



**Courage & EnCourage**  
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## **ENCOURAGE SUPPORT GROUP MEETING**

Roman Catholic Diocese of Lansing Chapter

**When: Sunday December 15, 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.

Susan and I want to take this opportunity to wish you and your loved ones a

**Blessed and Merry Christmas!**

and a

**Happy and Joy-filled New Year!**

We have enclosed with this month's communication a letter from Rev. Paul Check, the Director of Courage/EnCourage, regarding future plans for the ministry and challenges it faces. We urge you to read it and respond as generously as possible.

A second enclosure with this letter is from Fr. Paul Scalia in which he addresses a current expression heard in the media and on the lips of politicians like President O'Bama espousing that "love is love" while urging you to support gay marriage. This rather trite and vacuous statement is being used by many in the culture and often in our own families that marriage is for people who love each other, because, after-all, "love is love". Fr. Paul explains why this buzz phrase misleads and avoids the truth. The holidays often provide an environment that can lend itself to a discussion of same-sex behavior, and hopefully you will be fore-armed.

Additionally, we want to recommend the book *Prodigals and Those Who Love Them*, by Ruth Bell Graham. The book was written over 20 years ago, but remains relevant and available through book companies like Amazon. The book is filled with inspirational stories of those who 'wander' and return, and is a source of comfort to those of us who wait.

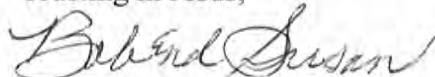
**Please** also remember that we unite to pray each Thursday to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in reparation for our sins and the sins against human sexuality such as same-sex behavior and abortion. Reparation is making amends for the wrongs committed through our sinful condition. Additionally, we pray as 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, 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 December 15th meeting, our next regular Diocesan EnCourage meeting is Sunday, January 19, 2014.

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](mailto: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 Hand of God the Father protect you, the heart of the Christ child enfold you and the presence of the Holy Spirit be with you this Holy Season and the year ahead."

Fr. David McElroy, O.Praem



## “Love is love”?

July 24, 2013 by [encourageandteach](#)

By: Fr. Paul Scalia

One slogan used for promoting “gay marriage” is the pithy phrase “Love is love.” In fact, our President tweeted his praise for the recent DOMA decision with the “#Loveislove” hashtag. It is a great piece of propaganda, because, well, who wants to fight against love? Do any of us want to be told that our love is illegitimate? So the mantra goes on and wins support for “gay marriage.” But does anyone give it any thought? Is it *true*? Are all loves the same? Is love love?



(photo credit: Stacy Rausch)

In one sense, *Yes: love is love*. It always involves an affirmation of the other (“It is good that you exist”) and a deliberate choice for the other’s good. For that reason we are obliged to love all people. We must look at each person and affirm: *It is good that you exist*. We must say to each person, *I want what is good for you*. So all embracing is this aspect of love that we must hold it both for God...and for our enemies.

In another sense, *No: love is not love*. Just a little reflection reveals that not all loves are the same. Suppose a woman walks into a coffee bar and says, “I love you” to her husband, then to her children, then to a friend, and finally to the barista. She means it differently for each person. At least, her husband hopes so. And if a husband gets home from work and announces, “I love my secretary,” he had better intend a different kind of love than he has for his wife. If not, he could always justify himself by saying, “Honey, love is love.”

In short, the object of our love determines its shape or structure. We love parents differently from friends, and friends differently from spouses, and spouses differently from God. And because we are embodied souls, the body plays a part in determining the

structure of our loves. That love traditionally called *eros* – romantic love – seeks sexual expression, physical union. Which is to say that the shape or structure of *eros* is determined by the design of the body.

A husband and wife say, “I love you” to one another in a way they do not to anyone else. Their love is different from all others because it involves a union of bodies in the very manner that bodies are designed to be united and in which only a man and woman can be united. Now, if we say that the male/female physical union is just one option among many, then we lose the distinctiveness not only of marital love but of other loves as well. They begin to bleed into one another. Friendship has suffered disproportionately from this blurring. Since we have extended *eros* to the love between two men or two women, we have experienced at one and the same time a decline in genuine friendships and also “friends with benefits.”

The need to distinguish between different loves goes beyond the marriage issue. It is at the heart of all morality to bring one’s loves into proper order. After all, the dissolute man has many loves. But they are all out of order. He loves his drink more than his kids, or his money more than his wife, or his wife more than God, and so on. The morally upright man, however, has brought his loves into proper order. He keeps each one in its place, where alone it thrives.

Most importantly, the Christian life requires such distinctions: “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Mt 22:37-39). By His words Jesus clarifies the proper order of loves – so that we can give our hearts rightly. By His grace He establishes this order within us, granting us the peace of a rightly ordered heart. We would be fools to allow a mere mantra to part us from this gift.





