

1. will cover the Old and New Testaments from end to end in one year. Try it.

2. Bookmark the **New American Bible** site [www.nccbuscc.org/nab/bible/imdex](http://www.nccbuscc.org/nab/bible/imdex) and visit it when you take a break at work

### **The Catholic Faith - Sacred Traditions**

The Sacred Traditions are a means of communion with God and one another through, sacraments, devotion and prayer. Given to us by Jesus, they engage and awaken our physical, mental and spiritual senses to God's presence and movement in our lives. There are three main areas.

#### **1. The Sacraments**

([www.couragec.net/OCFSacraments.html](http://www.couragec.net/OCFSacraments.html)). Rites observed by Jesus, that Catholics participate in today, serving as evidence of God's grace, sanctifying, building up, instructing and providing means of worship.

#### **2. Devotions**

([www.couragec.net/OCFDevotion.html](http://www.couragec.net/OCFDevotion.html)). Ways of regularly giving or applying one's time, attention or self to matters of holiness.

#### **3. Prayer** [www.couragec.net/OCFPrayer.html](http://www.couragec.net/OCFPrayer.html)).

Acts of communion with God such as confession, praise, or thanksgiving.

### **Our Catholic Faith - Magisterial Teachings and Focus Articles**

The magisterial teachings are a means by which the Pope together with a counsel of Bishops (together called the magisterium) interpreting the Holy Scriptures and Sacred Traditions, bring greater understanding and direction to us on current issues. Out of this effort come series of documents.

There are many magisterial documents. To get a complete listing, visit the Vatican website ([www.vatican.org/](http://www.vatican.org/)). There you can search on any number of topics that you may be seeking clarification on.

Associated with the magisterial documents are focus articles of bishops and priests on single and groups of documents. This is what comes most frequently to our parishes at sermons, notices in the bulletins and Diocese newspapers.

For the purpose of this Courage Website, we are presenting mixed groups of magisterial documents and focus articles specifically on homosexuality and

sexuality. From these you will see that the Church has for a very long time, instructed all to reach out to those struggling with homosexual feelings.

Contrary to what many of us have at times thought, the Church has not abandoned those of us with same-sex desires. She has instead stood firm on Spiritual truths that are meant to guide us toward our needed growth and maturity in Christ. The following teachings provide sound guidance on this issue.

1. **Holy See Endorses Courage** Pope John Paul II expresses the Vatican's approval of Courage, a Catholic organization that offers guidance and fellowship for those struggling with homosexuality.

2. **Eleven Church Teachings on Homosexuality** Compiled by Courage and a Youth Minister this article provides a comprehensive and clear picture on the church's teachings on homosexuality and why.

3. **Pope John Paul II Speaks On Homosexuality** Pope John Paul II reminds us of what homosexuality is and what our responsibilities are as Catholics in living out the truths in this matter.

4. **Chastity and Homosexuality** In the Catholic Catechism the Vatican defines homosexuality and gives guidance.

5. **Official Statement of American Bishops** The American Bishops bring more clarity and direction while maintaining the stated truths about homosexuality.

6. **Truth and the Meaning of Human Sexuality** The Vatican brings definition and direction to our understanding of Human Sexuality in general.

7. **Humanae Vitae** Pope John Paul II describes the sacredness of human life.

8. **On the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons** Letter from the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith to the Bishops of the Catholic Church, describing the proper pastoral ministry approach for counsel of those struggling with homosexuality.

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### **The Evangelization Station**

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Pamphlet 398

# **Courage - Ministering to Those with Same-Sex Attractions**

Courage, an apostolate of the Roman Catholic Church, ministers to those with same-sex attractions and their loved ones. We have been endorsed by the **Pontifical Council for the Family** and our beloved John Paul II said of this ministry, "**COURAGE is doing the work of God!**" We also have an outreach called **Encourage** ([www.couragec.net/Encourage.html](http://www.couragec.net/Encourage.html)), which ministers to relatives and friends of persons with same-sex attractions.

Persons with homosexual desires have always been with us; however, until recent times, there has been little, if any, formal outreach from the Church in the way of support groups or information for such persons. Most were left to work out their path on their own. As a result, they found themselves listening to and accepting the secular society's perspective and opting to act on their same-sex desires.

His Eminence, the late Terence Cardinal Cooke of New York, was aware of, and troubled by this situation. He knew that the individual dealing with same-sex attractions truly needed to experience the freedom of interior chastity and in that freedom find the steps necessary to living a fully Christian life 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 in September, 1980 at the Shrine of Mother Seton in South Ferry.

With the endorsement of the Holy See, Courage now has more than 110 Chapters and contact people world-wide, over 1500 persons participating in its ListServes, and hundreds of persons per week receiving

assistance from the main office and website. It has become a mainstream Catholic Apostolate helping thousands of men and women find peace through fellowship, prayer, and the Sacraments.

The Courage Central Office operates through the prayerful and financial support of the Archdiocese of New York as well as contributions and volunteer work from Courage members and other individuals and organizations committed to advancing its efforts.

Individual chapters throughout the world are self-supporting and exist with the permission of their diocesan Bishop.

