



12-Step Program

1. We admit that we are powerless over our homosexual desires and emotions, that our lives have become unmanageable.
2. We believe that Jesus Christ, our Saviour and the son of God who is infinitely greater than ourselves, alone can bestow upon us the gift of charity and restore us to Christian celibacy through the sacramental life of the Church. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. We turn our wills and our lives over to the care of God believing and trusting that He is the only one who can transform our suffering into His peace and wisdom.
4. We make a searching and thorough and courageous examination of conscience.
5. We admit to ourselves and confess to God and to another human being the exact nature of our sins.
6. We desire our Father's mercy and forgiveness and are entirely ready to have Him remove all these sins and defects of character.
7. We humbly ask Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. We make a list of all persons we have harmed, and are willing to make amends to them all.
9. We make direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. We continue to examine our conscience and when we are wrong, promptly confess it.
11. We seek through prayer, meditation, and the sacraments to improve our relationship with God and His Church, praying for knowledge of His will for us, and the grace to carry it out.
12. We are thankful for whatever spiritual awakening and grace we have received as a result of these steps, and thereby strive to practice these principles in all our affairs and to live chaste lives that may serve as good examples to other homosexuals.

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

Are "Gay Rights" Right? Roger Magnuson (The Berean League, 2875 Snelling Avenue North, St. Paul, Minn. 55113)

Coming Out Of Homosexuality, L.I.F.E. (P.O. Box 353, NYC 10185) (a 52 minute videotape)

Gay is not Good, Frank M. Du Mas, Ph.D. (Summit Ministries, P.O. Box 207, Manitou Springs, CO 80829) (originally published by Thomas Nelson)

Growing up Straight, What every Family Should Know About Homosexuality, George Rekers (Moody Press, Chicago, IL)

Healing for the Homosexual, Presbyterian Renewal Publications (2245 N.W. 39th Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73112)

Homosexuality: Laying the Axe to the Roots, Ed Hurst (Outpost, P.O. Box 4222, Minneapolis, MN 55414)

Homosexuality: A New Christian Ethic, Dr. Elizabeth Moberly (Attic press, Rt. 2, Stony Point, Greenwood, SC 29646) – 803-374-3613

Homosexuality and Hope, Gerard Van Den Aardweg (Servant Books, Ann Arbor, Mich.)

Men and Marriage, George Gilder (Pelican Publishing co., 1101 Monroe St., Gretna, LA. 70053)

Steps Out of Homosexuality, Frank Worthen (Love in Action, P.O. Box 2655, San Rafael, CA 94912)

The Broken Image, Leanne Payne (Crossway Books, Westchester, ILL)

The Courage to be Chaste, Benedict J. Groeschel, O.F.M. Cap. (Paulist Press, Mahwah, N.J)

The Homosexual Crisis in the Mainline Church, Jerry Kirk (N.C.A.P., 800 Compton Rd. Suite 9248, Cincinnati, Ohio 45231) (originally published by Thomas Nelson).

The Homosexual Network, Enrique Rueda (Free Congress Foundation, 721 Second Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002)

The Homosexual Person: A New Pastoral Perspective, John Havey (Ignatius Press, San Francisco) or Sakland Ave., Harrison, N.Y. – 914-835-4216

DIALOGUE

A member of Courage on homosexuality, celibacy

(National Catholic Register)

For the past 4 years, Vera has been a pastoral assistant to moral theologian Father John Harvey, who directs Courage, a national Catholic organization for gays which is approved by the Church. Vera is also a member of a Catholic Lay community Anawim. She requested that her surname not be used.

Register: When did you acknowledge your homosexual tendencies?

Vera: I was about eight when I realized my need for women. My teenage years were the most painful time. I did accept dates with boys, but I felt no emotional bond with them. When I graduated from high school, I walked away from the Church. I felt that the standards it set were too high.

Register: What brought you back?

Vera: I started doing counseling work and found that I could relate well to people because I understood their pain. At the same time, I had developed a close relationship with one woman which had a sexual dimension. When this woman became interested in a man, I became very depressed. Without thinking about it in moral terms. I knew I had to decide in which direction I really wanted to go. I have an aunt who is a religious Sister up in Maine. I visited her and she put me in touch with another nun who sensed that I was at a turning point. She brought me to some people in charismatic renewal group.

Register: At the same time, did you think you had any choice but to follow your homosexual tendencies?