November 2013

***I see clearly that the thing the Church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful; it needs nearness, proximity. I see the Church as a field hospital after battle. In pastoral ministry we must accompany people, and we must heal their wounds.***

Dear Friends in Christ,

Please help us to build a new wing in the Church's field hospital! Fr. Paul Scalia, the Chairman of our Board of Directors, has wisely described Courage as a room in the hospital Pope Francis depicts in his words cited above, a room first established by our beloved Fr. John Harvey, OSFS, of happy memory. Fr. Harvey would have cheerfully embraced the Holy Father's description of the Church, particularly because the Pope's emphasis on *accompanying people* and *healing wounds* illustrates the work of Courage and EnCourage so aptly.

The annual budget of the central office must increase from **\$250,000 to \$400,000** to accommodate the ever-expanding requirement for the practical, authentic and unique pastoral care Courage provides throughout the US and in a growing number of countries overseas. At the moment, we have only two full-time employees—the priest director and our business manager—but we must now add to our staff. I am hoping—and depending on your prayers for this intention—to find another priest to join our office, as well as a woman religious.

In addition, we will move a part-time project manager—Angelo, whom so many of you know and respect—to full-time, and we will consider an increased commitment of part-time workers and volunteers, whose work already contributes so valuably to our efforts. As the operation grows, we will require more assistance with fundraising, communications, and media relations. We will also add to the resources that the central office provides to dioceses and individuals.

**As an end of the year gift to the apostolate, would you please write a check today for \$100—more if you can—to help us provide the salaries and tools needed to support the work only Courage and EnCourage are doing?**

So many on our mailing list have been served personally by the work Terence Cardinal Cooke and Fr. Harvey began in 1980. How many more are in need today!

I can understand why earnest people so often ask me for just the right few words to explain the Church's teaching on homosexuality, for the best way to speak with charity and truth to a son or daughter who self-identifies as "gay," for the proper counsel to offer someone who should look to Christ. These are all noble questions, and I know that my answers are often inadequate. But when these questions come, I also think of the words of Pope Francis who, in the same interview cited above, referred to the Good Samaritan, "who washes, cleans and raises up his neighbor."

The Samaritan was on a journey. In like manner, God came into His own creation as a pilgrim, and indeed, as a stranger, for whom there was "no room at the inn" (Lk 2:7). But even knowing this would be true, God did not send an angel or any other ambassador...He chose to leave the glory and safety of heaven and to put Himself in harm's way...why? To become our *neighbor* by sharing our nature and our circumstances—with all the joy and hope, and all the sorrow and danger of this life—to show that true love knows no limits, particularly when it comes to *healing wounds*...to show that *nearness and proximity*, as Pope Francis said, best convey charity and mercy.

Establishing relationships, building trust, taking personal interest in the lives of individual people, often feeling the sting of rejection...this was the life and work of the Good Samaritan, Jesus Christ, and I believe it characterizes the work of Courage and EnCourage. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us," (Jn 1:14) so that He could heal our wounds and warm our hearts by His nearness, by accompanying us on the journey to the Father. This is the school of pastoral charity in which Christ, and his Vicar, Pope Francis, have enrolled us.

Our documentary, *Desire of the Everlasting Hills*, is complete. I am very pleased with the result and very proud of Rilene, Dan, and Paul for their courage and humility in agreeing to go on camera to share their stories, which will convey understanding, insight and hope to many. Please remember them in your prayers. I believe that our members are our best ambassadors, and the ones most likely to form relationships—even through media—that will become avenues of grace, mercy and peace in the hearts of others.

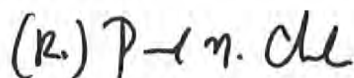
We must now raise money to promote and distribute the film, free of charge. Part one of the five-part catechetical series is also finished, and much of the filming for the remaining four episodes is done. Again, we are raising money for free distribution. In addition, we have contracted with a Catholic company for the redesign and maintenance of a new Courage website, coming at the start of 2014. And we continue the work of clergy study days. I traveled to many dioceses in 2013 and will do so again next year.

**Perhaps the biggest news I can share with you is this: Courage conducted a two-hour workshop for over 40 Bishops at the USCCB conference this month.** It was very well received, Deo gratias, and offers the hope that the apostolate will be ever more at the service of the Church in the US.

As always, I offer my sincere gratitude to our chaplains, group leaders, and listserv moderators, in the US, Canada, Mexico, and overseas, for all of their faithful service.

God bless and reward your prayerful support and generosity.

In Christ,



Rev. Paul N. Check





*Lord Jesus, you came to bring us the fullness of joy and to free us from all the pale imitations of happiness. This Advent, remove any barriers we have put up to keep you out of our lives. Teach us to welcome your presence wherever we find it, even in the difficulties and challenges of daily life. As we reach out in love to others, especially the poor and needy, may we come to know in our hearts that we are welcoming you, our Lord and Savior.*

*Amen*