

BONDINGS

Vol. 35, No. 4

A Publication of New Ways Ministry

Summer 2016

Pope: Christians must apologize to gay people for marginalizing them

By Joshua McElwee
National Catholic Reporter
June 26, 2016

ABOARD THE PAPAL FLIGHT TO ROME—The Catholic church and other Christian communities must apologize to gay people and to many groups they have let down or offended throughout history, Pope Francis has said.

In a press conference Sunday on the flight back to Rome after his weekend trip to Armenia, the pontiff said bluntly: "The church must say it's sorry for not having comforted itself well many times, many times."

"I believe that the church not only must say it's sorry ... to this person that is gay that it has offended," said the pope. "But it must say it's sorry to the poor, also, to mistreated women, to children forced to work."

"When I say the church: Christians," Francis clarified. "The church is holy. We are the sinners."

The culture has changed—and thank God!
—Pope Francis

The pope was responding to a question about remarks German Cardinal Reinhard Marx made last week that the Catholic church should apologize to the gay community for marginalizing them.

"I will repeat the same thing I said on the first trip," Francis said today, referencing the press conference he held on a return flight from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2013. "I will also repeat what the Cate-

chism of the Catholic Church says: that [gay people] should not be discriminated against, that they have to be respected, pastorally accompanied."

"The matter is a person that has that condition [and] that has good will because they search for God," said the pontiff.

"Who are we to judge them?" he asked, reframing his famous phrase from 2013 into the plural. "We must accompany well -- what the Catechism says. The Catechism is clear."

Francis also said that the culture in which he grew up in Argentina many

years ago was a "closed Catholic culture," giving the example of how it was looked down upon to even enter the home of a couple who had been married civilly after one of the partners had previously divorced.

"The culture has changed -- and thank God!" the pope exclaimed. "Christians; we must say we are sorry many times; not only on this."

"This is the life of the church," said the pontiff. "We are all saints because we all have the Holy Spirit inside us. But we are also all sinners."

The pope's words about apologizing to those the church has let down were part of a nearly hour-long press conference that focused on a wide array of issues.

Topics included: Francis' decision to create a commission to study the possibility of

ordaining women as deacons in the Catholic church, whether the pope might consider removing the excommunication of Protestant reformation leader Martin Luther, and his decision to continue to label the World War I-era killings of 1.5 Armenians as a genocide. †



Pope Francis answers questions from journalists aboard his flight from Armenia, to Rome June 26.

A Call for a Mass for LGBT People at the Vatican

By Benjamin Brenkert
Bondings 2.0
NewWaysMinistryBlog.wordpress.com
July 17, 2016

As a Christian gay person, and former candidate for the priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church, I propose that in response to the recent LGBT mass shooting in Orlando, Pope Francis celebrate a Mass for LGBT people in St. Peter's Basilica and Square in Vatican City.

The Pope's effusive, rhetorical question, "Who am I to judge?" is a promising question, but it needs actions to back it up. While a non-judgmental tone sounds good, unless clear and tangible follow-up happens, it doesn't mean much. His call for an apology to gay people shows that he is willing to ask their forgiveness. Jesuit Fr. James Martin told CNN, "No group feels more marginalized in the church today than LGBT people." Clearly, active forgiveness and reconciliation are needed. What better way to celebrate that than to participate in the Eucharist together?

What the secular and religious world needs is an unequivocal demonstration of prophetic support for LGBT people, especially youth. A Mass for LGBT people all over the world is a good first step to let gays know that they are accepted for who they are, and that they are loved unconditionally.

A public Mass is the type of action the LGBT community thirsts for. They want to know you truly offer presence, inclusion and acceptance. A Mass would allow a group that has been so excluded to participate in an action that is never conditional or situational: God loved the world so he sent His Son to save it.

At the Mass, Pope Francis could invite gay priests to come out of the shadows of their closets, allowing them to be completely and utterly honest about who they are. He could call parents of LGBT youth not to abandon their children. He could remind the rest of the world that pastoral outreach to the LGBT community is necessary. He could decry governmental policies which discriminate against or criminalize LGBT people.

The Pope could remind the world

that God delights in all people—straight, gay, lesbian, trans, bisexual, and all who don't fit a label—and that God made us human, embodied beings. Pope Francis could do this by calling for a reform of the catechism of the church.

At a mass for gays, the Pope could finally lead the church out of people's bedrooms, beyond talk about sex, and to human relationships and the whole life of every person. He could say that LGBT



people are not sinners and that their relationships of love are not sinful. Such is already the cornerstone of a papacy that proclaims the Joy of the Gospel.

The Pope should allow all LGBT people to receive the Holy Eucharist at such a Mass, creating an important symbolic gesture for all pastors and bishops who seek to limit reception of communion. He must allow them back into the Catholic family. If the church is truly maternal, it will open her arms in welcome.

It is sad to point out that the world is still not safe for LGBT people. The recent massacre of gays in Orlando reminds us that, despite the gains in marriage equality and the overturning of other discriminatory laws, the current wave of LGBT equality is still met with resistance in the secular world and with destructive messages in the religious world.

I call out to you, Pope Francis, please invite LGBT people throughout the world to make a pilgrimage to Rome in order to celebrate Eucharist with you. We will respond overwhelmingly, and this celebration will be a blessing for all. †

New Ways Ministry Responds to Pope Francis' Apology Call

Bondings 2.0
NewWaysMinistryBlog.wordpress.com
June 26, 2016

The following is a statement of Francis DeBernardo, New Ways Ministry's Executive Director, released on June 26, 2016, in response to Pope Francis' call for the Church to apologize to groups it has harmed.