Vera: I was seeing a therapist who told me I should just accept the fact that I was homosexual. But I wasn't comfortable with that. On the other hand, the person I spoke with in the charismatic renewal movement told me that "no one can cure you but Jesus." At that moment. I felt a real flood of love, mercy and acceptance. When I went home, I became involved in a prayer group. I began to feel as if the Lord was really asking me to give myself to Him. My contact with others who felt a similar calling gradually led to the evolution of a community based on what we call a "spirituality of the street." Our community is dedicated to the teachings of the Church and the Pope. And within this community, I gradually realized I would have to live a chaste life.

Register: This is Courage's approach.

Vera: Courage doesn't say homosexuals must become heterosexual in order to receive God's love and acceptance. The emphasis is more on redemptive suffering. And the community, in effect, was educating my conscience. I came to realize that homosexuality could only be lived through celibacy.

Register: How difficult is it to come to terms with the notion of what may be a permanently celibate life?

Vera: I have a homosexual condition – what I call a woundedness; a brokenness. It's a condition that plagues you. It's like

the cross. I had to come to terms with a lot of anger about who I was. I returned to New York and went back to my old condition for a brief period. But when I started doing this, I knew I was selling myself short. I had met a person, a deeper person inside myself, that made me feel same and whole. I wanted that person back. But I had to find purpose in my celibacy to take it on.

Register: Purpose in suffering?

Vera: At first, suffering simply meant deprivation. But I began to realize that I had to have a purpose if I was going to deny myself a relationship with another person. I am not a conformist. I question everything. If I was going to suffer, I had to do it in a way that would lead to an interior change or growth.

Register: Today you do seem to be trying to reorient yourself as a heterosexual. Do you think you'll succeed?

Vera: Some people talk about changing into heterosexuals. But whatever transformation occurs is interior and it's a question of yielding to God's will. The question of heterosexuality is not just jumping into another skin. It's going through a change of attitude. The homosexual condition is a woundedness. Yet, to some extent, the whole human race is wounded and the only way for anyone to come to Jesus is through dying and rising. Unfortunately, a lot of theologians are overly sympathetic with people's problems. If you're really going to be charitable to people you have to tell the truth.

Register: Can the truth be told without increasing a homosexual person's sense of self-hate and isolation?

Vera: The truth has to be given in a pastoral way, a gentle way. No mere doctrine is going to bring anyone through a transformation. The Holy Spirit is the only transformer. The pastoral approach is a mediation between doctrine and spirit. The people who come to Courage are hurting. The level of hurt and rejection – not only from the world, but from themselves – is very great.

Register: How can the Church better address the special needs of homosexuals?

Vera: People come to the Church looking for help and they're given the Vatican's position on sexual ethics. They find the ideals are too high. Often, homosexuals respond to Church teaching with the feeling that they can't take any more rejection – it hurts too much. They feel they've come so far in accepting themselves, and now they're being told that they're sick. There should be a pastoral program, a step-by-step process of helping them *understand* what the Church teaches.

Register: How would you compare Courage's approach with that of Dignity, another Catholic homosexual organization?

Vera: Dignity and other homosexual organizations will say to us, "How dare you say that homosexuality is a psychological condition; why, even the American Psychiatric Association says it's not a disorder!" But in fact the association's vote was not unanimous and the World Health Organization still

maintains that homosexuality is a psychological disorder. Dignity and some other groups, like New Ways Ministry, try to equate a homosexual relationship with a heterosexual relationship – but the fact is that a homosexual couple cannot have children and cannot share in the unitive quality of marriage. Of course, there are disorders in heterosexual relationships as well, but the potential for growth remains. When people say to me that they're happy in a homosexual relationship, I ask, "What do you mean by happiness?" The deepest peace you can have is where you're living the way God intended you to live.

Register: How can we support the human dignity of a homosexual person without also affirming homosexual activity?

Vera: Some time ago a television movie was shown starring Marlo Thomas as a mother who discovered that her son was homosexual. She disapproved of his condition, but at the conclusion, she "accepted" her son by accepting him with his lover... But a homosexual tendency is *not* who you are; it's a tendency in a person. There's more to him or her than that. I approach who I am in a different way. The more you grow internally, then, as the Scriptures say, the more you can know "yourself as you are known by God." There is a whole deeper reality to who you are. When God looks at us, He sees an innocence that is robbed and distorted by evil.

Register: Have priests and nuns joined Courage?

Vera: Yes, some priests, but very few women. All homosexual groups have a difficult time drawing women. A lot of women are not sexually involved as homosexuals, but they are emotionally involved. And homosexuality is worse in convents and seminaries where there is a dissenting voice that rationalizes sexual activity and other issues like abortion.

