

Director 's Corner
Rev. John F. Harvey, O.S.F. S.

In Memoriam
Peter Rudegear, R.I.P.

My dear friend and close associate in the Apostolate of Courage, Peter Rudegear, died in an automobile accident in the early hours of Saturday, December 15th, 2007. In my sermon at the Funeral Mass for Peter, I described how we worked together as a team at the annual Conferences of Courage and EnCourage, in various American cities, and also in Australia, Singapore and Hong Kong.

Now I want to share my thoughts with Courage and EnCourage members who knew him well. Over the years we were able to integrate our theological and pastoral approaches to persons with same-sex attractions (SSA). It all began about 10 years ago at a Courage Conference. In responding to questions at a particular session, Peter made reference to the work of the Holy Spirit in helping persons with SSA. Courage and EnCourage members, however, were not accustomed to hearing a clinical psychologist speak about the Holy Spirit. But Peter was deeply involved in the Charismatic Movement, making use of his musical talent at meetings. He was also a leader in the St. Joseph Foundation in Wynnewood, PA. This organization helps families in financial straits, and is now helping Karen Rudegear and her four children (who range in age from 5 to 16 years old).

In the past 5 annual Conferences, Courage presented a Theological Track for priests, deacons and lay persons who participate in catechetics, peace and justice seminars, and various spiritual systems, including Courage and EnCourage. In the Theological Track I would present the moral position of the Church and the dynamics of Courage and EnCourage; Peter would explore the psychological roots of same-sex attractions and some of the therapeutic approaches he used. I took care of the moral and pastoral, while Peter elaborated on the psychological aspects. We fielded questions together.

Peter had a firm grasp of theological principles and I had a thorough background of experience in psychological questions. I sent many persons to him, knowing he would bring to his therapy a spiritual perspective in complete accord with authentic Catholic Teaching. He also sent persons to me.

Previous to meeting Peter Rudegear, I had worked for many years with Dr. Richard Fitzgibbons. For some time Peter had also worked with Dr. Fitzgibbons before establishing his own office. All three of us presented Catholic Teaching in an integrated way. As I said in the Funeral homily, Peter's first concern was his family. On the last day of each of our annual Conferences, he rose in the middle of the night to fly to Philadelphia so he would be with his family at Mass and the rest of the day. His wife, Karen, homeschools their children.

On the last day of his life, he came home late for supper, because he was on the phone with a couple who needed advice concerning one of their adult children. This I learned from someone close to Peter. In my sermon at Peter's Funeral, I mentioned how he spent many hours during Courage meetings talking with members of Courage and EnCourage. This was his annual gift to our Courage and EnCourage Conferences. I had regular discussions with him concerning his method of therapy. He took patients where they were; he did not try to change their tendencies, but he brought them to the point where they saw their need to be chaste. If they were Catholic, he reminded them of the Sacraments while he selected the kind of therapy which would be best for the person. He often brought other members of the patients' families into his sessions with beneficial results for each patient. In a gentle way he helped his patient to accept the truth about one's condition. He rejoiced with a patient who had gained insight into her past relationship with her mother and now knew she was not homosexual. She left her same-sex partner and began to date, eventually becoming married. Yet, Peter never demanded of her that she seek to be heterosexual; nevertheless, he helped her to see the profound emptiness of same-sex relationships, thereby helping the woman to begin dating and to eventually marry. He prepared her to make the insight that she was meant

to marry.

Peter had a profound understanding of the forms of same-sex attractions combined with a prayerful attitude of helping the patient to make his decisions for his future. During our visitations of Singapore and Hong Kong in 2004 and 2006, Peter was asked by a number of people for telephone therapy, which he was already doing in the United States. Many emails and letters came to our office expressing deep sorrow upon the loss of a friend; those were sent on to his wife, Karen. Then she made a request of Courage: she wants to have the New York Office of Courage consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. I will see to it that this takes place. The closing Mass at the Courage Conference in Boston on August 10th, 2008 will be in memory of Peter Rudegear, a therapist with the heart of a priest and a father. May the angels lead you to paradise.

