

# Becoming Good News for the Gender Challenged

**‘FOR** I have  
not hesitated to  
proclaim to you the  
whole will of God.’  
St. Paul, Acts 20:27

*‘You Will Be My Witnesses’ (Acts 1:8)*

## **FORTY DAYS**

of Prayer and Fasting for the Church  
October 11<sup>th</sup>—Nov. 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017

### **A DEVOTIONAL GUIDE**

*By Andrew Comiskey*

Please join us for 40 days of prayer and fasting as we fight for the dignity of persons subject to a variety of destructive gender ‘selves.’ Together we will deepen our awareness of who God calls us to be as His faithful witnesses; we shall take bold steps to live the truth in love and so bring God’s Kingdom to loved ones whose identities and destinies suffer without Jesus.

This devotional guide begins on October 11<sup>th</sup> and runs through November 19<sup>th</sup>. You can follow this guide along with an international group of praying saints who like you are committed to ‘becoming good news’ for persons and cultures in deep confusion. You may want to consider giving up something precious to you during this time to pray more and also to heighten your ‘ache’ for persons afflicted by gender challenges. Also, you can join the DSM/LW staff in Spirit as we will pray together every day at 3pm CST during these 40 days. Our goal is to not only pray effectively for loved ones but also to become the good news for any fractured person whose heart is open.

For more information, please contact our intercessory prayer leader, Ann Armstrong at [aarmstrong@desertstream.org](mailto:aarmstrong@desertstream.org). You can access the daily readings on the DSM/LW app (search for Desert Stream Ministries at the app store or text “App” to 816-629-1930.)

*‘What the world needs today  
is the credible witness of  
people...capable of opening  
the hearts and minds of  
many to the desire for God  
and for true life.’*

*Pope Emeritus Benedict*





## OCTOBER 11TH: TEARS FOR FEARS

On the eve of 'gay marriage' becoming law in our nation in 2015, Time magazine did a cover story entitled 'America's Transition.' The article reasoned: if freedom for persons with same-sex attraction is best expressed in their right 'to marry', then why shouldn't persons who don't like their gender be free to change it? A few months ago, Time charted the next boundary-breaking horizon: the right of a generation to forego gender altogether in a cover story entitled 'Beyond He and She.' Here twenty-somethings cast off any permanent gender identification, insisting on the right to change at will, in the name of freedom. This is the mess we are in. Freedom is now defined as foregoing what defines us as sons and daughters of our parents, and of God Himself. This freedom enslaves lives. With the urgency of St. Peter when he cried out to his people: 'Save yourselves from this corrupt generation' (Acts 2:40), we too cry out for Jesus to awaken His people, beginning with us. The lives of our friends—and their capacity to reproduce other lives—are at stake. Hearts are hard, hearing dull. St. Jean Vianney said 'I weep because you don't.'

*'Transform our fears into tears, O God. May we weep for lost loved ones. Do not let our hearts become hard with disappointment, or sentimental with false acceptance. Through the gift of tears, keep our hearts soft and strong, ready to do Your will.'*

## OCTOBER 12TH: TEARS FOR FEARS

Chances are you have been leveled by the news that a loved one has adopted one of many alternative gender selves (Coming out "gay" seems almost quaint in our gender-bending age). What we need is a fresh, bracing dose of the good news that meets us facedown, the Crucified who weeps with us then in almighty mercy commands us to 'get up!' (Lk 7:14). We have been floored in order to become grounded in the only One worth living for—in truth, the only source of hope for ourselves and for persons we love. Afraid still? Of course. But His perfect love displaces fear at our core and empowers us to stand in the truth that Jesus alone can transform any misbegotten self into His original design. We pray in earnest that the breaking of our hearts might result in 'a heart of flesh' on fire with renewed faith in the One who makes all things new.

*'Forgive us for focusing on another's conversion. You are saving us from a dull and distracted faith. We are the objects of Your saving, refining love.'*

## OCTOBER 13TH: TEARS FOR FEARS

It pains us to witness loved ones tossed about like children on the waves and winds of false teaching (Eph 4: 14). We know them, not perfectly, but enough to recognize him or her as God's son or daughter, not a LGBTQ+ creation of their

own design. How vile the power of the deceiver to rob souls of their true gendered selves and the capacity to reproduce life! It startles us to accompany exquisite persons who are morphing into other 'selves' and adopting a culture that justifies their devolution. We flinch, we ache, we wake up. The unthinkable is now blasted by loved ones throughout the virtual universe: a godless declaration of freedom that would have been alien to them two years ago. We catch a glimpse of our compromise in theirs, the way we played nice and not true in the day of 'gay marriage' and Bruce Jenner. We cry out for God's heart and voice. 'Our assimilation into popular culture has bleached out strong religious convictions in the name of liberal tolerance, and has dulled our longing for the supernatural' Archbishop Chaput.

*'We are convicted of our placating ways and in need of supernatural help, O God. For our sake, and the sake of those we love, light the fire of almighty mercy, endowed with unconquerable power.'*

## OCTOBER 14TH: TEARS FOR FEARS

Of course we know that our loved ones have suffered—in ways we do not know. Dr. Mark Yarhouse describes 'the substantive unhappiness' or 'dysphoria' that impacts persons whose psychological reality of gender does not match their birth sex. Though he applies this definition primarily to persons who want to become the opposite gender, I would broaden 'dysphoria' to include all persons vulnerable to disavowing their gender value. We cannot wholly grasp the shame and self-hatred that a sensitive soul can experience as (s)he grows to reject the gift of his or her gender. Various factors contribute to gender dysphoria, but the result is excruciating. At odds with their gendered bodies due to beliefs that one is cursed or inferior, one lives in shameful alienation from oneself. And peers. Kids just want to fit in, and gender dysphoria disrupts this most basic accomplishment.

*'We need Your wisdom and mercy, O God. We confess that we understand only a little of what this one has combatted for years. We renounce the evil one and his false solutions. You are the solution; we lay our beloved at Your feet. You made him or her and You alone can redeem him or her from the dysphoric, divided self. Break our hearts for his/her suffering. Teach us to pray.'*

## OCTOBER 15TH: TEARS FOR FEARS

This fight is bigger than we are. It helps to know that we are fighting for another's dignity and against the common enemy of all of our souls. We fight the devil, the deceiver and devourer of human dignity. We do not fight against any person. Of course we are accused of doing just that. Little matter: we summon the Shepherd of us all and ask Him to make Himself known to our beloved the mercy Jesus exhibited in Matthew 9: 36. There He looked at the crowds who 'were harassed and helpless' and He experienced heartrending compassion for them because they were like



sheep without a shepherd. Jesus then prays for us to ask His Father to send forth workers into the harvest, under-shepherds like you and me, who will bring His liberating Kingdom to anyone who is open to it.

