

**Highlights from the Courage & EnCourage Annual Conference  
Benedictine College, Atchison, Kansas ~ July 27 – July 30, 2023**

As posted on the Courage International Facebook page

**Wednesday:**

On Wednesday, we set up the registration tables. Courage and EnCourage members, and priests and chaplains, from all over the country, including members from Canada, Spain, and Germany, arrived here at the beautiful campus of Benedictine College.



**Thursday:**

We began at 6:00 p.m. with the celebration of Holy Mass. Bishop Earl K. Fernandes, Diocese of Columbus, Ohio, was the celebrant.



After dinner our opening speaker was Fr. Paul Scalia. His presentation was titled “The Eucharist – Our Nourishment to Nourish Others: How Eucharistic Devotion Commits Us to the Poor in our Midst.”

On Thursday night, there was a healing service led by Fr. James Livingston who has ministered to us in this way for many years.

Throughout the weekend, the dozens of priests from all over the country made themselves available for confessions.

Not only were the conference speakers broadcast live via Zoom in English, but we also had Spanish translations via Zoom for the many Spanish speaking members who joined us!

**Friday:**

Fr. Kyle Schnippel and Fr. Colin Blatchford started the day with comments about current events and the state of the Courage apostolate.

That was followed by the celebration of Holy Mass with Bishop Earl K. Fernandes, Bishop of Columbus Ohio, as our celebrant.

Our first speaker of the day was Dr. Matthew Ramage, associate professor at Benedictine College. His presentation was on “The Healing Power of Sacrificial Love: Insights from Pope Benedict XVI and How to Live the Experiment of Faith.”

After lunch, Leyden Rovelo-Krull of the Catherine of Sienna Institute, spoke on, “Charisms: At the Service of Our Neighbor.”

In the afternoon there were Courage and EnCourage meetings with with many of our priests, deacons, and chaplains in attendance.

Our final presentation on Friday evening was by Fr. Richard Samour of the Diocese of San Antonio, Texas: “To Be One Mind with the Church: Celibacy and Gift of Self.”



At the end of the day was Eucharistic adoration and praying the rosary.

Many of you know Dr. Tim Lock who is a member of our Board of Directors and presented last year on the topic of forgiveness. We're very proud to report that the Catholic Media Association has just announced that his book, *Choosing Forgiveness*, was awarded first place in the Healing & Self Help category for 2023. In addition, Dr. Lock is part of a new EWTN series called *I Forgive* hosted by Immaculee Ilibagiza. Dr. Lock was signing copies of his book at the conference

## Saturday:

We began the day with Holy Mass with over a dozen priests concelebrating and several deacons assisting. Fr. Kyle Schnippel gave an inspiring homily reminding us “that Jesus asks the same questions to us as he asked to Martha” “Do you believe this?”

“Do you believe Jesus is sitting there in those moments of sadness with you? Do you believe he’s weeping with you? Do you feel his presence?”

Heather Voccola, who worked at the Courage central office for several years, had a table for St. Paul Book and Church Supply. They are happy to provide the conference bookstore at the Courage and EnCourage conference each year. You can also find them online at [stpaulmemphis.com](http://stpaulmemphis.com)

Courage member, Gary H., the master artist whose paintings of Christ on the Cross, Our Lady of Courage, and other beautiful works of art filled the stage, also had prints available for purchase at a table in the lobby.



Our first speakers of the day were Andrew and Annette Comiskey of Desert Stream Ministries on the subject of “Respecting Differences: How Mutual Submission Overflows to Others.”

In the afternoon, there were five separate workshop sessions that our members could pick from to attend.

Chuck Weber, Executive Director, Kansas Catholic Conference, was one of the presenters and he spoke on, “Service in Media.” Chuck was the producer and writer of our 5-part series, *Invited to Courageous Love*.

Saturday afternoon also included breakout sessions for EnCourage parents and praying the rosary at Mary’s Grotto on campus.



Fr. Bochanski was awarded the annual CMAC award. It is presented to a Courage or EnCourage member each year for outstanding service to the apostolate.

The highlight of the evening was personal witness testimonies from several Courage and EnCourage members. (Sometimes there is not a dry eye in the house!)

We ended the evening in celebration! Saturday night’s social included happy hour, light hors d’oeuvres, and Fr. John from Tulsa, Oklahoma, providing live music on his guitar.



## Sunday:

Our final speaker was Fr. Philip Bochanski, former executive director of Courage International, now the Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. His presentation was, “Go and Do Likewise: Imitating the Good Samaritan.”

Sunday’s Holy Mass was celebrated by Fr. Bochanski and concelebrated by priests from many dioceses around the country.



As we conclude yet another successful annual conference, we find ourselves filled with immense gratitude and a touch of bittersweet emotion. It is with a heart full of appreciation that we write to extend our sincerest thanks to each and every one of you for being an indispensable part of this unforgettable event.

Our dedicated volunteers deserve a special mention. Your tireless efforts behind the scenes ensured the seamless execution of each event, leaving everyone with a memorable experience. Without your commitment, passion, and love of our Lord and the Holy Catholic Church, this conference would not have been possible. Once again, we thank you for being an essential part of our annual conference.

A special thanks to all of those who participated in the Spanish component of our conference.

Your presence has brought joy and fulfillment to our hearts, and we sincerely hope that you carry the inspiration gained here and the love of Jesus, into your personal and professional lives.

We will continue our prayers for all of our members and may almighty God bless you