

**COURAGE CONFERENCE CLOSING MASS**  
**Mundelein Seminary, Mundelein, Illinois**  
**August 7, 2011**

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*S.S.P.: Take Courage! Do not be afraid to follow Christ.*

- I. It is a privilege to preside at this closing Mass of the Courage Conference.
- II. In today's Gospel passage, the disciples are in a boat. There is a storm and the boat is being tossed about. Jesus had been praying on the shore. He walks on the water toward their boat. The disciples think they are seeing a ghost!
  - A. Jesus says, "Take courage! It is I! Come, follow me! Do not be afraid!"
  - B. He says much to us in these words.
    1. Living a gay lifestyle is like being tossed about in a storm.
    2. Jesus says, "Take courage!" It is not easy to leave the gay lifestyle, hence the name of your group, "Courage."
    3. Jesus says, "It is I." Jesus is not just being grammatically correct here, as opposed to our saying something like, "Hey guys, it's me!"
      - a. Jesus is identifying Himself in the same way that God identified Himself to Moses, "It is I Who Am."
      - b. Jesus is God, hence He does what God does by calming the storm and walking on water.
    4. Jesus says, "Come, follow me on the water." Peter starts to walk on the water, but becomes frightened.
    5. Jesus says, "Be not afraid." Those who are in a gay lifestyle often cling to their promiscuity; it gives them a certain security, like a baby with a pacifier or a child with a teddy bear. Giving that up and following Christ may be frightening for some people.

- III. In his letter to the Romans, St. Paul is zealous for others to change their lives and find salvation in Christ as he did.
- A. Christ calls us too, probably not in the dramatic way that Paul was called by being knocked off his horse.
  - B. Christ speaks softly to us as He did to Peter, "Come, follow after me.
- IV. In the reading from the First Book of Kings, Elijah learned that God does not necessarily come to us in the wind, or the fire, or in an earthquake, but in a quiet whisper.
- A. We would love for God to do something dramatic: perhaps an apparition or a vision in a dream; wouldn't it be great to get a text message or e-mail from God with a clear message!
  - B. But that is not how God speaks to us. We need to be quiet, be still, calm the storm, turn off the TV, the radio, the iPod, and just listen.
- V. We listen to God in the readings of this Mass; Christ comes into our hearts in the simple forms of bread and wine that become His Body and Blood.

May God give us this grace. Amen.