*'Will you equip us, O Jesus, to see what You see when we behold the beloved? Free us to love as You love! If our beloved ones shun us, would you show us other needy ones who are crying out for You? Send us to them, O God; send them to us. Prepare us to become an answer to our own prayers for anyone with a heart to hear.'*

## **OCTOBER 16TH: UNDIVIDED: KNOW WHOSE YOU ARE**

Our authority to see and to feel and to act clearly according to the Good Shepherd is rooted in our receiving His mercy. He laid claim to us! He gave all to gain us, His water poured out to cleanse us, His blood shed to give us divine life, His Spirit to raise us up with that life! Integration, or chastity, is rooted in spiritual chastity; that means receiving God's reign in our lives and seeking to be founded on His love as the basis for our lives. In that way, and in that way alone, we can overcome the intimidation of the evil one, who accuses us mercilessly:

*'You are so unloving...Who do you think you are...You caused this problem' etc.* We remind ourselves that we belong to Jesus, our hope and help and worth are in Him; we welcome these gifts constantly as we cry out for mercy. He loves us freely, and He is enough to mobilize us for His merciful purposes.

*'Thank You Jesus, that all my failures and divides find an end in You. My hope for wholeness—for myself and every person, lies in Your brokenness on the Cross and the new life You won for us there. Help me to practice the Presence of Your mercy.'*

## **OCTOBER 17TH: UNDIVIDED: KNOW WHOSE YOU ARE**

It helps to remember that Jesus chooses the foolish and weak to make known His mercy to the smart and strong (1 Cor 1:26-31). I love when Jesus says He hides Himself from 'the wise and learned powerful and makes Himself known to little children' (Matt 11:25-30), simple ones who know how much they need Him. We have been reduced to great need for a big God. We will rely upon Him to make a way for our offerings of mercy—when, who, how. He will give us the right Spirit and the right words! We grieve that our loved ones have grown proud, sure of their 'right' to create their own reality, as if God did not exist or was no match for their cleverness.

*'Our hope is in You, O God. In our littleness, might You assure us that we are yoked to You? Thank You that our burden can be light when we share it with You who are kind and humble. Make us kind and humble, renewed in the truth that You are in control and that You make a way for us to become good news.'*

## **OCTOBER 18TH: UNDIVIDED: KNOW WHOSE YOU ARE**

Jesus said that He was the light of the world (Jn 9:5), a brilliant source of life in the darkness of deadly freedoms. No matter how dark our rebellion, we cannot overcome His light (Jn 1:4, 5)! All we need to do is to draw near to Him so we can catch the rays of light and life emanating from His Presence, like Moses whose face became radiant as he conversed with God (Ex 34). Intimacy with Him and clarity from Him enable us to reflect His glory. In that way we become who Jesus declares us to be: 'the light of the world' (Matt 5:13, 14). We are called to blaze as little 'Christs' in the darkness of this night! Despair and intimidation tempt us to deflect His light; let us turn in humble confidence toward the One who always shines and always seeks us out as mirrors of His radiance. What a gift! And a responsibility. If we deflect divine light due to fear, it is hidden toward those who are perishing (2Cor 4:3).

*'Jesus, show us how to best position ourselves near You. Deepen our devotion; heighten our sensitivity toward Your whispers. Shine upon us and make Yourself known through us, Light of the World.'*

## **OCTOBER 19TH: UNDIVIDED: KNOW WHOSE YOU ARE**

In order to become a clear reflection of Jesus, we must ensure that our hearts are not divided in their devotion. We become like the one(s) we worship. If we look to sources other than Christ for our worth and power, we risk growing dim. This can occur even in the most basic and good human relationships. St. Paul spent a lot of time helping the Corinthians sort out how to best work out their marriages and their single lives (1 Cor 7). His counsel was clear and direct: 'Live righteously in undivided devotion to the Lord' (v. 35). His point? Don't let domestic concerns crowd out who matters most—Jesus. Later, in the same letter, he warned them of false teachers who might 'lead them astray from their sincere and pure devotion to Christ' (2 Cor 11:3). St. Paul wants us to neither complicate nor clutter our child-like reliance upon Jesus alone.

*'All my fountains are in You, O Lord' (Ps 87:7). 'Let this be our prayer O God. May You become the fountain of our lives, our first thought, our sustaining thought, the last thought of our day. Unite us in Your fullness, through focused attentiveness on You.'*

## **OCTOBER 20TH: UNDIVIDED: KNOW WHOSE YOU ARE**

Our freedom to become good news for persons enslaved by false freedoms is simple. As we become spiritually chaste, undivided in our devotion to Jesus, we are making a way for others to follow Him as we are. When we do this, we lay a base for our own solid identities as sons and daughters of



the Father. And isn't that what we all long for—to know who we are as children deeply loved by our Father, the One who made us in His image as male and female and who thus has unique authority to bless the gender value of His children? Freedom comes from aligning the truth of our nature with the One who ordained it. St. Paul said it best to the Galatians who were tempted by extraordinary religious demands that divided them from new believers. 'When we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. But in the fullness of time, God sent His Son...to redeem those born under the law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are now His sons, the Father sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, the Spirit who cries out "Abba, Father." So you are no longer slaves, but sons...' (Gal 4:3-9)

*'Father, in the complications of confused loved ones, make clear to us the slavery common to us all. Free us for sonship and daughterhood through the gift of Your Spirit; free us from slavery to fear and accusation. Thank You for Your Fatherly vision and care for all Your wandering children.'*

## **OCTOBER 21<sup>ST</sup>: WHOLE-ENOUGH? BECOMING WHO WE ARE**

Becoming good news for loved ones stems from undivided devotion to Jesus; the Author and Finisher of our humanity also invites us to grow in our integration as men and women. To be undivided means that we take seriously any blocks to accepting our gender and our bodies. Each of us is a gendered 'gift' that He designed to build up others, especially members of the opposite gender. Are we free to behold and bless the gift that we are as male or female and the gift of the other? Like all persons, we are ordained male or female at birth but must still become who we are. Obviously, we see reflected in our loved ones an often pain-filled path on which one's gender goodness has become obscured, frustrated, starved, or robbed. We are not exempt from how sin in all of its subtlety can damage our gendered selves. We especially see this in how the enemy slams our pretty good marriages in order to mock the divine revelation of Christ and His Church. Dr. Nicholas Healy cites how our gendered bodies are 'the hinge of Christian doctrine' in that they reveal the God who dwells in bodily form (Col 2:9), who was sacrificed to redeem our 'gift', and who manifests Himself when we give the gift well!