Register: Why do you think homosexuality seems to be a growing problem with Catholic priests and nuns?

Vera: The problem is their approach to celibacy. If you're not accepting it, you're resenting it. Celibacy means leaving an empty space in your being for God and God alone. When you resent celibacy, your energies are going to go into the formation of other relationships. Some of these men are only priests during the week. On the weekend, they go off with their partner. Some religious orders have taken the kernel of sanctity out of their call. This has contributed to an acceptance of sexual relationships because [priests and nuns] have lost their sense of vocation and they approach their work only as a job.

For information contact:

Courage International
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The Word is Courage

Editor's report - Catholic New York

On a Friday night in the Big Apple a dozen guys were sitting around a table, talking about – of all things – celibacy. They had come from their jobs in business, the professions, labor. Some had traveled from as far away as Philadelphia for the weekly get-together. All had traveled a much longer distance psychologically, emotionally, spiritually. The distance from what Friday night used to be: making the scene in a gay bar, or exploding with frustration in a lonely room.

They talked, now and then, about the cynicism of the gay scene, about “the turmoil of homosexual life,” as one phrased it. “If you think celibacy is the pits, try promiscuity,” said a man I’ll call Jim. “I’ve stood in bars and screamed inside myself, “God! What am I doing here?”

For him, and for the others, the Friday night meeting at a church in lower Manhattan has become the answer to that cry. The group began a year and a half ago, with the spiritual direction of Father John F. Harvey; an Oblate Franciscan priest who teaches moral theology to seminarians in Washington, D.C., and has been engaged by the New York Archdiocese for the ministry to Catholic homosexuals.

Father Harvey said his work is “to give these people a solid spiritual foundation for leading a chaste Christian life in the midst of the world and temptation. “He acknowledges the compulsion that accompanies the homosexual condition. He maintains that while for some, homosexuality is an orientation they have chosen, for others it is a condition which

“they don’t choose, they discover.” For the Catholic, the condition means celibacy, in some ways as mandatory as that attached to the priesthood. “You can’t do it on your own,” says Father Harvey. “You need God’s help. And you need the help of a group.”

When the earliest members of the group he guides began their meetings, they chose the name, Courage.

For many of them, there were the bouts with guilt, the confessions, the slips, and more guilt.

Providing example to others is one of the goals of the group. So is sharing friendship, “so that none of us will have to face the problem of homosexuality alone,” according to the statement of purpose they drew up. One of the youngest members recalled the bitter panic he felt when he faced his homosexuality and realized how he must live as a Catholic. “I saw myself completely boxed in; a loner for the rest of my life, afraid of intimacy,” he said. He smiled then, his dark eyes darting around the rectory table. “This is the first time I could have friends and be chaste.”

When the talk got around to “choosing celibacy without bitterness,” Stuart said, “You have to make your goal union with God. As soon as I did that, I started to move.” Said the dark-eyed youth. “when you do it for love God, the struggle and the pain and the dying become a source of joy.” That open honest smile again: “I’ve never been happier.”

I thanked the men of Courage for letting me sit in on their meeting, and especially

for letting me join them at prayer. A week later one member sent me a sketch of some men kneeling in a small church in dimness that captured the idea of silent supplicant prayer. Light streamed from the central element of the drawing – the Cross of the suffering Christ. I think I understand it better now than ever before.

Father Harvey and the people of Courage are hoping that more groups like theirs will be forming soon. They asked

that Catholic New York help them reach out to others by printing the address:

Courage International

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New York NY 10001

Tel: 212-268-1010

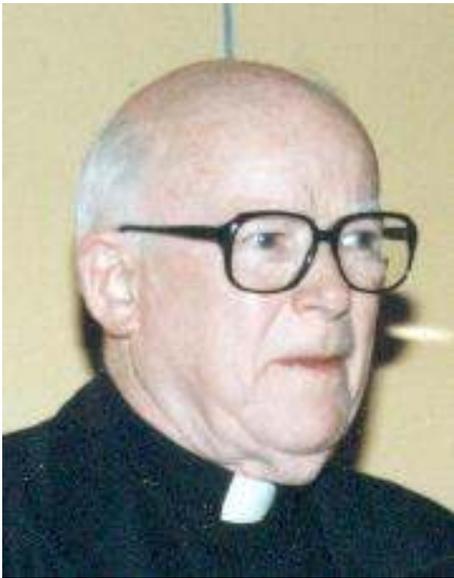
Fax: 212-268-7150

NYCourage@aol.com

<http://www.couragerc.net>

Ministry to Homosexual Persons

“Courage” offers hope for men, women seeking chaste lives



RALEIGH-It began in a small way at a parish in New York City in 1980 as a response to cries for help.