No pope has said more welcoming words to LGBT people than Pope Francis' recommendation today that the Church—indeed all Christians—should apologize for the harm religious traditions have caused to LGBT people. The pope's statement was simple, yet powerful, and it fell from his lips so easily. The simplicity of his language will provide an immense blessing of healing and reconciliation to LGBT people and Catholics who support them, who have been waiting decades to hear such a simple, honest statement from the Vatican.

This step by Pope Francis shows that Church leaders can and should admit when they have been wrong, especially when their wrongs cause people tremendous and unnecessary harm. His message signals a major change in attitude for an institution that has a terrible history of ever admitting that it has done something wrong. Admitting an error is healing not just for the harmed people to whom an apology is issued, but to the apologizer, too. Great healing can come from this statement not just for LGBT people, but also for Church leaders who will follow the Pope's example.

Indeed, some Catholic leaders have already acknowledged the pain that the Church has caused sexual and gender minorities. When the person in charge sets the tone for such apologies, more leaders and people will be moved to follow suit.

In calling for an apology, Pope Francis said that he affirmed the teaching of the Catechism of the Catholic Church about gay and lesbian people, but, significantly, he emphasized the social justice teaching about condemning prejudice and discrimination against them. Few church leaders ever think of emphasizing the teaching against harming LGBT people, ignoring it to amplify the teaching against

sexually engaged homosexual relationships.

We hope and pray that the pope and other church leaders issue formal statements of apology, and, more importantly, offer gestures of reconciliation for LGBT people. In the aftermath of the mass shooting in Orlando, only a handful of Catholic bishops even acknowledge that there was an LGBT dimension to the incident. A few, like Bishop Robert Lynch, not only expressed sympathy for the LGBT victims, but also acknowledged that the Church's teaching and language too often fostered anti-LGBT sentiments. Pope Francis' statement shows support for Bishop Lynch's approach.

Most welcome, too, was the fact that his call for apologies to gay people, also included a call to apologize to others that the Church has harmed: women, the poor, the divorced, and children forced to work.

Pope Francis' comments did not come out of a vacuum, but out of the decades of work that Catholics have been doing to remind Church leaders that the Church was too often complicit in the social prejudice and physical harm that LGBT people experience. The prayers, witness, work, and ministry of so many dedicated Catholics has finally risen to the top of the hierarchy and is starting to be heard and enacted.

For some LGBT people who have been so wounded and bruised by Catholic leaders' negative messages, the pope's statement may seem like too little, too late. While indeed we have waited a long time for an opening like this, I think it is important to rejoice at this step forward. We must work and pray to make sure that the next steps take place much quicker. Among those next steps are more dialogue between Church leaders and LGBT people. Equally needed is a serious re-evaluation of the hierarchy's disapproval of committed sexual relationships of lesbian, bisexual, and gay couples, as well as re-thinking the denigrating language Church leaders often use to describe transgender identities.

New Ways Ministry thanks Pope Francis for his example of Christian humility, and we encourage him to continue to pave the way for even greater changes for LGBT people and the Catholic Church. †

BONDINGS

Summer 2016

Vol. 35, No. 4

Francis DeBernardo, *Editor***Board of Directors**

Mary Byers
Jeannine Gramick, SL, Chair
Ryan Sattler

Board of Advisors

Cornelius Hubbuch, CFX
Anna Koop, SL
Claire Pluecker
Cristina Traina

Staff

Francis DeBernardo, Executive Director
Matthew Myers, Associate Director
Robert Shine, Social Media Coordinator
Glen Bradley, Staff Associate

Co-Founders

Sr. Jeannine Gramick, SL
Rev. Robert Nugent, SDS

Bondings is a seasonal publication designed to keep our subscribers informed of issues that pertain to LGBT people and the Catholic Church.

Founded in 1977, New Ways Ministry is an educational and bridge-building ministry of reconciliation between the Catholic LGBT community and the institutional structures in the Roman Catholic Church.

New Ways Ministry seeks to eradicate prevalent myths and stereotypes about homosexuality and gender identity and supports civil rights for LGBT persons in society.

New Ways Ministry

4012 29th Street
Mount Rainier, Maryland 20712
(301) 277-5674

Info@NewWaysMinistry.org
NewWaysMinistry.org
NewWaysMinistryBlog.wordpress.com

We need a victory of speech over the violence of silence

By **Sister Jeannine Gramick, SL**
National Catholic Reporter
July 11, 2016

"I have been thinking about you a lot lately ... first with the news about the Loretto sisters being called to Rome. And then, of course, since the shootings in Orlando. ... At morning prayer at home we prayed for the LGBT people and their families and for a strengthening of the message of nonviolence."

I've received many phone and email messages like this one lately. You see, I'm a Sister of Loretto and I've been involved in ministry on behalf of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Catholics for 45 years.

On June 12 came the shocking news that the most lethal mass shooting in modern U.S. history had occurred inside Pulse, a gay nightclub in Orlando, Fla. -- 50 people dead, including the gunman, and 53 injured.

This was by no means the first such attack. More than 40 years ago, an arson fire at a gay club in New Orleans snuffed out the lives of 32 LGBT people. Every day, LGBT people around the world are at risk because of verbal threats, intimidation and bullying, and even imprisonment, torture and death.

Often we don't even recognize the homophobia and transphobia in unacceptable jokes or casual comments. But subconscious, intolerant attitudes toward LGBT people fuel the kind of bizarre violence that happened in Orlando. One kind of violence not often recognized is the violence of silence. After the Orlando massacre, some in our church were guilty of this kind of violence. Headlines the world over noted that the shooting took place in a gay club, but statements released by the Vatican press office, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and Orlando's bishop conspicuously passed over references that the people targeted were lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. Some bishops issued no statement at all.