*'So we cry out to Jesus: help us to live the truth we want badly for our loved ones. Show us the subtle efforts of the enemy to disintegrate our lives and relationships. We too want to become the men and women You ordained us to become, body, soul and spirit.'*

## **OCTOBER 22<sup>ND</sup>: WHOLE-ENOUGH? BECOMING WHO WE ARE**

Chastity is wholeness, a rich and dimensional goal for all persons. It involves integrating our longing for human communion with our longing for God (CCC#2337). He has a will for our gendered humanity that is creative and robust. We tend to think of chastity as abstaining from sex. Not

true. While chastity resists lust—using persons for one's own pleasure—it actually liberates the freedom to be a good gift for another. Freedom from sexual sin frees us to integrate what is good and true about sexual love. God made men and women to complement each other, so that we can reveal to one another His 'power and tenderness, yet in a different way' (CCC#2335). As we realize these inspired differences, we delight in the truth that 'it is not good to be alone' (Gen 2:18). God made us to be fruitful, not frustrated; that means He delights in clearing out debris from the 'riverbed' He designed in each of us so that the waters of life can flow freely, yet within the boundaries that make our offering constructive. Chastity makes us good lovers; men become more manly, women more feminine, as we grow in this exquisite virtue.

*'Father, open our eyes to what chastity is. Show us what hinders the flow of the river in us. Encourage us in Your call to love others with bold clarity. Forgive us for backing off from people for fear of failing. Give us the courage to live out chastity well.'*

## **OCTOBER 23<sup>RD</sup>: WHOLE-ENOUGH? BECOMING WHO WE ARE**

Boundaries liberate our freedom to love people when we are afraid. Some of us have good reason to fear. Maybe we have violated people by crossing sexual boundaries that we should not have. Maybe we have been violated. Some of us have black holes in our imagination as a result of pornography. Dr. Stefan Oster writes that 'there is no single form of sexual activity outside of marriage that Scripture does not call either unchastity or adultery...Jesus in fulfilling the law through love raises the bar of purity. We need to know and to manifest this Jesus who is there to touch, heal, and lead us into wholeness.' Perhaps we incurred emotional wounding through angry outbursts with others. Shaken, we are now defensive. Others of us make huge efforts to fix people rather than letting them face their own demons and make hard choices. In all of these cases, boundaries can help us love people better. We can set real limits that help us to care for people without lusting, raging or rescuing. Knowing our weaknesses, we can choose to relate within parameters in order to love more purely. When these boundaries are challenged, we can insist on them for love's sake. We are weak and so are our loved ones. Boundaries help us to love strong.

*'Help us to love strong, O God. We face many difficult relationships that require wisdom to know proper boundaries and the strength to set them. Help us to love within the limits of wise boundaries.'*

## **OCTOBER 24<sup>TH</sup>: WHOLE ENOUGH? BECOMING WHO WE ARE**

We discover that our desires are complex and varied. Lust, fear, pride, and hatred rise and fall. Feelings that recede in one season may roar back in the next. Who can know



the habits of our heart? What triggers passion? It helps to become self-aware, to trace certain 'feeling' responses to our need for love and security. And to talk them out with trusted friends so that we do not have to be alone with disturbing desires. In the light, certain feelings lose power, and we are able to employ our will to make good choices as to how to handle them. In this way, we cooperate with the Holy Spirit in gaining self-control. Most importantly, God invites us to dialogue with Him as we sort out the complexity of our hearts. I love Psalm 38: 9 when David sighs: 'All my longings lie open before You, O God.' It is a gift to know that we can engage honestly and without shame before the One who knows all about us, who is not surprised by our disturbing mixtures, and who loves us deeply as we seek His merciful help. Through open dialogue with God and His members, we grow in chastity and love for others.

*'Help us to understand and sort out the desires of our heart. Break the grip of shame and isolation; teach us to bring our hearts into the light of Your love. Transform our desires with the desires of Your heart, O God.'*

## OCTOBER 25<sup>TH</sup>: WHOLE-ENOUGH? BECOMING WHO WE ARE

Becoming chaste is a gift and a process that endures until we see Jesus face-to-face. It applies to all persons, married and single. Given our propensity to love unfaithfully, whether that involves breaking proper boundaries or refusing to honor others well, we can freely take up our little crosses. That little cross unites us with Jesus whose greater Cross shelters our unfinished efforts. He has done it; He lives, and Love has won the prize for which we strive heavenward. Special grace here for marrieds who have a special call to reveal the indissoluble bond between Jesus and His Church; for this we die daily, confident that the grace to love this other better each day is nothing less 'than the fruit of Jesus' cross' (CCC #1615). For singles, freedom from family demands means freedom for communion with Jesus that sheds light on all persons. Radiant singles reveal on earth that one-spirit union with Jesus is better than this life, a heavenly goal for all persons.

*'Help us to embrace our status in life, be it in marriage or singleness, as a gift from You. Help us to take up our crosses daily en route to chastity.'*

## OCTOBER 26<sup>TH</sup>: POWER OF THE WHOLE GOSPEL

We want to live the truth that we declare—that means that we understand the noble goal of chastity and pick up our little crosses daily in order to realize it. Then God calls us to proclaim the incredibly good news that all persons benefit from chastity. Honestly, becoming whole through the grace of Jesus' Cross is exciting. To witness the Holy Spirit reconciling fractured men and women to their beautiful gendered selves—nothing better and more relevant

for a generation enslaved by false liberties! I am in awe of Almighty Mercy in my own life. God simply did not give up on me when I believed that my only and best option was to 'gay'-identify. He fought for me on the Cross and lavished love on me from human messengers until I surrendered to that still small voice and began to seriously 'Jesus'-identify. Those were the options for discovering my true self: stay fixed on the cracked mirror of my own 'freedom' or look into the splendid face of Mercy. Now I live to declare the wholeness I have discovered in Jesus. How fitting that it flies in the face of poplar assumptions—does not every authentic declaration of the Gospel? I love the courage of St. Paul and St. John in Acts 4 when the powers-that-be commanded them to stop declaring Jesus' resurrection from the dead. They replied: 'Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard' (vs. 19, 20).

