

What do Courage and EnCourage believe?

Courage and EnCourage believe that, with human support and Divine Intervention:

- Persons with SSA can follow Jesus Christ according to Roman Catholic spiritual and moral teaching.
- It is possible to have SSA and live a chaste and productive life.
- Persons with SSA can develop an assured, grace-filled understanding of themselves while growing into their true identities as mature men and women.
- Homosexual attractions or feelings are not a sin; however, homosexual acts are immoral and do not lead to a deeper life in Christ.
- A person's dignity does not depend upon his or her sexual attractions but upon his or her relationship to Jesus Christ.
- Homosexual desires are not usually a person's choice.
- Therapy may address underlying emotional issues related to SSA; however, therapy cannot guarantee that SSA will be eliminated.
- Men and women with SSA can lead chaste lives. Chastity, made possible by Christ's redemption, is a liberating virtue and a source of joy and human freedom.

EnCourage further believes:

- Standing by the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, EnCourage members support one another and their loved ones through discussion, prayer, fellowship, and sacrifice.
- We are not our children's saviors; Jesus Christ is Lord, God, and Savior.
- We are not responsible for our grown children's decisions to pursue homosexual activity (should they make such a decision), but we can encourage them to lead chaste lives.
- EnCourage offers faithful witness to Catholic teaching on sexual morality while meeting the needs of its members with charity and compassion.

"Courage is doing the work of God."

St. Pope John Paul II, The Great

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How do Courage and EnCourage work?

The three pillars of Courage and EnCourage are:

1. A support group system based on the respective goals of Courage and EnCourage;
2. Good fellowship within a growing sense of community;
3. The development of authentic and solid Catholic spirituality.

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Spiritual support for Catholic men and women with same-sex attractions who desire to live chaste lives in accordance with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church



"Be strong and of good courage; be not frightened, neither be dismayed; for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

Joshua 1:9

What is Courage? What is EnCourage?

Courage and EnCourage are spiritual support groups.

Courage was founded in 1980 by Servant of God Terence Cardinal Cooke, Archbishop of New York, to help Catholics with same-sex attractions live chaste lives in accordance with the Roman Catholic Church's teaching.

EnCourage is the affiliate support group for family members, spouses, and friends of men and women with same-sex attractions (SSA).

The dignity and identity of Christian persons are not determined by their sexual attractions but by their relation to Jesus Christ through faith, hope and love.

Experiencing SSA is not a sin. The Church makes a distinction between *having* SSA and *pursuing* same-sex acts.

The Five Goals of Courage

The founding members of Courage have developed the following goals and purposes:

1. To live chaste lives in accordance with the Roman Catholic Church's teaching on homosexuality.
2. 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.

3. 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.
4. To be mindful of the truth that chaste friendships are not only possible but necessary in chaste Christian life; and to encourage one another in forming and sustaining these friendships.
5. To live lives that may serve as good examples/role models to others.

Facts about SSA

Medical doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and other mental health professionals agree that SSA can be caused by a variety of factors including emotional predisposition, environment and childhood experiences, and sexual abuse.

Courage members are free to pursue professional therapy to further understand and possibly diminish their same-sex attractions. They are under no moral obligation to do so, however. There is no guarantee that therapy will eliminate SSA, nor is such therapy always affordable or available. Courage itself does not provide professional therapy; we are solely a

spiritual support group for those persons with SSA who want assistance in living chaste lives.

Courage provides confidential, welcoming, and informative support for men and women with SSA. Please join us.

What does the Church say?

"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. Every one 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
Signed by Joseph Ratzinger

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI

What do Church officials say?

"Support groups, noted for their adherence to Church teaching, for persons who experience same-sex attraction continue to be an important part of Church ministries and are to be encouraged. [Same-sex attracted persons] should not be encouraged to define themselves primarily in terms of their sexual inclination, however, or to participate in 'gay subcultures,' which often tend to promote immoral lifestyles. Rather, they should be encouraged to form relationships with the wider community... Examples of such ministries whose principles are in accord with Church teaching are Courage and EnCourage."

"Ministry to Persons with a Homosexual Inclination: Guidelines for Pastoral Care"

U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops
November 2006

"Human love hence embraces the body, and the body also expresses spiritual love. Therefore, sexuality is not something purely biological; rather, it concerns the intimate nucleus of the person."

"The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality"

The Pontifical Council for the Family
1995