Silence is violence when, as in this instance, it denies the existence of a whole category of people, people who have been targeted with physical violence because of who they are. If I don't acknowledge your existence, I do not need to recognize your rights; I do not see that you need added protections. Furthermore, I am unable to know you or to relate to you in a meaningful way.

"Silence=Death," the slogan of AIDS activists in the 1980s, not only questioned President Ronald Reagan's silence about the disease, it also boldly declared that, as a matter of survival, silence about the repression of LGBT people must end. The violence of silence kills.

I thought again about the email from my friend who wrote to me also because the Sisters of Loretto were called to the Vatican. Fifteen U.S. communities of women religious have been contacted by the Vatican's congregation for religious life to continue conversations begun

during the 2008-2014 apostolic visitation of women's orders. Four of those 15 have been identified. Three have spoken publicly about the Vatican's latest summons: the Loretto sisters, the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet.

These three communities represent for me a victory of speech over silence. Church investigations of individuals or groups have usually been shrouded in secrecy,

which has had disastrous consequences for the life of the church. Secrecy instills fear and enables authorities to exercise control of mind or action. When significant matters are kept secret from the faithful, church leaders cannot be held accountable for their actions, nor can the faithful engage in informed conversations about important issues.

Of course, confidentiality may be needed for certain considerations, but confidentiality is more respected if used sparingly. To the average Catholic, what church leaders choose to

keep confidential seems arbitrary. Perhaps the church needs a Freedom of Information Act?

Silence can destroy any family, not only a family with LGBT persons. It can destroy a family that is not accepted at a church because of a divorced parent, or is ignored by neighbors because of a special needs child, or cannot talk about some dysfunction within it. Silence can even destroy the spiritual family we call church.

To the three religious communities we know of, the Vatican congregation has expressed concern about public dissent from church teaching. Apparently, the congregation prefers that individuals and groups keep silent if they dissent.

Rather than be alarmed, the congregation should view accusations of dissent as possible signs of vitality. How has our church been able to change over the centuries, if not by dissent? Modifications in the church's position on slavery, usury, and salvation outside the church are the usual examples of doctrinal change all affected by public dissent.

Public dissent can stimulate in people the courage to speak honestly about their experiences. In the search for truth, there will be much diversity of opinion, many ambiguities and even confusion. Only the test of time will show what is authentic.

Pope Francis seems to encourage dissenting views. He tells youth to "make a mess" and exhorted the bishops at the Synod on the Family to speak their minds, even if they disagreed with him. I believe that Francis is depending upon the people of God to hasten needed reforms in our church, but these reforms depend upon free speech and access to information from church sources.

If our church were a democracy and this a campaign year, my yard signs and buttons would read, "Down with the violence of silence and up with a victory for speech!"



Sr. Jeannine Gramick, SL

TO SUBSCRIBE COMPLETE AND RETURN THE FORM

Enclosed is:

_____ \$25.00 in the US or Canada

_____ \$35.00 outside US or Canada

_____ I wish to receive *Bondings*,
but cannot donate at this time.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

DayPhone _____

Night Phone _____

Cell Phone _____

Please make check payable to "New Ways Ministry". Outside the US, please use *only* checks drawn on a US bank in US dollars or go to www.newwaysministry.org.

Mail to:
New Ways Ministry
4012 29th Street
Mount Rainier, MD 20712

New Ways Ministry's Eighth National Symposium **Justice and Mercy Shall Kiss: LGBT Catholics in the Age of Pope Francis** April 28-30, 2017 Chicago, Illinois

Plenary Speakers:

LISA FULLAM, Associate Professor, Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley
LESLIE GRIFFIN, Professor of Law at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas
BRYAN MASSINGALE, Professor of Theological and Social Ethics, Fordham University
FRANK MUGISHA, Executive Director, Sexual Minorities Uganda

Workshop sessions will examine such issues as: transgender and intersex identity, LGBT church workers, lesbian/gay members in religious life and the clergy, LGBT youth, parish outreach programs, and family issues.

Pre-Symposium Retreat on Spirituality & Social Justice led by **Sister Simone Campbell, Executive Director, NETWORK**

For more information, contact:
New Ways Ministry
4012 29th Street
Mount Rainier, Maryland 20712
Phone: 301-277-5674
Email: info@NewWaysMinistry.org

Stock-taking times: Religion's role in Orlando massacre

By Russell Pollitt, SJ
The Daily Maverick
 Benmore, South Africa
 June 14, 2016

Gay-bashing has often found its justification in religious traditions. It's an unfortunate pitfall that many believers fall into: the propensity to see themselves as the ultimate guardians of morality and in so doing demonise anyone that is "other" – or does not fit their narrow (often flawed) understanding, and categories. This has been further compounded by the language that is used in religious traditions. Naively, I was shocked to read some of the reactions – by so-called believers – in the aftermath of the horrific killings at Pulse.

Fr. Edward L Beck, writing in *Cruxnow.com*, describes how he spoke out against what had happened on Sunday morning as news broke across the world of the killings in his Sunday sermon. One congregant left his church, agreeing with him. This was a "terrible tragedy." However, she went on to say, "If they hadn't been in a place like that at two in the morning, they would still be alive." I read the line twice to make sure I had comprehended it correctly. Beck goes on to say that he was "dumbfounded, literally speechless."

Beck continues: "In fairness, I don't believe she was saying that the scores killed and injured deserved it, or were directly responsible for their fate, but the implication was almost as chilling: If those in the Pulse nightclub hadn't been socialising in a gay – and therefore, in her view, immoral – environment in the middle of the night, their lives would have been spared."