*'Rouse us, O God, for such a time as this. May the startling relevance of Your Cross and the beautiful gift of chastity wake us up to the need of each lonely suffering soul for Jesus. Free us to be Your messengers of holy freedom for all.'*

## OCTOBER 27<sup>TH</sup>: POWER OF THE WHOLE GOSPEL

We can ask the Father to stir up His Spirit in us, so that we might burn with renewed passion for reclaiming lives in His Name. In truth, we are all too busy with the demands of our normal lives. Does anyone naturally have much room for the saving of souls? We need help from on high—the fire from heaven enkindling our souls so that we must agree with the prophet Jeremiah: 'If I say that I will mention His name anymore, His word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot' (Jer 20: 9). I find the good news of Jesus for the gender challenged so inspiring, and the culture so dull and deceived to His relevance, that I must flare up like a flame and declare His transforming power. My freedom, and the freedom of others, depends on it! While in my Greek class at seminary, I overheard in the class next door a tepid lecture about how 'homosexuals cannot change.' I quietly excused myself from my class, went in to the other, and asked the professor if I might briefly share my experience of Jesus' transforming love in my fractured life. He allowed me to do so, and it made all the difference. People remain in darkness until we dare to blaze as His torches.

*'Quicken us by Your fiery Spirit, O God. Might Your Word flare up in us as it did for Jeremiah? Direct our steps and open our lips to declare Your freedom to the dull and deceived.'*

## OCTOBER 28<sup>TH</sup>: POWER OF THE WHOLE GOSPEL

In order for the Holy Spirit to activate us to reach outside our comfort zones, we must frequent settings where the Spirit is free to quicken and guide His members. We need



the whole counsel of God, and that means seeking all the gifts of His Spirit among like-minded Christians. (Such groups are usually based on prayer, the laying on of hands, waiting on God's lead, and interceding for the advance of God's Kingdom.) Scripture is utterly clear here: when Jesus sends out His witnesses, He did so 'by clothing them with power from on high' (Lk 24:49); that means the extraordinary outpouring of the Spirit on messengers so that His message might ignite these lamps of fragrant, clean oil. In Acts 1:8, Jesus speaks of the disciples receiving power from the Spirit 'in order that they might become His witnesses.' Then the Spirit falls upon them in Acts 2 to endow them with all they need to burn bright for Jesus. So we too as His disciples need a daily Pentecost, the open reception to the Spirit in His fullness. How else will we be alive to His stirrings, His fire stirring in our bellies that must be expressed for our freedom and for the freedom of our loved ones?

*'Father set us free by granting us a hunger and an active quest for more of Your Spirit. We cannot be Your disciples without more of You. Pour out Your Spirit upon us, we pray. Refuel and ignite us constantly that we might burn true and steady, ready to flare up at any time to do Your will.'*

## OCTOBER 29TH: POWER OF THE WHOLE GOSPEL

St. Paul leads the way for our Kingdom advance. His apostolic call expresses itself with crystal clarity in Acts 20 when he gives his farewell to the Ephesians elders. His message was charged with grace and challenge for them as he recounts multiple hardships in proclaiming Jesus and warns them of the deceivers and division that awaited the Ephesians after his departure. He declared amid it all: 'I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God' (v.27). Ever merciful, he never failed to mince words about the battle he and his colleagues faced in staying true to the good hard news that Jesus invited them to declare with all their might, all their days. So Jesus invites us now to become that good news for those gender challenged ones under the sway of false freedoms. Will we tell the whole truth, as the Spirit leads? Last month I was in line at Starbucks where I was provoked by a drink offer that would give a % of the price to Lady Gaga's 'Born that Way' foundation designed to serve LGBT youth. I was aghast. No-one is born that way and to foist that upon teens is nothing short of child abuse. I knew I had to declare the truth of how Jesus transforms lives, beginning with my own. I calmly registered my complaint to a gender-challenged female 'barista' sporting 3 metal clamps in a face framed by cropped purple hair. She was not a happy camper. But she heard the good news—Jesus changes lives, if we let Him. LGBT fatalism is no freedom at all but actually enslaves human liberty. We must preach the whole will of God, and trust Jesus with the result.

*'Inspire us with the truth that You only ask for obedience, not immediate success. Help us to share the good news generously, sensitively, and boldly that You are not limited by our 'born that way' deceptions.'*

## OCTOBER 30TH: POWER OF THE WHOLE GOSPEL

We can pray always that Jesus might fire us up to declare His truth. In particular, we can pray for our loved ones and ask that Jesus will make us an answer to our own prayers. Or we can ask that that another turned on Christian might reach out to him or her and make known His transforming love through that marvelous blend of a life well-lived and well-chosen words. I am convinced that persons under the sway of God's Kingdom will be ready to launch for God's missile-like purposes in this hour. I am also convinced that as I respond to the Spirit's lead in my daily life that I may well be an answer to one such prayerful champion. The Spirit has given me a loving burden for a 'gay'-identified man at my gym; I discovered he has a faithful Catholic father who prays for his faraway son. I join that father's prayer and make every opportunity to be kind to his son; then I urge that son to draw near to the One who draws near to Him constantly. One morning the Spirit asked me to wait for him as he swam laps. As soon as he finished, God gave me these words: 'You must give an answer to God for your life. You can start doing that now or wait 'til it may be too late.' He listened.

*'Help us to burn with Your heart for persons under the sway of deception. We will not sit back and watch them die in darkness. We will seek to be a reflection of Your light for as long as we have breath. We come alive as we live for the saving of many lives.'*

## OCTOBER 31ST: CROSS-FIT: WORTHY OF CHRIST

The main hardship we face in becoming good news for the gender-challenged is the perception that we are unloving. Because we champion chastity as God's will for humanity, we cannot agree with anyone's 'right' to defy His order. In that disagreement, we are seen as hateful, and rigid in our denial of another's 'right to love.' For this we must ensure that we stay utterly tender and true to God's almighty mercy for that one in error; we must never fall into the temptation to view their wanderings as more horrible than our religious hypocrisies. We must ensure that whatever "persecution for righteousness' sake" (Matt 5:10) we face is not because we are singling out the gender broken. We are simply calling all persons to chastity! Still, we face an irrational defensiveness among the LGBT+ crowd to Jesus Himself. Here we must understand the link between deep wounds and the counterfeit solutions offering by the enemy. Rejection and self-hatred run deep in many strugglers. Our common enemy designs a plan for vulnerable ones in which God becomes the enemy and friends are defined as anyone who simply affirms whatever relationship or identity one chooses to assume. That sounds good to a person who has hurt for a long time and just wants to feel better. We know that only Jesus can heal those wounds. But the enemy works hard to make Jesus and His people the problem. In this we



pick up our little crosses in the shelter of His big Cross and continue to cry out that our loved one may have a revelation of the real Jesus, even through weak ones like us!