Fr. John F. Harvey, O.S.F.S.

"Out From Under"

Months ago I invited Dawn Stefanowicz to speak at our August 7-10, 2008, Courage Conference. Her story, *Out From Under: The Impact of Homosexual Parenting* (Enumclaw, WA: Annotation Press, 2007), written for the protection of children who live in environments similar to the one in which she and her siblings lived, will draw many parents to attend this year's conference. She writes in the preface that in the book she attempts "to deliver an open, honest and balanced account of what it was like growing up with a homosexual father and a weak, subservient mother."

While exposing the horrors of her upbringing, she elevates marriage "as the primary haven for the protection of children." Dawn believes that the faith and guidance provided by the Scriptures helped her endure and even grow through the dark times in her life. She has carefully guarded the family name, and did not write her book until her parents had died. From her adolescent conversion until the present, Dawn has a mission which her book will promote. She desires to help her readers understand how parents and family can affect their children. The book is endorsed by four psychotherapists from the United States, Canada,

and the Netherlands, including Gerard J. M. van den Aardweg. Her mission is to reach legislators, judges, and members of Courage and EnCourage with the message that parents need to be alert to the plight of boys and girls who live in unsafe environments.

BULLETIN BOARD

2008 Courage/EnCourage Conference

The annual Conference is scheduled for August 7th - 10th, 2008 and will be held at the *Spiritual Life Center of Marian Community* which is located in Medway, MA (www.MarianCommunity.org) just outside of Boston. As soon as we have costs and other specifics available we will post them on the Courage web site at www.CourageRC.net.

Fr. Harvey is Turning XC!

Our esteemed Director, Fr. John F. Harvey, O.S.F.S. will be 90 years old in April 2008. We praise God for a birthday present to Fr. Harvey in the form of a Successor! Fr. Paul N. Check has been confirmed, due to the gracious permission of Bishop William E. Lori of Bridgeport, CT, as the Director-Elect of Courage International, Inc. and is now working closely with Fr. Harvey. Please thank God for this favor and keep both Fr. Harvey and Fr. Check in your prayers during this transitional period. Thank you Fr. Harvey for pouring yourself out like an oblation on behalf of us all ... HAPPY & BLESSED BIRTHDAY!

In Other News:

◆ Fr. Harvey has been honored with the establishment of an endowed Chair in his name at DeSales University, Center Valley, PA. Henceforth there will be a Fr. John F. Harvey, O.S.F.S. Chair of Ethics and Moral Theology at the University.

◆ Plans have not yet been set for the New Jersey or Mid-West SPORTS CAMPS 2008. Please continue to check the Courage web site for dates and registration information which will be posted as they become available.

The 20th Annual Courage/Encourage Conference

Sean Cardinal O'Malley, O.F.M. Cap., has personally invited Courage to the Archdiocese of Boston for its 200th Anniversary as a diocese in the United States. Our venue will be the *Spiritual Life Center of Marian Community*, Medway, MA (www.MarianCommunity.org) which is just outside Boston and our dates are **August 7 - 10, 2008**. The costs have not yet been set, but we are working hard to keep them in line with previous conferences despite rising costs all around us. As soon as a contract is solidified we will post this information on our web site. We hope you will be able to be with us at this very special gathering!

Courage Men's Retreat

Sixteen Courage men experienced a unique and inspiring retreat held from Friday, January 18th to Monday January 21st at the Villa Guadalupe Retreat House in Stamford, CT (staffed by the Sisters of Life). Filled with quiet prayer, liturgies, and homilies given by Fr. Paul Check and Fr. Paul Scalia, the 3 special days were overflowing with healthy chaste fellowship, and grace-filled opportunities to connect with men who experience the same struggle. Particularly effective was "The Grand Silence," during which all participants were challenged to be silent from the conclusion of Evening Prayer to the recitation of the Angelus at noontime the following day.