Beck explains that, in the face of the astonishing reaction his congregant displayed, he went to social media to try to process this. Most empathised with dismay but there were some responses, he writes, which surprised him. "One person tweeted: 'Saying LGBT relationships are 'intrinsically disordered' and 'morally evil' incites hatred worldwide not love... Catholic teaching on LGBT is part of the problem. It fuels hatred and bigotry worldwide. It kills LGBT hearts.'"

It's an uncomfortable question but one that believers have to ask: What role has religion played (across the board) in fueling homophobia? I suspect the answer will be equally uncomfortable.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (which is the tradition I am familiar with but suspect that other traditions are not dissimilar) says "tradition has always declared that homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered." It refers to homosexuality as an inclination which is "objectively disordered." Most people stop reading there but it does go on to say that gay people "must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided."

It is not uncommon for gay people to feel unwanted and not welcome in Christian communities. Sometimes their families feel too embarrassed to go to church, or in worst case scenarios, are shunned because of their gay family member. Gay people and their families have been treated as second-class citizens. Many gay people were never physically driven away from a church – the language alone was enough.

This kind of language came under scrutiny at the Synod on the Family, called by Pope Francis, in 2014. A number of bishops called for a language that is more sensitive but, sadly, many other bishops dug their heels in and would not budge on this issue. Many of the American bishops, and some Africans, were the most vociferous on this subject.

Some of the bishops argued that it was precisely this kind of language that alienated gay people and their families. Some alluded to the fact that this language did not point towards a loving God who welcomes all, no matter who they are.

Writing on family life in his post-Synod Apostolic Exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia*, the Pope clearly says that "every sign of unjust discrimination" towards gay people must be avoided. He goes on to say, "particularly any form of aggression and violence." Some people, especially LGBT Catholics, were disappointed that Francis was not stronger on the issue.

The kind of language that is used in official texts of the Church powerfully shapes perceptions, attitudes and actions. After all, isn't that what religious teaching strives to do – shape perceptions, attitudes and actions – hopefully for the good?

While religion and religious language alone cannot be held responsible for or used as the sole motivating factor for this

senseless killing in Florida, believers cannot let this pass. We need to interrogate the impact of the words we use and the positions we take. Religious language, and the mindset it forms, must take stock of its contribution to forming attitudes that contribute to a cocktail that breeds such evil acts. This type of evil can never be associated with God.



A memorial vigil for the Orlando shooting victims.

Often the Bible is used to justify a range of attitudes and actions. But there is an important fact that is overlooked or ignored: The difference between what is in the Bible and what the Bible teaches. What the Bible teaches is not always reducible to what is in the Bible.

To understand this, we need to look at the Bible as a whole and look at its trajectories and common themes. We need to study the text in its totality and not just read, blindly, what is in the Bible. We should never isolate one section of the text. We must also bear in mind that the texts we read in the Bible were written in certain circumstances, addressing certain issues, and within a certain cultural milieu.

The overarching theme of the Bible, without doubt, is the love of neighbour and care of the poor. Many accounts in the Bible explain what kind of disaster follows when these are not fulfilled. Love of neighbour and care of the poor, by their consistent repetition in both the Old and New Testaments, overwrite all other themes. This overwriting theme should be the lens that informs the perceptions, attitudes and actions of believers.

Pope Francis seems to get this. Speaking to an Italian journalist, who was questioning him on his famous "Who I am to judge?" remark when he was asked about

gay priests in 2013, said: "I am glad that we are talking about 'homosexual people' because before all else comes the individual person, in his wholeness and dignity. And people should not be defined only by their sexual tendencies: let us not forget that God loves all his creatures and we are destined to receive his infinite love."

While we should ensure that religion is not used by extremists to justify murder, we have to acknowledge that religious perceptions and attitudes need to be challenged when they fail to position themselves within the authentic vision of a particular religious tradition. Extremists are not only "out there," they are within our religious communities. Just last week the pope warned that those within the Church who told us "it's this or nothing" are heretics.

When Christians fail to condemn the killing of gay people at Pulse, they fail to position themselves in the authentic tradition. Bad religion, as a colleague remarked on social media, is an assault rifle.

The US government has failed to deal with the issue of gun control despite multiple shootings in recent years. Equally so, a number of religious traditions have failed to deal with language and attitudes that perpetuate homophobia. That's a sin too.

If the individual person and their dignity comes first, as Pope Francis has reiterated a number of times, that means it comes first for everyone, migrants, blacks, whites, gays, straights. There are no exceptions.

In the days ahead there will be vigorous debates in the political arena about guns and how freely available they are in the US. It's the same story every time one of these tragedies unfolds.

But there is another place where urgent discussion is needed: in the faith community. I hope that the Christian community will have the courage to face up to its part in shaping perceptions, attitudes and actions that have contributed to the persecution and suffering of gay people by perpetuating homophobia. We need to call it what it is: wrong.

When religion, or anything for that matter, is distorted and used by extremists for their own ends, it needs to be condemned. When it is distorted and used by some believers for their own ends, it needs to be condemned, even more urgently. †

After Orlando, Archbishop Pledges to LGBT People: "I Stand With You"

By Bob Shine
Bondings 2.0
 NewWaysMinistryBlog.wordpress.com
 June 14, 2016

Catholic leaders were initially silent about the anti-LGBT prejudices undergirding the mass shooting at Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, which has left at least 50 people dead and more wounded. Four bishops have since released statements acknowledging the prejudice behind these attacks.

Bishop Robert McElroy of San Diego released a statement, saying the murders were "rooted in a counterfeit notion of religious faith and magnified by our gun culture." He continued:

"The shootings in Orlando are a wound to our entire society, and this time the LGBT community has been specifically targeted and victimized. . .

