



Same-sex attraction has become a topic of discussion in modern society — from the political and cultural efforts to mainstream it to fights over same-sex “marriage” and employment in the Church. The extremely clear, humane and rational teachings of the Church on human sexuality have never been more essential and never been more misunderstood and mischaracterized. In particular, the cross carried by those with same-sex attraction who wish to live as faithful Catholics has become heavier as the subject dominates mainstream culture.

So what has the Catholic Church historically taught about baptized Christians with same-sex attraction? As outlined in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) and USCCB documents:

CCC 2357 Homosexuality refers to relations between men or between women who experience an exclusive or predominant sexual attraction toward persons of the same sex. ... [based on sacred scripture] tradition has always declared that "homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered. They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. ...

2358 ... This [same sex] inclination, which is objectively disordered, constitutes for most of them a trial. [However] They must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. ... These persons are called to fulfill God's will in their lives and, if they are Christians, to unite to the sacrifice of the Lord's Cross the difficulties they may encounter from their condition.

2359 Homosexual persons are called to chastity. By the virtues of self-mastery that teach them inner freedom, at times by the support of disinterested friendship, by prayer and sacramental grace, they can and should gradually and resolutely approach Christian perfection.

"The Church seeks to enable every person to live out the universal call to holiness. Persons with a homosexual inclination ought to receive every aid and encouragement to embrace this call personally and fully. This will unavoidably involve much struggle and self-mastery, for following Jesus always means following the way of the Cross.... The Sacraments of the Eucharist and of Penance are essential sources of consolation and aid on this path. ...

“While the Church teaches that homosexual acts are immoral, she does distinguish between engaging in homosexual acts and having a homosexual inclination. While the former is always objectively sinful, the latter is not ... Although one would be morally culpable if one were voluntarily to entertain homosexual temptations or to choose to act on them, simply having the tendency is not a sin. Consequently, the Church does not teach that the experience of homosexual attraction is in itself sinful.” (USCCB, *Ministry to Persons with a Homosexual Inclination*, 2006)

In response to a growing need within the Catholic Church for ministerial outreach and compassionate pastoral and spiritual companionship for Catholics/Christians with same-sex attractions, ***Courage*** and ***EnCourage*** were created within the U.S. some years ago.

Courage

His Eminence, the late Terence Cardinal Cooke of New York, was aware of, and troubled by an apparent lack of pastoral outreach and available resources within the Church for those experiencing same-sex attractions. In response to this concern, he decided to form a spiritual support system which would assist men and women with same-sex attractions in living chaste lives in fellowship, truth and love.

With the endorsement of the Holy See, Courage is a Roman Catholic apostolate which now has more than 100 Chapters and contact people world-wide, over 1500 persons participating in its ListServes, and hundreds of persons per week receiving assistance from the main office and website. It has become a mainstream Catholic Apostolate helping thousands of men and women find peace through fellowship, prayer, and the Sacraments.

The Courage Central Office and individual chapters throughout the world are self-supporting and exist with the permission of their diocesan Bishop. In helping individuals gain a greater understanding and appreciation of the Church's teachings, especially in the area of chastity, Courage extends the Church's invitation to a life of peace and grace. In chaste living, one finds the peace and grace to grow in Christian maturity. (SR: <https://couragerc.org/>)

EnCourage

EnCourage is a Roman Catholic apostolate for parents, friends and family members of loved ones with same-sex attractions. EnCourage is a faithful witness to Catholic teaching on sexual morality which meets the needs of its members with charity and compassion. EnCourage does not embrace the necessity of changing a loved one's sexual attraction to seek support from its ministry.

EnCourage helps members to focus on their own spiritual development with the goals of achieving peace and complete trust in God's Providence and His love for us and for the ones we love. EnCourage offers a supportive, confidential environment to share feelings, experiences, information and guidance for maintaining healthy relationships with our loved ones with same-sex attractions.

EnCourage provides members with an understanding of the needs of individuals who experience same-sex attractions and assists members to reach out to their loved ones with true compassion. EnCourage supports the work of Courage, the Roman Catholic apostolate to same-sex attracted individuals who live chastely in fellowship, truth and love.

(SR: <https://couragerc.org/encourage/about/>)

Diocese of Colorado Springs' representative is:

Fr. Mark Zacker
Pastor of Corpus Christi Catholic Church
Office: 719-633-1457
Email: markzacker@yahoo.com

The Archdiocese of Denver has a similar Apostolate and cleric representative also:
Fr. Dan Norick, 720-434-2638, dnorick@gmail.com.