In helping individuals gain a greater understanding and appreciation of the Church's teachings, especially in the area of chastity, Courage extends the Church's invitation to a life of peace and grace. In chaste living, one finds the peace and grace to grow in Christian maturity.

## The Five Goals

The following five goals of Courage were created by the members themselves, when Courage was founded. The goals are read at the start of each meeting and each member is called to practice them in daily life.

1. Live chaste lives in accordance with the Roman Catholic Church's teaching on homosexuality. **(Chastity)**

2. Dedicate ones life 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 Holy Eucharist. **(Prayer and Dedication)**

3. Foster a spirit of fellowship in which all may share thoughts and experiences, and so ensure that no one will have to face the problems of homosexuality alone. **(Fellowship)**

4. Be mindful of the truth that chaste friendships are not only possible but necessary in a chaste Christian life and in doing so provide encouragement to one another in forming and sustaining them. **(Support)**

5. Live lives that may serve as good examples to others. **(Good Example)**

Some say the Church is just a bunch of rules and restrictions. Some talk about the Church as if it arbitrarily and spontaneously comes up with its stances in order to exert control on society. Some wonder if

living the Catholic faith will be helpful in their struggle with same-sex desires.

Courage emphasizes that, through your relationship with Jesus Christ, you will find what truly matters in life. In fact, it is only in Him that you will find the true answers to your questions.

The road is not always easy but, with faith, understanding and love, you will be able to make choices that will enable you to walk a closer walk with Him.

The Catholic Church is here to help us do that through teaching and through the sacraments. Contrary to popular perspective, practicing Catholics find great freedom in following the Church's teaching.

This section provides a simple overview of the Catholic faith. After reading through it, we encourage you to seek further understanding and relationship with God and others by participating in your local parish.

The Catholic faith is made up of three **interconnected** parts.

### 1. Holy Scriptures

[www.couragerc.net/OCFHolyScriptures.html](http://www.couragerc.net/OCFHolyScriptures.html) - The Word of God, written into two books: the Old and New Testaments. From the Holy Scriptures we can gain insight and clarity on who God is, how He relates to us and how as God's people we have responded.

### 2. Sacred Traditions

[www.couragerc.net/OCFSacredTraditions.html](http://www.couragerc.net/OCFSacredTraditions.html) - Means of communion with God and one another through the Sacraments, devotions and prayer. Given to us by Jesus, they engage and awaken our physical, mental and spiritual senses to God's presence and movement in our lives.

### 3. Magisterial Teachings -

[www.couragerc.net/OCFMagisterialTeachings.html](http://www.couragerc.net/OCFMagisterialTeachings.html) Means by which the Pope together with a counsel of Bishops interpreting the Holy Scriptures and Sacred Traditions, bring greater understanding and direction to us on current issues.

## The Catholic Faith - Holy Scriptures

We believe the Holy Scriptures are Divinely inspired works. That means that God was right there in the hearts of those who wrote them, breathing His Holy Spirit into every thought and stroke of the pen. From the Holy Scriptures we can gain insight and clarity on who God is, how He relates to us and how, as God's people, we have responded.

The Holy Scriptures, also known as the Word of God, are an essential and integral part of our faith as Catholics. Did you know that the readings recited at each mass cover the Old and New Testaments in three years? From the Vatican to local churches to our living rooms, the Bible is of great importance to a Catholic's walk.

Try making some time daily to reflect on the Sacred Scriptures. And keep in mind, the Holy Spirit given to the Church by Jesus after His Resurrection is constantly with us to offer guidance and protection. This means that you are not alone in this effort.

Do this. Each morning when you wake up and each evening before you head off to sleep, say a prayer to the Holy Spirit to ask for His guidance and pause for a moment in expectation of His presence. Then open up your Bible and read a passage. Spend a few moments and quietly reflect on it. You may want to write down some thoughts that come to you, in your journal.

Here's some other suggestions for approaching the Word of God. Pick one and try it out.

3. Make a visit to your **local parish** and see if there is a **Bible study** offered there. If not, ask if they know of other places which would offer them. When studying the scriptures in the presence of a clergy member, you will gain the benefit of acquiring a clearer and broader understanding of them. Also, getting together with others to study the Word of God can bring to you different perspectives on the Bible, and what you share can help others too. Besides, it's fun to study with others.

4. Visit the **Word of God** website ([www.wordofgod.ca/](http://www.wordofgod.ca/)). This resource was developed by Fr. John Mole, O.M.I., to help you prepare for the coming Sunday's readings.

5. The Holy Scriptures have been studied for years by the Church and some Church organizations have put together booklets explaining them. You may want to get a hold of one of those. Try visiting **The Word Among Us** website ([www.wau.org/](http://www.wau.org/)). There you can view articles online and order their periodic publication.

6. Publications like these come out monthly providing insight on the scriptures presented in the daily and Sunday Masses.

7. Another type of Holy Scriptures guide is the **"Prayers of the Hours."** It is a prayer book that many Holy Orders use for their daily prayer. Any Catholic book store would have them in stock. If read daily, you