Today, “Courage,” a support group for homosexual persons who wish to lead chaste lives, is based in seven U.S. cities, in Canada, Holland, Germany, South Africa, New Zealand and Australia. Founder-director Father John Harvey of the Oblates of St. Francis of Sales visited the Diocese of Raleigh recently to guide a priests’ study day on the pastoral care of the homosexual person.

The 69-year-old priest taught moral theology at De Sales Hall in Washington, D.C., for 38 years. He is a visiting professor there, and teaches medical ethics to nurses at St. Francis de Sales Hospital in Philadelphia. He is the spiritual director of Courage chapters in New York City and White Plains, N.Y. In an interview with *The North Carolina Catholic*, Father Harvey said Courage lacks legions of members.

“But we can’t measure the value of a movement by the fact that many don’t accept it.” Father Harvey said. “Rather,

we must measure it by the change in the lives of those who do.”

He said, “The message of salvation was never meant to be a popular movement. God offers salvation to individuals. God is not beholding to *The Washington Post* or CBS polls.”

Courage, he said, supports men and women who want to move “from the slavery of homosexuality to lives of virtue.”

The Church is challenged to respond to persons who are struggling to find Christ in a chaste life.

The idea is countercultural to a “feel-good society.” Which assumes that anyone who tries to be chaste must be neurotic.

“We live in a society that says that everyone must have sex-if not good sex, then bad sex will do,” Father Harvey observed. “The reality is that people can lead happy, productive lives of chastity.” He thinks celibacy gets poor press. He said celibacy doesn’t produce a sexless creature devoid of human feelings. It is a matter of learning to give certain feelings over to God.

Courage drew on the insights of the first members of the support group. Looking to their own experiences, they hammered out these goals:

- To live chaste lives in accordance with the Roman Catholic Church’s teachings on homosexuality;
- To dedicate their lives to Christ through service to others, through prayer and reception of the sacraments;

- To regard friendships as possible and necessary for a good life;
- To foster a spirit of fellowship so that no one will face the problems of homosexuality alone;
- To live lives that may serve as good examples to other homosexuals.

Father Harvey said, on the one hand, an undetermined number of homosexual men and women live lonely lives, desperate to keep their “secret.” On the other hand, society and the Church offer them little hope in a milieu of fear and misconceptions.

He said the distinction must be clearly made between homosexual orientation and homosexual activity.

Courage was founded on good *information*. It was built on a series of educational conferences in 1979-80, which Father

Harvey helped to develop for clergy, Religious and laity at the invitation of the late Cardinal Terrence Cooke of New York.

“The first meeting of Courage took place in October 1980,” Father Harvey said.

“Its purposes were hammered out by lay people. Its name was suggested by one of the first members, who died of AIDS in 1984.”

The organization languished when few people responded to ads placed in *The Village Voice*.

Then *Catholic New York*, the archdiocesan paper, took interest in Courage. That support helped Courage become a well-established ministry.

**“The reality is
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Father Harvey

He said the formation of a Courage group begins with the sanction of the local bishop and support from diocesan priests, Religious and laity. Anonymity of members must be protected and guaranteed.

Candidates for membership must understand and espouse the commitment to celibacy and the other goals of Courage.

Father Harvey said Courage models the “Twelve Steps of Alcoholics

Anonymous,” which are concerned with spirituality. “One person may feel helpless to alcohol, whereas another person may feel helpless to homosexual activity,” Father Harvey said. “The steps complement the Courage goals and can be viewed as practical ways to fulfill those goals.”

Father Harvey is in residence at St. Michael Church, 424 W. 34th Street, New York, N.Y. 10001 (1995)

Recommended related reading includes:
A Spiritual Plan to Redirect One’s Life
Father Harvey, Daughter of St. Paul Press, 50 St. Paul Ave., Boston, Mass. 02130

Pastoral Care and the Homosexual
Knights of Columbus pamphlet No. 85, P.O. Box 1971, New Haven, Conn. 06521

The Homosexual Person, New Thinking in Pastoral Care Father Harvey, Ignatius Press 15, Oakland Ave., Harrison, N.Y. 10528