*'Help us, O God, to discern what it means to be persecuted for what is right. Show us any self-righteousness and weed it out—by love and for love of our wandering friends. Melt demonic defensiveness through the flame of love. Let scales fall off the eyes and hearts of our loved ones, we pray.'*

## **N**OVEMBER 1<sup>ST</sup>: CROSS-FIT: WORTHY OF CHRIST

Perhaps the most costly expression of becoming good news for the gender challenged is for parents with sons and daughters under the LGBT+ stronghold. Great kids come home from university or a faraway city with a different spirit, different language, and a new way of seeing reality which clashes with God's Kingdom. Further, other family members who are lukewarm or nominal believers see nothing wrong with their LGBT+ member. The gender challenged member will of course seek solidarity with the 'accepting' side of the family. You become the religious villain. It may help you to hear Jesus' words: 'Anyone who loves his mother or father more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me' (Matt 10: 37). So Jesus is given you a chance to discover the truth that 'family ties are important but not absolute.' (CCC#2232). What is absolute is staying true to Jesus by loving all persons, especially family members, out of a godly vision for their humanity and the amazing grace He has for them to live that truth.

*'Help us to endure misunderstanding, gossip, and slander for Your Name, Jesus. We realize that we have made choices just to be liked, not to be true to You. Thank you for this little share in Your Cross. Make us worthy of You, Jesus, through this trial in my family.'*

## **N**OVEMBER 2<sup>ND</sup>: CROSS-FIT: WORTHY OF CHRIST

We face the hard truth that in spite of efforts to be kind and considerate to persons who do not share our commitment to Jesus and His vision for humanity, we will be rejected. I discovered this early on when I began to take my faith seriously and refuse the 'gay self.' I worked at a school for mentally challenged kids and all my teacher peers (except one) rejected me for my choices. Worldly people rebel against Jesus. That includes nominal Christians who side with mocking voices in order to be liked. It helps to hear from St. Paul: 'Those who seek to live godly lives will be persecuted' (2 Tim 3:12), and of course the words of Jesus: 'If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember the words I spoke to you: "The servant is not greater than his master."

If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also' (Jn 15: 18-20).

*'Thank You, Jesus, that being rejected for our faith means that we are becoming worthy of You. Help us to be lights in the darkness of unbelief and a skewed vision of humanity. Give us quiet courage to shine, to face resistance, to be rejected for Your sake.'*

## **N**OVEMBER 3<sup>RD</sup>: CROSS-FIT: WORTHY OF CHRIST

It is hard to bear the cross of rejection for Jesus' sake. It hurts to be excluded from others' respect because they perceive us as unloving, intolerant, and even hateful. Here we are invited into the fellowship of sharing in Jesus' sufferings (Phil 3:10). St. Paul wanted to know Christ in the 'power of His resurrection' but first had to share in His sorrows. So must we if we are to know the fullness of His life. We die a little when for Jesus' sake we are dismissed. We look to Him alone. United with His Cross in our little cross, we begin to sorrow, not for ourselves, but for the principle of sin and darkness in the world that resists Him. When we sorrow over sin, we bear the cross (Aquinas) and experience a unique kind of intimacy with Jesus that would elude us otherwise. I recall a dark season at our church where a group of people tried to close our Living Waters group on the grounds that we were unloving towards persons with same-sex attraction. How hard and how sweet to know Jesus in this way! Sorrow over sin makes us worthy of Christ, for 'anyone who does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me' (Matt 10:38).

*'Jesus, thank You for counting us worthy of You. Prepare us to suffer loss of name and face for Your Sake.'*

## **N**OVEMBER 4<sup>TH</sup>: CROSS-FIT: WORTHY OF CHRIST

Real joy arises only from seasons of sorrow over sin. Inspired grief clears out the fire place and frees us to burn for Him. His purposes become more important than our comforts. Through the irrational defensiveness of the LGBT+ mindset, Jesus invites us into the privilege of finding joy in Him and Him alone. With the confidence that comes through keeping our eyes fixed squarely upon His Cross, we discover that He shines upon our little crosses and accomplishes great things. Through us! No greater joy exists than experiencing Jesus' delight in sharing His kingdom with us (Lk 12: 32). Case in point: our pastor did not know what to do with the debate about Living Waters in his parish. So he appealed to the diocese. It just so happens that the man in charge had just attended the Living Waters training; he advocated boldly for us, and the entire diocese became our protection. The group proceeded joyfully to set captives free. 'As servants of God, we commend ourselves in every way... through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine yet regarded as impostors; known yet regarded as unknown; dying and yet we live on; beaten and yet not killed;



sorrowful yet always rejoicing; poor yet making many rich; having nothing, yet possessing everything' (2 Cor 6: 4, 8-10).

*'Thank You Jesus that holy joy arises from godly sorrow. Grant us the grace to live like St. Paul, 'sorrowful yet always rejoicing.' We are not worthy yet You make us worthy by giving us a share in Your suffering and new life. Now we extend Your Kingdom. We want to live no other way.'*

## NOVEMBER 5<sup>TH</sup>: CLEAR VISION AND LANGUAGE

One liberating truth that can change how we love our gender challenged friends—we can choose to see them as God sees them. These ones are not intrinsically LGBT+ persons. These are persons made in God's image, His beloved sons and daughters, however estranged they may be from Him. Our friends possess certain vulnerabilities, including a culture that wants to reduce them to an identity based upon these vulnerabilities. So we love a wounded people subject to a world that shapes them to a distorted image. Our vision is based on what God says about them—how He sees them. Our beloved ones may not like that vision. They may even insist that we agree with their self-definition that they are intrinsically 'gay' or even the opposite gender trapped in the wrong body. We can hear that and still hold firm to the truth. There is no such thing as an LGBT+ person—only wounded individuals who resist how Jesus their Creator sees them and how Jesus their Redeemer wants to help them realize that vision. Our clarity here helps guide our prayers and our interactions with loved ones. We engage with deceived ones patiently, not rudely. Jesus love is no less, and may be even greater for those who have lost vision.

*'Thank You Jesus that we can hold fast to the true identities of loved ones. We simply line up with how You see them. Free us from worldly thinking and categories; free us for true vision.'*

## NOVEMBER 6<sup>TH</sup>: CLEAR VISION AND LANGUAGE

To be sure, every person is different. We do not want to pigeon-hole any person. Temperament and personality differ from person to person and we give each one the freedom to express his masculinity and her femininity in the manner congruent with his or her personality. But that does not change the truth that God ordained him or her a male or female. In truth, that is a divine ordination; He made us in His image as male or female. These are the two natures which define all persons. We tread upon these two natures at risk of offending God and fracturing ourselves. The creation of 60+ gender selves represents how far we have strayed from God. He made us and we must make every effort to align our self-image with our biological ordination as male or female. So we grieve the self-created identities of loved ones; that should provoke us all the more to hold tenaciously to the truth of how God made them. That is a supreme act of love,

what it means to be the salt of the earth (Matt 5:13) which preserves the dignity of God's beloved children.

