

EnCourage Members Honor Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception and Unite in Prayer on “Shrine” Day

*Private prayer is like straw scattered here and there:
if you set it on fire it makes a lot of little flames.
But gather these straws into a bundle and light them,
and you get a mighty fire, rising like a column in the sky.*
Saint John Vianney

Every night of the week, for more than three years, EnCourage prayer call members have sought to bundle their individual flames of prayer together. The hope has been that a mighty fire of united prayers might ascend like a blazing column before the throne of God. On December 7, 2019, many EnCourage prayer call members united in prayer yet again—but in a different way. They united to honor Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, on an EnCourage Shrine Day.

In days leading up to Shrine Day, members prayed a novena to Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception. When Shrine Day arrived, members went to local shrines or holy sites and prayed before the Blessed Sacrament. Rosaries and Divine Mercy chaplets were prayed for healing of all those experiencing Same-Sex Attraction (SSA) or Gender Identity Disorder (GID), and for healing of those who support SSA or GID behavior. Participants prayed for their own loved ones, and also for loved ones of others—praying from a list of names collected in advance.

Many felt the comfort, hope and peace of the Holy Spirit, as one participant described:

While visiting and praying for our loved ones at a shrine in my area, I felt such solidarity with other EnCourage members. I was filled with peace and hope that our unified prayers will be answered, in God’s good time.

Some members felt Mary had heard their prayers, as another member explained:

I knew Mary was hearing each and every parent as we all prayed a special prayer for these kids. Surely our prayers that day were brought to her as in a giant bouquet.

At least 14 holy sites were visited, often by multiple members, in various states including: Texas, Florida, Georgia, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Washington, and Virginia. Some visited shrines included the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, the National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa and the Basilica of the National Shrine of Mary, Queen of the Universe. To honor Mary, members took pictures of her images. These beautiful images were shared with fellow participants, and some are on the [Courage Facebook page](#).

Our next EnCourage Shrine Day will be on Saturday, April 18th—the day before Divine Mercy Sunday. To participate, e-mail praywithcourage@gmail.com. If you have a conflict on April 18th, uniting your prayers “spiritually” on an alternate day will work. Prayers will be sent and names collected in advance.

If you are homebound, you can pray from home, perhaps participating in a “virtual” tour at a shrine like the [National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception](#).

For information on EnCourage nightly prayer calls, please e-mail sullivanm0521@yahoo.com.