"We pray for the many victims in Orlando who were targeted for death simply because of their sexual orientation, and we grieve with their loving families and friends. This tragedy is a call for us as Catholics to combat ever more vigorously the anti-gay prejudice which exists in our Catholic community and in our country."

Chicago's Archbishop Blase Cupich had recognized gay and lesbian victims in his initial statement, and followed up with a letter read at a regularly-scheduled Sunday evening Mass hosted by the Archdiocesan Gay

and Lesbian Outreach ministry. Cupich said in the letter, posted on Twitter by journalist Michael O'Loughlin:

"For you here today and throughout the whole lesbian and gay community, who are particularly touched by the heinous crimes committed in Orlando, motivated by hate, driven perhaps by mental instability and certainly empowered by a culture of violence, know this: the Archdiocese of Chicago stands with you. I stand with you.

"Let our shared grief and our common faith in Jesus, who called the persecuted blessed, unite us so that hatred and tolerance are not allowed to flourish. . ." Bishop Robert Lynch of St. Petersburg responded on his blog, acknowledging forthrightly that Pulse was a nightclub for "Gay, Lesbian, Transgender" patrons. He continued:

"[S]adly it is religion, including our own, which targets, mostly verbally, and also often breeds contempt for gays, lesbians and transgender people. Attacks today on LGBT men and women often plant the seed of con-

tempt, then hatred, which can ultimately lead to violence. Those women and men who were mowed down early yesterday morning were all made in the image and likeness of God. We teach that. We should believe that. We must stand for that. Without yet knowing who perpetrated the PULSE mass murders, when I saw the Imam come forward at a press conference yesterday morning, I knew that somewhere in the story there would be a search to find religious roots. While deranged people do senseless things, all of us observe, judge and act from some kind of religious background. Singling out people for victimization because of their religion, their sexual orientation, their nationality must be offensive to God's ears. It has to stop also."

Bishop David Zubik of Pittsburgh released a statement which said, in part:

"Our Muslim neighbors are grieving over this tragedy as much as our gay and lesbian neighbors. We are all God's children. May we love, honor and respect one another as such."

Meanwhile, in his initial response to the incident, Bishop John Noonan of Orlando did not acknowledge the gay and lesbian dimension of the attack. Preparations for his diocese's Vigil to Dry Tears, which took place last night, had no evidence that the victims were members of the LGBT community.

Archbishop Joseph Kurtz of Louisville, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, also ignored victims' identities about which David Gibson noted in the *National Catholic Reporter*:

"That statement contrasted with Kurtz's statement a year ago after the shooting massacre in a black church in Charleston, S.C. Speaking two days after the attack on Mother Emanuel by a white supremacist, Kurtz repeatedly condemned the 'racism and the violence so visible today' and called for efforts to combat both, in personal change and through public policies."

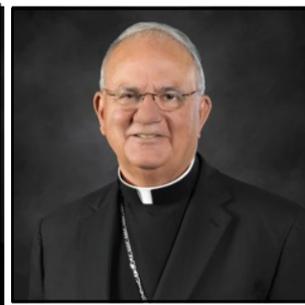
Michael Sean Winters, in a column in the *National Catholic Reporter*, wrote about Kurtz's and other bishops' failure to identify this incident as having an anti-LGBT dimension: "If you are so [out of touch] that you do not realize that the refusal to refer to people as they refer to themselves is offensive, especially when that same group of people has just been the object of a violent and murderous attack, stop pretending to any claim to moral leadership in the society and just go away." †



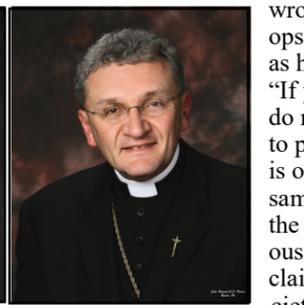
Bishop Robert McElroy



Archbishop Blase Cupich



Bishop Robert Lynch



Bishop David Zubik

Gay, Catholic, and Proud: A Young Person's Perspective

By **Matt Hawley**
The Huffington Post
 June 8, 2016

It's that time of year again. The beginning of summer marks the time of year when every major city hosts its LGBT Pride Parade. The cities will explode in a Molotov cocktail explosion of pink confetti, diva music, and piñatas filled with



Matt Hawley

condoms. Or so I've heard. For the first time I will be participating in the festivities. Not because for the first time in my life I'm gay, but for the first time in my life, I'm verging on something adjacent to pride when it comes to my sexuality.

For the longest time, I didn't know what that meant. How could someone be proud of their sexuality? Did straight people walk around proud of the fact that they wanted to have heterosexual intercourse? Unlikely. But really what was there to be proud of when it came to sexuality at all? It is an uncontrollable fact bestowed upon each of us. It's like celebrating my red hair or freckles. Those don't bring me a sense of pride. They're just facts. I'm proud of accomplishments. My graduation from college, my job, the relationships I've built with those around me, my dedication to watch all of season 2 of *True Detective* no matter how bad it got. Those

required work.

My gayness didn't require work. It required being born.

But then I thought again.

I grew up in a traditional, Irish-Catholic family in Boston. My mom is the principal of a Catholic school. My grandparents traveled over directly from Ireland. I've only ever missed two Sunday masses since I was eight. That's the level we're talking.

A few years ago, when I decided to finally come out as gay — though my attendance at the last three Taylor Swift tours should've already been an indicator to anyone who breathes — I went to Church first to talk about it with God.

In the Catholic faith, there is a practice called adoration. Growing up I didn't understand what it was. I just thought that's where my mom would go on Friday nights when she didn't feel like drinking. But as I grew older I understood why she went.

Catholics believe that at the last supper Jesus said, "Take this bread and eat. For this is my body given up to you." When we receive the Eucharist, a consecrated piece of unleavened bread, we are not remembering the last supper or reenacting it. We believe we are actually receiving and consuming God and all the peace he brings.