*'Help us to remember the two natures in which You made us. Take us deeper in how You see reality. Give us penetrating sight that can break strongholds of deception in loved ones under the world's sway.'*

## NOVEMBER 7<sup>TH</sup>: CLEAR VISION AND LANGUAGE

St. Paul writes persuasively about the power of Jesus' sacrifice and rising to cleanse our vision of all humanity in his second letter to the Corinthians (Chapter 5). His insights can be applied to today's gender profiling—the way we tend to reduce to people to gender and sexual categorizations. Even the faithful do this, good Christians referring blithely to persons as 'gay' or 'trans' in obedience to the popular culture, especially the media, which seems more powerful in instructing us in human identity than the Bible and Church!. St. Paul sets us straight. In light of the Cross, 'we are from now on to regard no-one from a worldly point of view (2 Cor 5:16)...' We must lead the way in informing others that no -one is intrinsically LGBT+, that such identifications are a social construct not anchored in a genetic or biological causality, and that creating a 'self' based upon fluctuating desires and self-perceptions is not good for the person. In that way, we uphold human dignity by offering others the reality of choice. That is good news! We are not our desires! And we can choose not to live under the low LGBT+ ceiling.

*'Jesus, forgive us for forsaking the freedom You won for all persons at the Cross. Free us from a media-driven anthropology. Give us courage to see reality for what it is and to impart that truth as You lead.'*

## NOVEMBER 8<sup>TH</sup>: CLEAR VISION AND LANGUAGE

I cannot tell you how freeing this vision is. It liberates me to see my LGBT+-identified friends (notice how I say 'identified' only to describe how they chose to identify; they need not) from the open horizon of who they are as male or female. And who they can choose to become by fixing their eyes on Jesus and the goal of chastity. Great drafts of mercy pour out of me as I realize that this person is not another specie, a third sex, a gender anomaly: (s)he is much loved by God and destined in His plan for gender clarity and wholeness! Under my breath, I simply rebuke the false ideas about their 'trans' selves or their 'gay' spouses or lovers. One can never truly transcend the gender of his or her birth. And there is no such thing as a 'gay' marriage: two husbands or two wives. I do not fortify falsehood by agreeing with self-created constructs. Instead, I can view my friend as having a companion with whom (s)he is working our deep needs and desires which become all the more distorted by sexualizing them. I disagree with any disordered friendship; at the same



time, I know it is not the end of the line for this loved one. Jesus is. And He cares more for him or her than I can. So I ask Him to help me stay true in vision and in language for this one, while always calling him or her home to Jesus.

*‘Thank You Jesus for liberating us from worldly thinking and freeing us for the true vision of You—above and behind and all around our loved one. You made him or her, and You will redeem this beautiful person of Your design. Help us to do our little part in summoning that self, God of Almighty Mercy.’*

## NOVEMBER 9TH: CLEAR VISION AND LANGUAGE

Though we do not underestimate the inner turmoil that accompanies gender dysphoria, we know that God alone can alleviate this one’s suffering by helping him or her make peace with his or her gender. Come to think of it, we are merely restating the same goal to which Jesus calls all persons: ‘Be reconciled to God and He will be faithful to establish you in your true gendered self!’ In other words, we are destroying barriers that separate people from each other (LGBT+, etc.) and calling all persons in our differences to walk together under the same Cross toward the same goal of chastity. We are one people united in Christ heading for wholeness: one goal, one Cross, one people. We are not singling out anyone. In truth, persons most at odds with their gender or those most driven by lust may well be better candidates for God’s mercy than traditional Christians who simply cannot see their ‘minor’ infractions of misogyny or self-righteousness or co-dependency. We who seek to become good news for the gender challenged always hold up Jesus’ mirror to ourselves and try to be the first to boldly confess our sin and wounding. That may include the residual dysphoria we face as we struggle for gender self-acceptance and the gift we are supposed to be for others, especially the opposite gender. In so doing, we realize that no sin or disorder can ever be wholly alien to us. And as God has had mercy on us, so we can never exclude any seeker from the Cross in community which has become our freedom. We agree with St. Paul that Jesus created in Himself one new humanity out of a divided people and has united us together in this one body (Eph 2: 15, 16). ‘May we never boast except in the Cross of Christ, through which the world has been crucified to us and us to the world... what counts is a new creation. Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule...’ (Gal 6: 14-16).

‘Jesus, start a counter revolution through us. As we see and say the truth of how You made us and how You redeem us together under the one Cross toward the one goal of chastity, open blind eyes and dull ears to the truth that sets captives free. In particular, we pray for \_\_\_ and ask that these seeds of merciful truth would find newly broken ground in his or her heart.’

## NOVEMBER 10TH: GLORY STORIES

The best way to preach the Gospel is to convey the death

and rising of Jesus through our stories. It’s rather simple. The most authentic hope we possess is based upon our surrender to Jesus in shameful, no-win areas of our lives and how, somehow, He imparted new life to us there. Wow. Our wounds, our persistent tendencies to sin and disorder, the failure of human love—yours, mine, ours—become the broken ground where the Gospel finds its richest expression. Just think of the persons who have most inspired your quest toward chastity. These were not detached teachers but dimensional witnesses whose well-expressed stories of struggle, failure, and real progress confirmed to you: I can become a more integrated person. We need witnesses who flesh out our good Christian ethics. Is it any wonder that Jesus Himself, raised at the right hand of God, still reveals Himself ‘as a Lamb looking like it had just been slain’ (Rev 5:6)? We understand His victory over sin and death as we behold His radiant wounds. The servant is not greater than his master. We reveal radiant progress en route to chastity by describing our missteps and the mercy of the Good Shepherd who helped us get back on track. Hope has meaning as we describe seasons of near despair, wholeness means more as it arises out of brokenness. We must learn how to best tell our stories then be willing to share them, even if it means being misunderstood by some. People perish without witnesses; I believe this is the key to a gender counter-revolution that liberates freedom for the fractured. I tire of the LGBT+ community taking ground through faux glory stories of ‘coming out.’ Let’s make Jesus known through real declaration of death to our self-created realities and the new life He summons.

