



## PRESS RELEASE

*Courage International's 2018 conference to center on spirituality of founder*

The spirituality and pastoral approach of Courage International's founding director, **Fr. John Harvey, OSFS**, will be the focus of the 30<sup>th</sup> annual **Courage & EnCourage** conference, which will center on the theme: "**Faithful to a mission.**"

The theme was derived from the words of the late Fr. Harvey, who said about his work with the apostolate: "I want to be remembered as being faithful to a mission." This year's conference coincides with the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of Fr. Harvey, who was born April 14, 1918.

"As we commemorate the centennial anniversary of the birth of our founder, Fr. Harvey, I am especially pleased that the Conference will be held in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, his birthplace," said Father Philip Bochanski, Courage International's executive director.

The 2018 conference will run from **July 12-15** at **Villanova University**, in Philadelphia, PA.

"The program will focus on themes that were important to Father Harvey's spirituality and pastoral approach, and we plan to include a number of speakers who worked closely with Father Harvey during the 28 years that he led the Courage apostolate."

"This year's event, which will mark our thirtieth annual conference, will be a time of great jubilee for the apostolate."

Fr. Harvey served from 1980-2008 as director of *Courage International*, a Roman Catholic apostolate for men and women who experience same-sex attractions and the loved ones of persons who identify as LGBT. The Philadelphia native died December 27, 2010.

Speakers will include **Johnnette Benkovic**, founder and president of *Living His Life Abundantly International, Inc.*, and host of the EWTN series *Women of Grace*; **Archbishop Charles J. Chaput**, OFM Cap., archbishop of Philadelphia; and **Fr. Gerald Murray**, a priest of the New York archdiocese and frequent commentator on EWTN, Fox News, and MSNBC.

Bishops who have confirmed their participation in the conference include **Bishop Peter Byrne**, auxiliary for the archdiocese of New York; **Bishop Michael Fitzgerald**, auxiliary of the archdiocese of Philadelphia; **Bishop David Konderla** of the diocese of Tulsa; **Bishop Thomas Olmsted** of the diocese of Phoenix; and **Bishop Mark J. Seitz** of the diocese of El Paso.

Other speakers will include members of Courage and EnCourage (the group for friends and family of persons who identify as LGBT), who will share their personal testimonies.

The event will be preceded by a "**Clergy day**" on **July 11** which will consist of seminars designed to offer formation to priests, deacons, and seminarians in ministering to persons who experience SSA.

Information on how to register, as well as the full list of speakers, is available on the official page for the event: <https://couragerc.org/event/courageconference2018/>



## NOTES FOR EDITORS:

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### **Background on *Courage International* and *Encourage***

***Courage International*** is an apostolate of the Catholic Church which offers support to persons experiencing SSA who have chosen to live a chaste life. It was founded by Fr. John Harvey, OSFS at the request of the late Cardinal Terence Cooke. The first Courage chapter meeting was held in New York City in 1980, and it was this initial group which developed the Five Goals of Courage: Chastity, prayer and dedication, fellowship, support, and good example/role model. Fr. Harvey was succeeded as executive director by Fr. Paul Check, who held the position from 2008-2016. Fr. Check was succeeded by Fr. Philip Bochanski in January, 2017. Today, Courage has over 150 chapters in fourteen countries. Courage and EnCourage received canonical status in the Roman Catholic Church as a diocesan clerical public association of the faithful on November 28, 2016.

***EnCourage*** is an apostolate under the Courage umbrella which provides support for families and friends of persons with SSA, and aims to teach them how to reach out to their loved ones with true compassion. The group was first formed in 1987 by families in search of guidance and understanding for supporting their loved ones with SSA. In 1992, this group adopted the name EnCourage. Currently, their chapters can be found in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Australia, Italy, and the United Kingdom.

For additional information, please visit our website at [www.couragerc.org](http://www.couragerc.org)

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