In adoration, we do not consume it, but we adore it silently. We believe God is present in that room. Everyone I've ever tried explaining this to gets a weird, bugged-out look in their eye. Like "Oh crap, I thought he was normal." It's like

"When I was younger, I didn't come out because I thought I had to choose between my faith and my sexuality. . . . When I came out, God reached out to me to say you can be both."

revealing you're a Scientologist at a dinner party while everyone backs away slowly hoping it's not contagious.

I used to think it was crazy too, but the more I went to it, the more peace I felt and the more I felt like I was having a direct conversation with God in that quiet.

I went to adoration when I decided to embark on Operation: Find a Man. I feared God would be angry, but instead I distinctly felt God encouraging me.

The next day I got a call from my mom at work. She said she'd gone to Church that morning and felt there was something troubling me that I hadn't told her about. I struggled to hold the phone. I've never felt so assured that God was in the Eucharist.

As I came out to family and friends over the course of the next year and a half, the response was varied — from unconditional love, to those who feared for my soul because now I was going to hell to blatant rejection. Many kept asking: "Why?"

That was a few years ago and I have developed a new life and new friends. Now their resounding question is: Why? Why are you still Catholic?

I understand that the Church deems my gayness "same-sex attraction disorder," which as an acronym spells "SAD" — the exact opposite of gay. I am clear that I can never get married in a Catholic

church — even while I go to mass every weekend and most Catholics who get married in churches are the Christmas-Easter types.

I would like to think the Catholic Church will one day change its mind, but it's almost irrelevant because the Catholic Church has been wrong about a great many things. I grew up in a time when Boston was littered with sexual abuse victim stories daily. I know the Catholic Church would rather people in Africa die of AIDS than give them contraception. I know the Church is still incredibly and shamefully sexist in almost every regard.

But that is the Church. And to be honest, I hate the Catholic Church as much as anyone. Catholicism has not lasted for 2,000 years because of priests or the institution. In fact it has lasted in spite of both. Its longevity stems from millions of people across the world who still connect to the beliefs of forgiveness, do unto others what you want done, and the self-sacrificing love of our creator.

When I was younger, I didn't come out because I thought I had to choose between my faith and my sexuality. I had no models of gay individuals who embraced their faith. People always chose one or the other.

When I came out, God reached out to me to say you can be both.

That is why I'm proud: I reached back. I have incorporated my sexuality into my whole being. It does not define me. I am proud to be gay and Catholic. That is not simply a fact. It is an accomplishment. In spite of my surroundings, I proclaimed that I want to find happiness with a man. In spite of the world, I maintained my faith. I did that, and I am proud.

LGBT-friendly Catholic Colleges and Universities

Below is a list of known LGBT-friendly Catholic colleges and universities, that is, those Catholic institutions that have some type of gay/LGBT student group, support group, ally group, etc. If you are aware of such a college that is known as welcoming to LGBT people, please let us know.



- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| <p>Alabama
 <i>Mobile:</i> Spring Hill College</p> <p>California
 <i>Belmont:</i> Notre Dame de Namur University
 <i>Goleta:</i> St. Mark's University
 <i>Los Angeles:</i> Loyola Marymount University, Mount Saint Mary's College
 <i>Moraga:</i> St. Mary's College
 <i>Oakland:</i> Holy Names University
 <i>Ranchos Palos Verde:</i> Marymount College
 <i>San Diego:</i> University of San Diego
 <i>San Francisco:</i> University of San Francisco
 <i>Santa Clara:</i> Santa Clara University</p> <p>Colorado
 <i>Denver:</i> Regis University</p> <p>Connecticut
 <i>Fairfield:</i> Fairfield University, Sacred Heart University
 <i>New Haven:</i> Albertus Magnus College
 <i>West Hartford:</i> Saint Joseph College</p> <p>District of Columbia
 Georgetown University, Trinity University</p> <p>Florida
 <i>Miami Gardens:</i> St. Thomas University
 <i>Miami Shores:</i> Barry University</p> <p>Hawaii
 <i>Honolulu:</i> Chaminade University</p> <p>Illinois
 <i>Chicago:</i> DePaul University, Loyola University, St. Xavier University
 <i>Joliet:</i> University of St. Francis
 <i>River Forest:</i> Dominican University in Illinois
 <i>Romeoville:</i> Lewis University</p> <p>Indiana
 <i>Notre Dame:</i> Holy Cross College, St. Mary's College, Univ. of Notre Dame</p> | <p>Iowa
 <i>Davenport:</i> St. Ambrose University
 <i>Dubuque:</i> Loras College</p> <p>Kentucky
 <i>Louisville:</i> Spalding University, Bellarmine University</p> <p>Louisiana
 <i>New Orleans:</i> Loyola University</p> <p>Maryland
 <i>Baltimore:</i> Notre Dame of Maryland University, Loyola University of Maryland</p> <p>Massachusetts
 <i>Boston:</i> Emmanuel College, Chestnut Hill: Boston College
 <i>Chicopee:</i> Elms College
 <i>Easton:</i> Stonehill College
 <i>North Andover:</i> Merrimack College
 <i>Weston:</i> Regis College
 <i>Worcester:</i> Assumption College, College of the Holy Cross</p> <p>Michigan
 <i>Detroit:</i> University of Detroit Mercy
 <i>Grand Rapids:</i> Aquinas College</p> <p>Minnesota
 <i>Collegeville:</i> St. John's University
 <i>Duluth:</i> College of St. Scholastica
 <i>Minneapolis:</i> College of St. Catherine
 <i>St. Joseph:</i> College of Saint Benedict
 <i>St. Paul:</i> St. Thomas University
 <i>Winona:</i> St. Mary's University of Minnesota</p> <p>Missouri
 <i>Kansas City:</i> Avila University, Rockhurst University
 <i>St. Louis:</i> Fontbonne University, St. Louis University</p> <p>Montana
 <i>Helena:</i> Carroll College</p> | <p>Nebraska
 <i>Omaha:</i> Creighton University</p> <p>New Hampshire
 <i>Manchester:</i> St. Anselm College
 <i>Nashua:</i> Rivier College</p> <p>New Jersey
 <i>Caldwell:</i> Caldwell College
 <i>Jersey City:</i> St. Peter's College
 <i>South Orange:</i> Seton Hall</p> <p>New York
 <i>Albany:</i> College of Saint Rose
 <i>Brooklyn and Patchogue:</i> St. Joseph College
 <i>Bronx:</i> Fordham University, Manhattan College
 <i>Buffalo:</i> Canisius College
 <i>Loudonville:</i> Siena College
 <i>New Rochelle:</i> College of New Rochelle, Iona College
 <i>Poughkeepsie:</i> Marist College
 <i>Rochester:</i> St. John Fisher College
 <i>St. Bonaventure:</i> St. Bonaventure University
 <i>Sparkill:</i> St. Thomas Aquinas College
 <i>Syracuse:</i> LeMoyne College
 <i>Queens:</i> St. John's University</p> <p>Ohio
 <i>Cincinnati:</i> Xavier University
 <i>Cleveland Heights:</i> John Carroll University
 <i>Dayton:</i> University of Dayton
 <i>Pepper Pike:</i> Ursuline College
 <i>South Euclid:</i> Notre Dame College
 <i>Sylvania:</i> Lourdes College</p> <p>Oregon
 <i>Marylhurst:</i> Marylhurst University
 <i>Portland:</i> University of Portland</p> <p>Pennsylvania
 <i>Cresson:</i> Mount Aloysius College
 <i>Dallas:</i> Misericordia University
 <i>Erie:</i> Mercyhurst College
 <i>Greensburg:</i> Seton Hill University</p> | <p>Philadelphia: Chestnut Hill College, LaSalle University, St. Joseph's University</p> <p>Pittsburgh: Carlow University, Duquesne University</p> <p>Radnor: Cabrini College</p> <p>Reading: Alvernia University</p> <p>Scranton: Marywood University</p> <p>Villanova: Villanova University</p> <p>Rhode Island
 <i>Newport:</i> Salve Regina University
 <i>Providence:</i> Providence College</p> <p>Texas
 <i>Austin:</i> Saint Edward's University
 <i>San Antonio:</i> University of the Incarnate Word, Our Lady of the Lake University</p> <p>Vermont
 <i>Colchester:</i> Saint Michael's College</p> <p>Washington
 <i>Lacey:</i> St. Martin's College
 <i>Seattle:</i> Seattle University
 <i>Spokane:</i> Gonzaga University</p> <p>West Virginia
 <i>Wheeling:</i> Wheeling Jesuit University</p> <p>Wisconsin
 <i>De Pere:</i> St. Norbert College
 <i>Madison:</i> Edgewood College
 <i>Milwaukee:</i> Alverno College, Cardinal Stritch University, Marquette University</p> <p>Canada
 <i>Toronto:</i> Regis College</p> |
|--|---|---|---|

Failure to Defend Gay Rights Contradicts Gospel, Says German Priest

By Bob Shine

Bondings 2.0

NewWaysMinistryBlog.wordpress.com
July 21, 2016

A German priest has critiqued systemic homophobia in the Catholic Church, doing so the day after Pope Francis recommended the church apologize to LGB people and others it had harmed.

Jesuit Fr. Klaus Mertes of Berlin, Germany, called the Catholic Church to re-evaluate how homophobia functions in ecclesial teachings and practice, reported *Global Pulse*. In an article for the academic journal *theologie.geschichte* ("*theology.history*"), Mertes highlighted

blind spots and performative contradictions." For instance, homosexuality is addressed in the Catechism's treatment of offenses against chastity thereby suggesting that just being gay is an offense as are any longings and desires. Mertes wrote:

"This painfully affects the everyday experience of gay people in the Church. Instead of being assigned to the field of 'chastity,' the subject of homosexuality should be handled under the heading of 'human rights.'

Where the Catechism does speak against anti-gay discrimination, the message is bizarre and gets "lost amidst discriminating statements" on homosexuality elsewhere, Mertes observed. Of the

frequently cited Catechism section no. 2358, where the church is called to engage gay people with "respect, compassion, and sensitivity," Mertes said it is "patronizing and hurtful." To those persons who believe homosexuality is a Cross to be carried, Mertes responded that it is not one's orientation that is the Cross but the

"aversion and hostility of homophobia" imposed upon someone who is gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

The article, published in German, noted other areas where anti-gay prejudices afflict the church. Mertes criticized the Platonic and Aristotelian understandings of sexuality and gender which have negatively impacted church teaching and theology across the ages. He challenged lingering associations in the church of homosexuality with child sexual abuse; he challenged rumors of a "gay lobby" at the Vatican; he challenged the ways in which homophobia and misogyny function within all-male societies like the Catholic clergy.

Mertes concluded by recounting the story of the Australian couple that addressed the 2014 synod and spoke about their friends who have a partnered gay son. The Australian speakers were criticized afterwards for bringing up their friends' support of the gay couple. Mertes commented on this criticism:

"This reflects the face of homophobia. They do not want the discourse. That is the problem. Because the discourse is like paste that no longer can be pushed back into the tube. Homophobia experiences discourse as threatening, and so it fights against it, instead of listening and arguing. But the scene from Rome also shows the power of the personal word: The discourse is not triggered by the 'speaking about' in the third person singular, but by speaking in the first person singular (or plural). The most important contribution to the reduction of homophobia is therefore the discourse in the first person."