*‘Jesus, summon us to tell the truth of what You have done in our lives. Give us courage to ‘come out’ and tell the truth of how Your love surpassed other loves and won us over to Your will for our lives. Give us the keys that unlock hearts to the joy and dignity of becoming chaste through Your grace.’*

## NOVEMBER 11TH: GLORY STORIES

Harvey Milk, the first openly ‘gay’-identified politician in the USA, consistently sought to be a good ‘face’ for homosexuality—declaring his lifestyle frankly, humorously, persuasively. He urged his followers to do the same; he knew that homosexuality is best normalized through good people ‘coming out’ to colleagues, family members and friends and so breaking down barriers to ‘gay’ acceptance. Sadly, persons who have been wounded by LGBT+ liberties, be they persons who are gender challenged or loved ones impacted by them, are silenced by shame. We stifle the good news. In the void we create by our silence, a host of wordly persons preach the joys of self-created identities. Then we react: God’s will for humanity is reduced to strident sermons that appeal only to a shrinking choir. When we break the silence and tell the real truth, God’s light dawns in the darkness and invites people to take hold of this Jesus—the answer to our gender meltdown. I recall a woman who said after hearing some of our good testimonies in a local parish: ‘This is the first time I have ever heard anything good coming out of



homosexuality.’ Shame on us for saying nothing. We live because He does. We need to tell people the truth of how He is making all things new.

‘Jesus, let HOPE ring out whenever people consider LGBT+ realities. Let that hope be rooted in You and our declaration of Your faithfulness in messy lives.’

## NOVEMBER 12TH: GLORY STORIES

Some of you might think your story is too traditional. You may disqualify yourself because you have no LGBT+ history. But guess what? You are still a disintegrated creature—every person is—en route to chastity through the mercy of our Creator. And to the degree we can articulate our stories of God’s merciful love, even if we have lived within the ‘lines’, we will make a way for persons to drop their stones and make room for persons who are further ‘out’ than we are. I recall my friend Karen confessing her divided heart—not due to porn or lesbianism or longing to be a man but the jealousy she felt toward other parents who were rejoicing in their kids’ fruitfulness while her kids wandered. She needed mercy to rejoice with those who rejoiced—to have a whole heart. The faithful become divided in many subtle ways; we must be especially attuned to our ‘elder brother’ sensibility that can devolve into resenting God and others for their perceived favor while we glower (quietly) in loveless obedience.

*‘O God, open our eyes to our need to be saved by Your love. Again! Our hearts grow cold and divided in myriad ways. Keep us alive to the fire of Your love for us so that we can declare Your glorious mercy in every season of our lives!’*

## NOVEMBER 13TH: GLORY STORIES

A few keys to sharing your marvelous witness of God’s mercy in the mundane and messy reality of your life: First, balance the gory with the glory. Don’t turn up the drama. State it plainly then show us how Jesus is making a difference for you in that area. If He has yet to do so, then maybe now isn’t the time to share it. That’s OK! Major on your hope for healing; the good now and the good yet to come. Which brings me to my second point. Give us a glimpse of your process. How Jesus’ heals our hearts, our morality, and our identities is always a process marked by fits and starts. The best witnesses know this and become skilled at presenting the fullness of miracles and mundane decisions over the long haul. Thirdly, try to be concrete about the mystery of how Jesus met you and still meets you. That can include the ways His members have loved you, as well as mystical encounters. A good friend can mediate Jesus as meaningfully as Scripture and Eucharist! Last, make sure you have talked through your process with persons who you reference in your story: parents, kids, spouses, colleagues. That may not be always wise or possible, but it is always good to try. Other persons may have a different opinion of your story but it shows integrity to reveal to them how you experience their impact

on your life. If that person does not want to be included in your ‘good news’ then you must count the cost of referencing them. Some witnesses will speak of a ‘loved one’ without revealing the identity of someone who does not want to be known. In the end, we have a story to tell and we need to stick to it.

*‘Make us witnesses who honor You and others by clear and hopeful truth-telling, as best as we can. Rather than diminishing anyone, may the ‘the word of our testimony’ (Rev 12:11) help to overcome our common enemy and open the horizon for others to know You more.’*

## NOVEMBER 14TH: GLORY STORIES

Finally, we must be led by the Holy Spirit as to whom and when we are to share our stories. God will prompt us: sometimes it is obvious, as when others invite us to share. At other times, God’s ‘still small voice’ ignites our hearts so that our freedom depends on opening our lips. Here we can learn to tailor our story to context; we would naturally share differently in a formal testimony than we would to a hurting friend or an unusual encounter with a stranger. We must be primed and ready to share as God leads, always respectful and always faithful to God’s lead, trusting Him with the outcome. I recall early on when the Spirit led me to tell a stranger at a party of my growing love for Jesus and His people as I surrendered my ‘gay’ self and exploits to Him. She became tearful and asked if I might talk with her son who was ‘gay-identified’, miserable, and in rehab. I did so, and both mother and son—neither Christians—witnessed a glimpse of what beautiful Jesus could do for persons who surrender to Him. This encounter imprinted something of the Gospel in their hearts. Hope pushed back the enemy in their lives and I took ground in my identification with Christ and His Cross.

*‘Jesus, our stories are glorious, because they tell Your story—death unto Life. May we always be ready to declare Your wondrous work in our lives. May our little lives reflect Your glorious faithfulness to a hurting, confused world. May many be persuaded that Your loving kindness is better than the vanities of this life, especially \_\_\_\_\_.’*

## NOVEMBER 15TH: SETTING A PLACE AT THE TABLE

Our last Living Waters group at St. Thomas More’s was a feast—the best way, I think to describe the table God set for us at His Church. Christians of all stripes who combatted a host of sins against chastity gathered before the huge Crucifix in the sanctuary for twenty weeks. We worshipped Jesus as He poured out blood, water and Spirit—the eyes of our heart open because our hearts were broken by our sins. Mostly, we sang out of gratitude because He had not forgotten us though we had run from Him. He ran faster and made a way for us to turn back to Him. Through His



Church! Different team members shared beautifully each week of a different aspect of His healing love from the guidebook and their own good lives; they helped us apply the truth to our disordered lives. They then invited us up to receive healing prayer at the altar. Afterwards, in same-gender small groups, we went deeper and allowed Christ's broken members to know us and to pray with us consistently in particular areas of need. We each made big steps toward chastity. Most importantly, we realized that we did not have to be tossed about by the faulty foundations of the culture (Eph 4:14)—kids subject to deceptive thinking. We discovered that we could establish our lives on the Rock which is Christ, manifest through His Church. His house is a banqueting table where we partake of His riches. We are becoming His body broken for each other, who want nothing more than to invite others to the table of His nourishing love.