Fr. Scalia gave a meditation talk on the first evening: he asked us to contemplate the question, "Whom do I seek?" Another topic he discussed was "obedience." Because most of the retreatants were single laymen living alone, Fr. Scalia suggested simple strategies such as making a schedule to do our everyday spiritual exercises. Fr. Check gave us great food for thought when he spoke about humility and forgiveness. Camaraderie and conversation were enjoyed at meals (we are grateful for the innovative cuisine of the Sisters of Life!) and at a football game we played on Saturday afternoon. The whole retreat gave us fuel to start the new year with Hope as we continue in our mutual struggle on the path of life. Please join us next year! *Jim B., NY Courage*

Fr. Jim Lloyd has a Blog!

Many of you already enjoy visiting the website of Fr. Jim Lloyd, CSP. Fr. Lloyd is a long-time member of the Courage Board of Advisors and the faithful Faciliator of a successful Courage group in New York City. We're happy to announce that Fr. Lloyd has also started a new weblog entitled, "**Catholicism, Scholarship and Fun!**" The weblog format allows for greater interactivity between Fr. Lloyd and his readers. To visit Father's new weblog and share your comments, go to:

<http://frjameslloyd.blogspot.com/> To visit Father's original website where all his previous articles are archived, go to: <http://www.geocities.com/frjimlloyd/> Both sites are updated regularly!

Homosexuality and the Catholic Church: Clear Answers to Difficult Questions

After long anticipation we are happy to announce that Fr. Harvey's latest book is now available through **Ascension Press, 1-800-376-0520** or www.AscensionPress.com. Boasting a Foreword by Archbishop Raymond L. Burke and an Introduction by Fr. Benedict Groeschel, this book's question-and-answer format makes it particularly accessible to the average reader. Please spread the word!

Sunday Night Live with Fr. Groeschel!

On March 30th at 7 P.M. EST, Fr. John Harvey and Fr. Paul Check will be appearing on EWTN as Fr. Groeschel's special guests. We look forward to seeing this historic televised conversation. In case you miss the initial broadcast (or just want to see it again), the program re-airs at 2 A.M. and 9 A.M. on Monday, March 31st and 5 P.M. on Saturday, April 5th.

Hola! Web Site en Espanol

The office is receiving more and more requests regarding support in the Spanish language. Please be aware that there is now a Spanish web site www.courage-latino.org/, with an excellent priest chaplain. In addition, we have in stock *Un plan Espiritual* and the

K of C's newly updated pamphlet, *La Atraccion Sexual al Propio Sexo: La Ensenanza Catolica y Praxis Pastoral* both by Fr. John Harvey.

Deo Gracias

On behalf of Fr. Harvey and the Courage Staff, many thanks to the Courage/EnCourage Group Moderators and Courage/EnCourage List Serv Moderators for their faithfulness and perseverance in a largely hidden and thankless service to us all!

An additional appreciation for those Courage Members who continue to attend meetings with small or sporadic attendance or who sit alone in a room so that a local Courage meeting exists. These men and women are spiritual heroes in a war for chastity of heart, mind and body. Let us all pray that their faithfulness and ongoing commitment draws more souls to Courage!

Added Note: The Twelve Steps are a vital part of the Courage spiritual program and not to be neglected. Recently, Fr. Harvey has been making good use of the wonderful pamphlet series of Fr. Emmerich Vogt, O.P. These are fully Catholic and obtainable from: The 12-Step Review, www.12-step-review.org or 1-800-556-6177. *Please don't cheat yourselves out of the inspiration and consolation available to you and your group through the Twelve Steps!*

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Fr. Harvey, Fr. Check, the Courage staff and volunteers, pray that you may have a fruitful Lent and experience the abundance of Christ's mercy in the Easter Season!