COURAGE
INTERNATIONAL

Thanksgiving, 2026

Dear Friends,

I happened to be at my parent's house on January 2, 2026, when I received a phone call that I never expected to receive: "We have been invited to share the story of Courage with the Holy Father, and you are one of the group going to meet Pope Leo!" It set off a flurry of planning and organizing, leading up to a conversation that was simply amazing. To spend thirty minutes with the successor of Peter was something I never thought I would have the opportunity to do. I found Pope Leo to be kind, gracious, humble, and a very attentive listener, as we shared the story and impact that Courage International has now achieved on a global scale, as the authoritative voice of the Church for those persons who experience same sex attraction, and for family members who have a loved one active in the lifestyle.

Here we were, the four of us, sharing the story of a ministry that has impacted each of us with the Holy Father. I continue to pray that the joy of that day inspires the ongoing work of Courage long into the future.

As the year started with an unexpected encounter, so too, this year is ending with something unexpected. I am very grateful for the work that Fr. Brian Gannon has given as Executive Director for Courage over the last two and a half years, and I am glad he will continue his work with Courage as the local chaplain for the Diocese of Bridgeport.

As this is published, I am resuming the role of Executive Director for Courage, while remaining as Pastor of my parishes in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. I am excited by the opportunity to give back to an organization that has given so much to me.

During these last six years in which I served on the Board of Directors, I started to learn the breadth of the work of the Courage Office. When I first started with Courage in 2014, I had no idea of the length of our outreach. As I said above, we are truly global, with ministry happening across the US and Canada; plus growing chapters throughout Latin America, in Poland, Spain, and Italy, small movements in Slovakia and the Czech Republic; as well as long established chapters in the Philippines and the United Kingdom; among other movements of Courage and EnCourage spread out to the far winds of this planet.

Frankly, it takes a lot of work to coordinate such a widespread ministry, especially with the small staff as we have. The *need* for our ministry calls for us to double our staff! It is amazing what we can do with only 7 full-time and 4 part-time employees. Imagine what we could do with twice that! Your ongoing support will enable the voice of Courage to be heard throughout the Church, because it is a beautiful and powerful voice of the transformative power of the Gospel. Please give as generously as you are able!

To further our reach, we are working on a new website to reach the world in a new and beautiful way. We are engaging young adults through our participation with FOCUS and their SEEK Conference. We continue to provide all our materials in at least three languages: English, Spanish and Portuguese, with occasional reaches to Polish and Italian as well.

As we enter this season of thanks, we begin by giving thanks to God for you and your support for this ministry through your donations and your prayers. Thank you.

But we know the work ahead is still mountainous. After the joy of meeting the Holy Father, we had the stinging disappointment of the Synod Report 9 which, frankly, maligned the work of Courage in such a vile way. We continue to explore our options for recourse to find the healing so many in Courage and EnCourage need after that report.

With the amount of work ahead of us, we continue to look for new sources of funding. This year, Fr. Gannon and Fr. Blatchford were able to attend the Napa Institute, a conference for influential Catholic leaders, and Fr. Blatchford and I plan to attend this coming year. We want to be a part of the conversation, to tell the story of healing and grace that is the heart of the ministry of Courage.

As we prepare to welcome the Lord, anew, this Christmas, know of my prayers, esteem and gratitude for all who have sustained Courage over the years, and I look forward to sharing the story of Courage to an ever-wider audience into the future. Please mark your calendars for the 2027 Annual Courage and EnCourage Conference, July 21-25, 2027, at Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas. We'd love to see you there!

In Christ,



Fr. Kyle Schnippel
Executive Director