dictatorship of relativism, we have an uphill struggle to persuade people of the reasons why homosexual activity is sinful, why same-sex relationships should not be legally recognized as marriages, and why chastity is virtuous.

Jesus, Emmanuel, God who is with us, gives the grace that we need to be “salt and light” in a fallen world, and to lead souls to the peace and joy that only He can give. It is the special work of Courage and EnCourage to bear witness to Church teaching about homosexuality, and to help more and more people to know and receive the authentic pastoral response of the Catholic Church to the challenge it poses.

This work depends on our financial assistance, particularly because the Courage main office is sustained almost entirely from donations and gifts from concerned people like you. The educational work of Courage, which you will be directly supporting, helps to dispel confusion, alleviate suffering and offer hope in an arena where the voices on the other side are resolute and well funded.

I am asking you, as a special Christmas gift to Courage, to write a check for at least \$50—or for \$100, or more, if you can afford it—but any amount you are able to give will be very helpful and greatly appreciated. Most importantly, we are aiming for 100% participation in this winter fundraising campaign from among all of our members. Our Christmas goal is \$50,000, which is needed to further develop the work of Courage’s education program, especially that for priests, deacons and seminarians. We want our clergy to be prepared to provide the correct pastoral response to homosexuality, according to the mind and heart of the Church.

Mary Stachowicz offered herself a witness to the truth of Church teaching in a way that most of us will not be called to do. But there is what we might term “a martyrdom for charity” that *will* likely be asked of us, when we give testimony to the Church’s teaching about sexual morality, and that testimony is rejected and we ourselves dismissed or attacked. As members of Courage and EnCourage, and as supporters of these wonderful apostolates, you are strengthening Christ’s presence amidst the moral chaos of today, by your example and by your words. God’s grace will always make possible our fidelity, and our hope rests on the promise of the Master: “You will know the truth and the truth will set you free.” (Jn 8:32)

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thomas John Paprocki". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name of the signatory.

Most Reverend Thomas John Paprocki
Bishop of Springfield in Illinois



FOR UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN.
UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN.

Is 'Twelve Days' deeply religious?

Lengthy Christmas carol is interpreted many ways

By SUSAN HOGAN
Dallas Morning News

It's a carol people love to sing — and argue about. Some insist that "The Twelve Days of Christmas" refers to the days leading up to Dec. 25. Others say it marks the time between Christmas and the Feast of the Epiphany (Jan. 6), which commemorates Jesus' baptism and the visit of the Three Magi.

Many think it's merely a funny children's song. Others insist it's deeply religious.

Historians generally agree the song's words were written in England during the 18th century and put to music composed in France much earlier.

And those pears and French hens aren't just fruits and birds, some historians say, but code for teachings to aid Catholics being persecuted. The song was an underground form of religious education, they say.



Interpretations differ, but here are some of the meanings attributed to the lyrics:

- **My true love:** God. The song is about the gifts from God.
- **The partridge:** Jesus.

- **Two turtle doves:** Old and New Testaments.

- **Three French hens:** Faith, hope, charity.
- **Four calling birds:** The Gospel writers Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

- **Five golden rings:** The Torah (the first five books of the Bible).

- **Six geese a-laying:** The six days of creation, according to the Book of Genesis.

- **Seven swans a-swimming:** The seven sacraments — baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, marriage, Holy Orders, reconciliation, last rites.

- **Eight maids-a-milking:** The Eight Beatitudes, found in the Sermon on the Mount. ("Blessed are the poor in spirit.")

- **Nine ladies dancing:** The fruits of the Holy Spirit — love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

- **Ten lords a-leaping:** The Ten Commandments.

- **Eleven pipers piping:** The Apostles, minus Judas.

- **Twelve drummers drumming:** The articles of faith in the Apostle's Creed.

May this be a blessed time for you and your family as you prepare to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Bob and Susan