

WHAT WE CAN DO

"Above all, welcome these young adults and, if they are honestly striving to live in accordance with the teaching of Christ, encourage their full and active role in parish life. Such participation provides a source of support that allows them to make progress in living a chaste life.

We ask that you promote support groups that foster chaste living, such as "Courage" for individuals with same-sex attraction and "EnCourage" for families interested in learning more about how to help their loved ones. Where support groups already exist, give them your backing. Where they do not yet exist, make every effort to establish them at both the parish and diocesan levels."

— Pastoral Ministry to Young People with Same-Sex Attraction, Episcopal Commission for Doctrine of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, June 23, 2011

"This resource accurately reflects Church teaching; it will profit those who seek to grow in their understanding of the love and mercy that God has for us all. It offers valuable insights from those persons who experience same-sex attractions and who have chosen to live lives consistent with the truth of the human person and the Catholic Faith."

— Fr. Paul N. Check, Executive Director, Courage International

For more information or to speak with the chaplain in confidence, contact:

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For more information about the Church's teaching on homosexuality, please visit the Courage website at www.couragerc.org.

Have Courage! Share this pamphlet with a friend or loved one.

HAVE COURAGE! YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Do you experience same-sex attractions?

Do you know someone who experiences same sex attractions?

Do you agree that all people are beloved children of God, *regardless of their sexual attractions*?

If you have answered "yes" to even one of these questions ...

Have Courage! You are not alone!

A PLACE TO CALL HOME

Many of us who experience same-sex attractions have chosen to embrace the Catholic Church because we have found *love* in the Catholic Church - in the last place the world taught that we should look! The Catholic Church welcomed us *as we were* and gently invited us to pursue a greater degree of truth and self-honesty about who we are as persons. Today we understand why - as we come to embrace greater truth, we experience greater joy. Our journeys have brought us to grow in our understanding of our purpose and place in God's beautiful plan. The joy we experience today as a result of saying "Yes!" to that invitation is greater than what we ever before knew was possible. Our lives are living testimonies of that joy, and we thank the Catholic Church for inviting and encouraging us to pursue greater truth and self-honesty, while affirming us in the truth that we are indeed beloved children of God, first and foremost.

Our journeys have also been greatly aided by *Courage*; a world-wide Catholic spiritual network supported by Blessed Pope John Paul II, designed specifically for persons like us - persons who have been permitted the experience of same-sex attractions and who desire to live joyful lives as faithful Catholics. *Courage* empowered us with the awareness that despite our *non-specifically chosen* attractions, we still are free to *specifically choose* how to define ourselves as persons. That has empowered us with the realization that we

have the ability to be honest with ourselves about the existence of our attractions, while still being able to self-identify in a way that reflects Catholic teaching - which is to choose to self-identify first and foremost as beloved children of God, above all else. Today we realize how this identity, when wholeheartedly embraced, reflects a greater degree of truth of who we are as persons than any identity that is centered on any single facet of our beings (such as our sexuality). This is why we now joyfully choose to self-identify not as gays or lesbians, but rather first and foremost as beloved children of God - who are fully honest with ourselves about the existence of our attractions.

As well, within *Courage* is *EnCourage*, a ministry for our loved ones who might not experience same-sex attractions, but who are striving to grow together with us while we journey towards a stronger relationship with Christ.

