

## ***Catholic Teaching***

“The human person, made in the image and likeness of God, can hardly be adequately described by a reductionist reference to his or her sexual orientation. Everyone living on the face of the earth has personal problems and difficulties – but challenges to growth, strengths, talents and gifts as well. **Today, the Church provides a badly needed context for the care of the human person when she refuses to consider the person a “heterosexual” or a “homosexual” and insists that every person has a fundamental identity: a creature of God, and by grace, His child and heir to eternal life.**” *Letter from the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith – October 1986*

## ***Official Statement of American Catholic Bishops***

Some persons find themselves through no fault of their own to have a homosexual orientation. Homosexuals, like everyone else, should not suffer from prejudice against basic human rights. They have a right to respect, friendship and justice. They should have an active role in the Christian community. Homosexual activity, however, as distinguished from homosexual orientation, is morally wrong. Like heterosexual persons, homosexuals are called to give witness to chastity, avoiding, with God’s grace, behavior which is wrong for them as non-marital sexual relations are wrong for heterosexuals. Nonetheless, because heterosexuals can usually look forward to marriage, and homosexuals, while their orientations continues, might not, the Christian community should provide them a special degree of pastoral understanding and care. (From *To Live in Christ Jesus* National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1976).

## ***The Courage Apostolate***

***Courage*** was founded by His Eminence Terence Cooke of New York in response to the great need of persons with homosexual desires. He knew that what was truly needed was for the individual to experience the freedom of living chastely and in that freedom find the desire and growth necessary to live fully Christian lives in communion with God and others. He was concerned that many would not find this path and would be constantly trying to get their needs met in ways that ultimately do not satisfy the desires of the heart.

In response to this concern, he decided to form a spiritual support system which would assist men and women with same-sex attractions in living chaste lives in fellowship, truth and love.

Knowing of Fr. John Harvey's extensive ministry experience in this field, he invited him to come to his Archdiocese.

With the help of the Rev. Benedict Groeschel, C.F.R., and others, Fr. Harvey began the ***Courage*** Apostolate with its first meeting held in September, 1980 at the Shrine of Mother Seton in South Ferry.

With the endorsement of the Holy See ***Courage***, now with more than 95 Chapters world wide, and hundreds of persons daily receiving assistance from the main office and website, has become a mainstream Catholic Apostolate helping thousands of men and women find peace through fellowship, prayer and the Sacraments.

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***Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston  
Respect Life Office***



A spiritual support group helping men and women live in accordance with the Catholic Church’s pastoral teaching on homosexuality.

***Confidential Help Line***

***Call Fr. Mike at  
713-468-9555***

***or***

***713-741-8728***

### *Courage believes that*

- ◇ With support, persons with homosexual feelings can choose to follow Jesus Christ according to authentic Catholic spiritual and moral teachings.
- ◇ With faith in Christ and His Church, it is more than possible to live a chaste single life in a healthy and happy manner.
- ◇ With the Church, we can develop a happy grace filled understanding of ourselves and continue to grow into our true identity as maturing Catholic men and women.
- ◇ Homosexuality is not a personal sin - it does not make a human person sick or perverse - however, homosexual acts are immoral and do not lead to a deeper life in Christ.
- ◇ The dignity and identity of Christian persons is not determined by their sexual orientation but by their relation to Jesus Christ through a developing faith, hope and love.
- ◇ Homosexuality is not the work of God - nor is it usually a person's choice - it is an aspect of an arrested sexual development resulting from no one simple factor. This arrested development will disorder a person's normal sexual feelings.
- ◇ For those who really want it, reparative growth is a possibility and can happen.

### *Goals*

- ◇ To live chaste lives in accordance with the Roman Catholic Church's teaching on homosexuality.
- ◇ To dedicate our entire lives to Christ through service to others, spiritual reading, prayer, meditation, individual spiritual direction, frequent attendance at Mass, and the frequent reception of the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist.
- ◇ To foster a spirit of fellowship in which we may share with one another our thoughts and experiences and so ensure that none of us has to face the problems of homosexuality alone.
- ◇ To be mindful of the truth, that chaste friendships are not only possible but necessary in chaste Christian life – to encourage one another in forming and sustaining them.
- ◇ To live lives that may serve as good examples to others.

### *A Spiritual Growth Plan*

- ◇ Develop the ability to **relax** - to slow down and be at peace in the presence of a loving God.
- ◇ Practice an **examination of conscience** that helps you see yourself as Christ sees you - with love, respect, forgiveness.
- ◇ Choose a **spiritual guide** - someone who can help you keep in touch with the forgiving and creative presence of Christ in your life.
- ◇ **Read and meditate** each day on the life of Jesus Christ and His teachings.
- ◇ **Pray** - each and every day - especially the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, if at all possible.
- ◇ Finally, **serve** - volunteer your time and energy, your mind and heart to help others come closer to Jesus Christ and His Church. Give of yourself - the value of a Christian life is not defined by sexual orientation.

*Lord Jesus, in you I die and rise to New Life.  
May I know your life so fully that  
I would rejoice in all that I face.  
Amen.*