*'Open our eyes, O God, to the feast You provide for us every time we gather in Your Name. Forgive us for distancing ourselves from Your feast. As You have made a place for us there, open our hearts to helping make a way for beloved ones who are blinded to the beauty of Your House. We pray for \_\_\_\_ in particular, that someday (s)he might savor the sweetness of Your house with us.'*

## **N**OVEMBER 16TH: SETTING A PLACE AT THE TABLE

Without a vision for the Church as a healing community, we lose sight of the context Jesus ordained to welcome sinners and make them saints. We first belong then we become. God sets the lonely in families (PS 68:6). When we know we are loved, it is not that difficult to lay down the selves we have created in our hurt and rebellion. Not long ago I had a dream about a very wounded person—a young woman who was trying to become a man. Her body was tiny and thin, like a malnourished boy's; she seemed to be disappearing, as if dying. In a lucid moment, she looked up and beheld Jesus who drew near to her, mighty in mercy, wholly masculine and achingly tender. He looked her straight in the eyes and said: 'I only want your best.' In His gaze, her self-deception melted away and she took His hand. Oh, that we might be that Church where wounded ones withering in deception might enter the embrace of Jesus through His beautiful body. Might we all hear those words in our struggle—'I only want your best'—and seek to make a place at the table for love ones who need to belong in order to become all that Jesus has made them to be.

*'Free us Jesus, to become Your arm, Your eyes, Your heart for a generation that will perish unless enveloped by Your members. "Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision" (Joel 3:14) May we each do our part to create a context where hurting ones can come home, especially \_\_\_\_.'*

## **N**OVEMBER 17TH: SETTING A PLACE AT THE TABLE

We confess that we live in a world that has demonized

the Church and made her the reason for the mess we are in today, not the solution. So we must take care to stand faithful and true to the gift that she has never ceased to be to broken ones. Like St. Catherine of Siena, 'may our lives be shed and consumed for this sweet Bride.' The best thing we can do is to walk humbly before God and each other, freely partaking of her riches as the antidote for our own chastity. We must live the truth in love if we are to offer a place at table for the broken. The Church has been compromised by members who have lived fractured lives and brought disrepute to His house. So we shall do our part to live holy lives out of His mercy and to extend the border of her covering over any and all who gather there to seek Jesus. What matters is the strength of our conviction in her call and capacity to restore fractured lives. 'Faith in the Lord's real presence and in His transforming power decides everything. If this faith is firm, the Church's doctrine about human sexuality will be comprehensible and equally firm. If it evaporates, then repentance, conversion, grace, and sanctification evaporate with it' (Dr. Stephen Oster).

*'Renew our faith in Your house, O God. Make it firm. May we do everything in our power and Your greater power at work in us to create a clean house where Jesus is evident in truth, mercy, and power. Impassion us with the clarion call to become who He made us to be—male and female, progressively freed to bless and honor our fellow humanity through Jesus, our Head.'*

## **N**OVEMBER 18TH: SETTING A PLACE AT THE TABLE

In taking our places as faithful members of His house, ready to include all who seek Jesus, we are reminded that all are in need of God's mercy. So we do not scapegoat persons who are more obviously broken in their gender identities and relationships. The Church today needs the revelation of holiness and healing, beginning with the revelation of human love in marriage. Perhaps no other sacrament has taken such a beating. We as a culture now struggle to recognize 'marriage' for what it is, and why it must always be understood as indissoluble, and open to life. Marriage cannot be separated from the gift of children. Our 'gay marriage' culture is founded upon the lie that no real difference exists between men and women. And in a culture of contraception, we come closer to removing the gender distinction that gives rise to new life. In blocking life, we block the revelation of man for woman, woman for man. Beneath all of this runs our divorce culture where we make and break vows with alarming ease. We must reclaim the truth that marriage accomplishes something much deeper and richer than what is obvious: it reveals Jesus' love for His bride. Marriage reveals what is holy for all persons and for this reason we must ensure that our marriages work—that we become faithful to each other and inclined to the other's good. So we cry out as the Church:

*'Jesus, help us to do all that we can to support and sustain marriage—in particular, those persons among us who have*



said 'yes' to You and to each other for life. May we fight for this most fundamental relationship, which impacts every life that passes through it. We pray especially for our married members who join us in their quest for chastity. Give us special wisdom and sight as to how to best encourage them to make good their marriage vows.'

## **N**OVEMBER 19TH: SETTING A PLACE AT THE TABLE

In today's gender meltdown, we are all witnesses. Our very beings, housed in these bodies, reveal what is good and true and real about gender—a reality that goes down to the core of our being and from our depths reveals something beautiful about humanity made in God's image. Gender difference does not exhaust itself in reproduction; it determines the direction of how we will offer the gift of ourselves in the whole of life. We live more humanly as we integrate our masculine and feminine selves. That is among the chief goals of chastity and it cannot be separated from our witness to a world that no longer recognizes the Creator and His image in humanity. We are witnesses of He who ordained us as gendered beings and He who summons that revelation of man for woman, woman for man. 'A witness is the beautiful, attractive embodiment of the goodness of the truth, the truth of ourselves now fulfilled by Christ in a form that is filial, spousal, fruitful, and open to God. Only this approach can take seriously both the demands of the truth and the human freedom in relation to it.' (Dr. Mary McCarthy). Our witness of the beauty and power of gender has never been more relevant as we seek the freedom of a generation enslaved to false liberties.

*'You have called us for such time as this. Might we pray and arise as an answer to our own prayers on behalf of a people rendered fractured and fruitless by lies. Free us to live the truth in love and so shine forth how You made us and how You redeem us. Grace and mercy and peace to all who heed our witness.'*



### 2017 Fall Report

**PUBLISHER/EDITOR**  
Andrew Comiskey

**ART DIRECTION**  
Kevin Williamson Design

**DESERT STREAM MINISTRIES  
PUBLISHES THE FOLLOWING:**

Newsletter (Spring and Fall)

Mid-Year Report (Summer)

Year-End Report (Winter)

### Mission Statement

Based on the biblical foundations of compassion, integrity, and dependence on God, Desert Stream Ministries proclaims to the world the transforming power of Jesus Christ. We equip the body of Christ to minister healing to the sexually and relationally broken, through healing groups and leadership training for the local church.

### Staff

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
Andrew Comiskey

**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR**  
Abbey Foard

**DESERT STREAM PRESS**  
Annette Comiskey

**LIVING WATERS USA  
COORDINATOR**  
Dean Greer

**DIRECTOR OF INTERCESSION**  
Ann Armstrong

**RESOURCES & AGUAS VIVAS**  
Daniel Delgado

**TECH SUPPORT**  
Eric Spady

**INTERN STAFF**  
Amanda Smith  
Dana Epperly

#### SUPPORT STAFF

Becky Turner, Lori Harry, Nate  
No part of this Newsletter/Report may be reproduced or reprinted without permission.

*Please address all inquiries to:*

**DESERT STREAM**

706 Main Street

Grandview, MO 64030

(816) 767-1730 Fax: (816) 767-7221