

The Cardinal Archbishop of Mexico City - Courage Latino Conference Guadalupe, November 2012

My dear brothers and sisters in the Lord. I am grateful for the welcoming words of the very reverend Carlos Ruiz y Alverado, vice rector of the Basilica of Guadalupe; I greet with affection Fr. Paul Check, Director of Courage International, Fr. Buenaventura Wainwright, Director of Courage Latino, and all my brother priests who support this ministry in the various chapters in Mexico, Latin America and the Hispanic chapter in the United States.

“Teacher, what good deed must I do to gain eternal life?” (Mt 19: 16)

In this first text, which sheds light on the Congress that has brought us together, we clearly remember they are the words of the rich young man who approached Jesus and asked him, not about the norms he needed to observe, but rather showing a search for a fullness of meaning for life (Cf. *Veritatis Splendor*, 7). Surely it is this you have taken on to search for, the situation of many of you, brothers and sisters with attraction to those of your same sex, in view of the experiences you have had, the good you thought you had attained, the frustration and pain you have suffered.

In the depths of your hearts something was telling you “This is not the real life! This cannot be all there is!” As men and women of faith you have turned your eyes to the Church; you have approached Jesus to ask him again: What must I do to gain eternal life?

And the answer to the deeper questionings of the human being is given by Jesus Christ; even more, He is the answer, as the Council affirms: “Really, the mystery of man is only made clear in the mystery of the incarnate Word. For, Adam, the first man, was a figure of him who was to come, that is to say, Christ the Lord. Christ, the new Adam, in the same revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes clear the grandeur of his calling” (*Gaudium et Spes*, 22). Only in Christ will all we human beings find the full meaning of our existence.

Throughout these days you will be able to reflect upon human sexuality based on the texts of Sacred Scripture, you will be reviewing attentively the third part of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, of which we are celebrating the 20th year of publication, and which is the mature fruit of Vatican Council II. In brief, you will be considering the the sixth commandment. The title of the third part of the Catechism, where the section about this commandment can be found, is suggestive in itself of the reflection you intend to make: “The Life in Christ”. From the teachings of this much-to-be-valued text, you may again feel close to Jesus, and hear his answer about “gaining eternal life”.

The *Letter to the bishops of the Catholic Church on the pastoral care of homosexual people* says “What, then, are homosexual people to do who seek to follow the Lord? Fundamentally such persons are called upon to fulfill the will of God in their lives, uniting to the sacrifice of

the Lord's cross the suffering and difficulty they may experience because of their condition." (No. 12)

I consider that all of you men and women with attractions to their same sex want to follow in the steps of Jesus, the master; if you have come to Courage, it is because you want to be faithful to Christ. You and all Christians are called to live in chastity; do not be afraid of the meaning of this word. Remember it: **chastity** is the moral virtue which rules the exercise of sexuality according to the person's state of life, functioning among his or her values, and with respect to the nature of sexuality itself (Cencini, *Virginidad y Celibato Hoy [Virginité and Celibacy Today]*, 107). It is beautiful to hear that this Congress is publicized as "Camino a la Castidad [The Road to Chastity]; in effect, we must travel on it as on a piece of good news; because it signifies the maturation of the whole being of a man, the whole being of a woman; that they come to live love and express it with the body in sincerity and in the truth (Cf. Cencini, 109).

Dear parents, brothers and friends of those who live this condition of SSA: I thank you for your participation, your companionship through prayer, and your fortitude to be part of this apostolate; for you, also, Christ makes himself present as the answer to your anxiety and an easing of your pain. Do not forget what our beloved Bl. John Paul II told us: ". . .an eminent form of love shown to the Christian family of today, frequently tempted to discouragement and distressed over ever growing difficulties, is giving it reasons for confidence in itself, in its own richness of nature and of grace, in the mission God has confided to it: 'The families of our times must turn to rise higher. They must follow Christ.'" (*Familiaris Consortio*, 86) Only in the following of the Lord are we able to secure what we are building, to help ourselves as a family and to help our sons and daughters.

My worthy brothers in the priesthood, with the certainty that you are serving faithfully the will of the Lord by urging on those living this condition to live a chaste life and to remember their great dignity as sons and daughters of God; as bishop I encourage you to keep on with this apostolate, which is an authentic specialized form of pastoral attention to all homosexual persons (Cf. *Letter to all bishops . . .*, 17), without doubt a very concrete form of true pastoral charity.

"Do whatever he tells you." (John 2:5)

In the environs of a place so meaningful for all of us, the person of Holy Mary of Guadalupe and her message makes resonate in our ears and hearts the voice of the Woman of Faith in Cana of Galilee: ". . . do whatever he tells you". Mary confirms what was suggested by the rich young man in his question about the deeper meaning of life. With full confidence she affirms that the Master is truthful, that he does not fool us, and that to do what he tells us makes for the happiness of those who share life with us and, in consequence, of our own selves.

One Saturday, here in Tepeyac, Holy Mary, Mother of God, appeared to an ordinary man, a man of the people, Juan Diego, who very early in the morning came in pursuit of God and of his commandments (Cf. *Nican Mopohua*, 6)*; to all of you participants at this Congress I propose St. Juan Diego as a model, because before all else, you come here with the disposition of disciples, recognizing that God our Father brings us by his commandments to true happiness; surely this holy little Indian did not know the wishes of his heart would be realized. We know the story: Our Lady, Our Girl, in the midst of signs, the song of birds, the calling him by his name and her personal presence, asks “. . .that they build for me my little Sacred House in which I will show him, I will glorify him by making him manifest: I give to the peoples, with all my own love, Him, who is for me a compassionate gaze; Him, who is my help; Him, who is my salvation.” (Cf. *Nican mopohua*, 26-28)

In her little Sacred House, Our Mother goes out to meet all of you, she wants to hand over to you The One you are looking for. She has heard your weeping; she knows about your sadness; she is ready to cure all your sufferings, your miseries, your pains. (Cf. *Nican Mopohua*, 32) For this reason she says to you with insistence “Do what he tells you”, because the Sweet Lady from Heaven invites us always to do the will of The One who is for her the “Compassionate Gaze”; only in this way, living by his breath, his word, can we put into effect the desires of Jesus Christ Our Lord.

It is not by happenstance that this Congress, “Road to Chastity”, is taking place here; Holy Mary of Guadalupe, the same as for the people born in these lands, comes quickly to help everyone: men and women, parents, family members and friends, the shepherds walking at the front of this apostolate and their collaborators in the various chapters, and their father bishops; she does so asking us: “Am I not here, I who have the honor and the good fortune of being your mother? Are you not under my shadow and protection? Am I not the fount of your joy? Are you not in the hollow of my mantle, in the crossing of my arms? Do you perhaps need anything else? (Cf. *Nican Mopohua*, 119)

Confident, then, in the Maternal presence of our Heavenly Girl, who speaks to our heart and gives us her Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, may we live these days together with God Our Father, feeling the immense love that he shows us when he gives us during these days the opportunity for reflection, prayer and encounter. May this Congress bless us with every kind of heavenly gifts and permit us to take to our chapters an abundance of “flowers” as signs of the good wishes of Our Lady. God bless you all, and good work!

*The *Nican Mopohua* [“Here is recounted”] is the account of the ‘Guadalupe’ event at Tepeyac [“the brow of the mountain”] in December, 1531; written by a native Mexican and on the basis of his interviews with St. Juan Diego.