COURAGE
INTERNATIONAL

Easter 2022

Dear Friends,

Speaking in 1999 to representatives of diocesan ministries to people who identify as LGBT, Cardinal Francis George, then-Archbishop of Chicago, said that "To deny that the power of God's grace enables homosexuals to live chastely is to deny, effectively, that Jesus has risen from the dead." For more than forty Easters, Courage and EnCourage members have found freedom, peace and joy in an encounter with the Risen Christ through the sacraments and the perennial teaching of His Church.

Sadly, this Easter finds the universal Church divided on that perennial teaching—the very thing that unites our Courage and EnCourage family—at the highest levels of leadership. For example, in early February, Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich, SJ, Archbishop of Luxembourg and President of the Commission of Bishops' Conferences of the European Union, who has recently been named Relator General for the upcoming Synod of Bishops, claimed that "the sociological-scientific foundation of this teaching is no longer correct," and called for "a fundamental revision of Church teaching" and "a change in doctrine."

Just last month, Cardinal Reinhard Marx, Archbishop of Munich and a close advisor to the Holy Father, went further in support of such a revision. "The catechism is not set in stone," he said. "One may also question what it says." Cardinal Marx's dissent has been the most explicit to date, but numerous bishops and priests have called for a change in the Church's doctrine about the morality of same-sex intimate acts. They have done so despite the reality that the Catechism presents that teaching as based on Sacred Scripture and Tradition, and consistently taught by the Church—and therefore an infallible teaching of the ordinary universal magisterium. Every Catholic is called to embrace these teachings fully and freely, especially clerics, who profess an Oath of Fidelity before ordination and each time they accept an office in the Church. They swear to "hold fast to" the Church's doctrine, "faithfully hand it on and explain it, and … avoid any teachings contrary to it." To break an oath is a grave sin.

As we gather for Mass each day, the staff of the Courage Office pray that we may be "faithful to the mission ... to speak the truth in love to the Church and to the world." The contrast between Cardinal George's faithful encouragement and call to chastity, and the cynical dissent of Cardinal Hollerich and Cardinal Marx demonstrates just how essential our mission is for the sake of our brothers and sisters who are striving to live chaste lives, to keep their relationships with loved ones strong and healthy, and to be a light of hope and witness to the world. Our Courage and EnCourage family rightly looks to the Church, and especially our spiritual fathers in the clergy, to support and guide them in these efforts. And we take seriously our right to expect such support and clear guidance, as well as our responsibility to do what we can to strengthen our brothers and sisters in the faith.

With all of this in mind, I am asking you earnestly to continue and even increase your support for Courage International and the work that we are doing to proclaim the truth. Your support will help us in numerous ways:

- Our annual Courage and EnCourage Conference welcomes members and chaplains of our apostolate, as well as people in ministry, to pray, study and celebrate together, and to support one another in embracing and living the truth. More information on this year's conference is included in this mailing, and I hope you can join us. Even if you are not able to attend in person, **your gift of $500** allows us to provide a **scholarship** for a potential priest chaplain, a Courage member, or a teacher or catechist, who would not otherwise be able to afford it.
- We love to welcome new chaplains, appointed by their bishops, to the Courage Office for in-person training. This includes time for study and discussion, as well as the opportunity to attend several Courage and EnCourage meetings locally and learn from our veteran chaplains and members. **Your gift of $1,000** will allow us to provide this program **at little or no cost** to the new chaplain's diocese.
- Throughout the year, our associate director, Father Blatchford, and I travel around the country—and, when we can, internationally—to offer "Clergy Study Days" to priests and deacons in their dioceses. We explain the Church's teaching and the language it uses, discuss good pastoral care, and share personal testimonies from Courage and EnCourage members. **Your gift of $2,500** would **significantly defray the cost of this program** so that no diocese need hesitate to invite us because of a lack of financial resources. **Your gift of $5,000** would cover our costs for such a program **completely**.
- The best work that we do remains the pastoral care that my brother chaplains and I provide for our members. **A gift of any size** means I can spend less time fundraising and more time with the men and women whom I have the privilege to serve in this apostolate. And **major gifts and bequests** will allow our work to continue uninterrupted for years to come.

The most important gift, of course, is your prayer that our work will draw many people to hear the Good News about chastity and virtue, and experience the happiness that holiness brings. "This is what is at stake," St John Paul II once wrote: "the reality of Christ's redemption. Christ has redeemed us! This means that he has given us the possibility of realizing the entire truth of our being; he has set our freedom free from the domination of concupiscence" (*Veritatis splendor,* 103).

Be sure of my prayers for you and your loved ones on Easter and throughout this joyous season. May Christ, truly Risen, reward your generosity and bless you and your loved ones abundantly.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Father Philip G. Bochanski
Executive Director