

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 reason and truth that underlies Catholic teaching. 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! PURSUING THE GREATEST TRUTH

What does the Catholic Church actually teach?

How do I explain my faith to my friends?

Does the Catholic Church actually love ME?

If you have ever asked any of these questions...

**Have Courage!
You are not alone!**

EMBRACING THE FAITH

There are many of us with same-sex attractions who have chosen to embrace the Catholic Church and Her teachings. We have done so because we have experienced the greatest degree of joy in the Catholic Church - in the last place the world ever taught that we should look! We have come to know that the Catholic Church loves us very deeply and we would like nothing more than to share that message with the whole world. For that reason, we would like to share with you the Truths that the Catholic Church teaches so that you can better understand how we came to know that the Catholic Church is where we are loved and where we belong. Our souls desired truth - and the Catholic Church delivered!

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH TEACHES THESE FIVE ESSENTIAL TRUTHS

1. The Catholic Church sees all people, regardless of their sexual attractions, as beloved children of God *above all else*.
2. We need to acknowledge the existence of our sexual attractions so that we can be more completely honest with ourselves.
3. We do not specifically choose our sexual attractions, therefore we can let go of any shame or guilt internalized on account of the existence of those attractions.
4. The primary focus of our prayers should not be to “take away same-sex attractions”, but rather should be for the strength to keep Christ at the center of our lives *and our identities*.
5. For as long as we have free will, we have the ability to choose how we shall identify ourselves as persons. However, because *that which is unchosen* needs to be considered distinct from *that which is chosen*, we need to recognize our *unchosen* sexual attractions to be distinct from the identities we *choose* to embrace.



IMPLICATIONS OF THESE FIVE ESSENTIAL TRUTHS

There are many of us who experience same-sex attractions and who have chosen to embrace these Five Essential Truths. However, after doing so, we realized that in order to reflect these truths in our lives, we would have to examine *and possibly make changes* to how we approached ourselves, our sexuality, and ultimately, each other. This has been a joyful, yet challenging process, but it has yielded great rewards. Embracing these Five Essential Truths *and their implications* - and then living our lives accordingly has helped us experience peace and joy beyond what we ever before knew was possible. For that reason, we invite you to journey with us into these truths *and their implications* in hopes that you might also share in our joy.

- 1. Language:** If we do not recognize *unchosen* sexual attractions to be distinct from *chosen* (embraced) identity then we inhibit the fullness of truth from being known. That is, if we choose to use words like "straight", "gay" (or "ex-gay"), "lesbian", "bi-sexual", and "transgender" in ways that *do not clarify* whether we are referring to either *unchosen* sexual attractions or *chosen* (embraced) identity, then we *knowingly prevent* the fullness of truth from being known via *our choice* to use non-clarifying language.
- 2. Truth:** Points of view that do not clarify the use of those prior-mentioned words *are not capable of reflecting the fullness of truth*. Those points of view embed the error that something *unchosen* (such as sexual attractions) *need not be considered distinct* from something *chosen* (such as embraced identity). When we embrace those error-containing points of view as *actual truth*, we commit to embracing *less than the fullness of truth*. When we embrace *less than the fullness of truth* (or an inhibition of truth) as *the fullness of truth*, we commit ourselves to embracing falsehood.
- 3. Joy:** A commitment to falsehood (whether we have full knowledge of it or not) prevents us from being able to experience the fullness of joy. We are invited to recognize that the *only* points of view that *potentially* permit us the ability to reflect the fullness of truth when embraced, are points of view that explicitly clarify

whether we are referring to either *unchosen* sexual attractions or *chosen* identity. If we *choose* to not clarify our use of language in this regard, then we *choose* to inhibit truth from being known, and in inhibiting truth, we compromise our ability to experience joy.

- 4. Fulfillment:** We all naturally pursue fulfillment. However, our journey towards fulfillment is greatly influenced by the identity we choose to embrace. If our identity is centered on our sexuality, then our journey towards fulfillment will be anchored on our sexuality (creation). If our identity is centered on our relationship with God, then our journey towards fulfillment will be anchored on our relationship with God (Creator). However, since it is true that *infinite* Creator is greater than *finite* creation, it is true that the identity that draws us to seek fulfillment via our Creator will fulfill us *to a greater degree* than any identity that draws us to seek fulfillment via creation.
- 5. Identity:** When we choose to identify as beloved children of God *above all else*, while still fully acknowledging the existence of our sexual attractions, we reflect the truth *within our embraced identity* that Creator is greater than creation for this identity orders God *above* sexuality. However, if we choose to embrace the sexually-centered identities of being "straight", "gay" (or "ex-gay"), "lesbian", "bi-sexual", "transgender", and so forth, we embrace identities that inhibit us from being able to reflect truth, for those identities order sexuality (*finite* creation) to be greater than God (*infinite* Creator). Those identities embed falsehood for they disorder that which is *finite* and that which is *infinite*. However, when we choose to embrace the identity of being "beloved children of God, who fully acknowledge the existence of our sexual attractions", we correct that disordering, and are thus able to reflect a greater degree of truth from within our beings. The awareness of our choice to embrace *this* identity and thus reflect greater truth, is what empowers us to be able to experience a greater degree of joy.

WE ARE CALLED TO INVITE OTHERS

Those who strive to affirm persons into embracing sexually-centered identities *may or may not* be aware of the inhibitions of truth they are promoting. For those who are not aware, we must carefully *and appropriately* invite them into uninhibitedly journeying towards greater truth. There was a point where we too could not see the inhibitions of truth that we were embedding within ourselves while embracing those sexually-centered identities. However, as we chose to respond to the invitation to seek a greater degree of truth, the inhibitions of truth that we were embracing in our lives and identities became illuminated. As a result of this illumination, we knew that in order for us to be fully honest with ourselves, we would have to embrace that greater degree of truth that we had come to discover. For that reason, we now choose to embrace the truth that our *unchosen* sexual attractions *need to be considered distinct* from how we choose to identify ourselves as persons.

As well for the same reason, we now choose to embrace identities that order *infinite* Creator to be greater than *finite* creation. Most importantly, we now choose to reflect those truths via our decision to embrace the identity of being *beloved children of God above all else*, while still being fully honest with ourselves about the existence of our sexual attractions. In choosing to embrace this greater degree of truth, we have come to experience a greater degree of joy.

WE INVITE YOU TO
WALK WITH US AND
TO SHARE IN OUR JOY!