This is not Fr. Mertes first time criticizing the church for how it approaches homosexuality. In a June interview, he

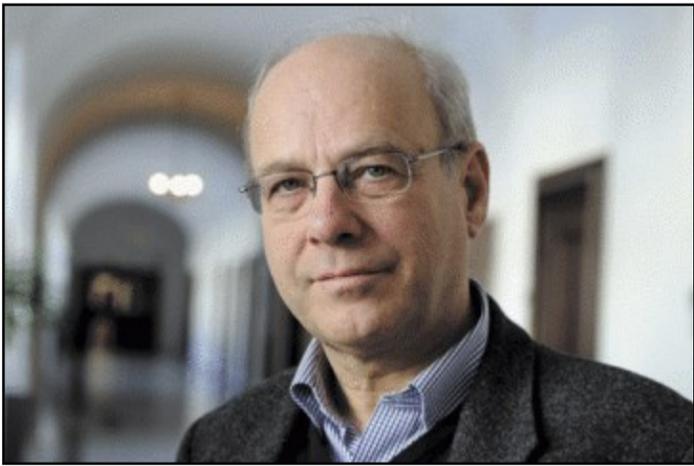
said church leaders must reform the "deficient mindset" they hold on this issue and extolled LGBT Catholics who remain in the church despite oppression. Commenting on nations where bisexual, lesbian, and gay people face the death penalty, Mertes said he was "appalled that the church is so silent on this issue." The German priest is well known, too, for being a whistleblower in Germany about sexual abuse at a Jesuit school in the country.

Much of what Fr. Mertes wrote in the journal article is not new, such as the Scriptural research or critiques of how church leaders understand clergy sexual abuse. What is striking, however, is the powerful and concise way in which he laid out a systemic homophobia in all areas of church life. When reading it all together, even LGBT people and their allies will be struck again by the deep problems

in our church's treatment of sexuality and gender.

Mertes' two best contributions are, first, his recommendation that the church shift the lens through which it understands and engages homosexuality, moving from a focus on chastity to a focus on human rights. If an updated edition of the Catechism made only this revision, it would do much good. Second, the priest identified anew what LGBT advocates have long known, which is the power of personal narrative. Sharing stories and speaking in the first person invites connection and opens minds in the most powerful ways.

Homophobia is intensely present in our church, as Mertes made clear, but I am hopeful because, so too, are the loving and courageous witnesses of LGBT people and their loved ones who break down prejudices and build up justice. †



Fr. Klaus Mertes, SJ

areas where homophobia is reinforced by church teaching, as well as where it influences the church's work.

Mertes began by saying homophobia violates the commandment of charity, and that Scripture and early Christianity clearly witness to inclusive, equal relationships in opposition to today's homophobia. Citing Galatians 3:28—"There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus"—the priest said modern adaptations could include that "there are no longer homosexual or heterosexual." He continued:

"That the Church cannot bring itself to uphold the basic human rights of gay people, and that it even allows senior church representatives to champion cultural traditions which threaten homosexuals with death, contradicts the Gospel Message."

Mertes examined how homophobia in the church influences its interpretation of Scripture. He noted that contemporary anti-gay prejudices "prevent an historical-critical look at the relevant passages" in Scripture and in non-canonical historical texts. Prejudice leads some to prefer a "fundamentalist Bible exegesis" at odds with the historical-critical approach endorsed during Vatican II. Scholars have repeatedly debunked the idea that any biblical condemnation of homosexual activity can be understood as a condemnation of the modern understanding of homosexual orientation and relationships.

Second, Mertes criticized church teaching as expressed in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. He recognized not only the active homophobia in the Catechism's explanations, but also sees it in

Bourgeois: Church Must Change Its Teachings on Homosexuality

By Roy Bourgeois

Bondings 2.0

NewWaysMinistryBlog.wordpress.com
June 26, 2016

Homophobia, according to Webster's dictionary, is "the irrational hatred or fear of homosexuals."

The language we use breeds hatred and fear, which often leads to violence. It's time to disarm hatred and fear. A good place to start is with church teachings.

According to the official teaching of the Catholic Church, as stated in its Catechism, section 2357:

"Basing itself on Sacred Scriptures, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, tradition has always declared that 'homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered.' They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved."

This teaching instills shame and self-hatred. It has contributed to gay people being rejected by their families, fired from their jobs, bullied, and even killed.

Throughout history, the Bible and "tradition" have been used to justify discrimination. The Bible was used to support slavery, as it was used to oppose the right of women to vote.

Growing up in Louisiana, we used our "tradition" and the Bible to justify our segregated schools and worshiped in a Catholic Church that reserved the last five pews for blacks. And today, once again, we are using the Bible and tradition to discriminate against gay people. Over the years, I have had to deal with Catholic church teachings. I served as a priest with the Maryknoll Fathers for 40 years. In 2012, I was expelled because of my public support for the ordination of women.

Being kicked out of the priesthood and my community of long-time friends was very painful. However, this experience gave me a glimpse of what millions of people have gone through, on a much deeper level, because of their race, gender, or sexual orientation.

Since my expulsion from the priesthood, I have been hearing the stories and experiences of gay people. Two stand out and kept me awake at night:

Catholic parents told me about their high school son who was gay. While they expressed unconditional love for him, he was bullied at school and did not feel wel-

come at their church. Two weeks before graduation, he committed suicide. They told me that the Catholic Church's teaching on homosexuality contributed to the death of their son, and they left the church.

On a recent human rights delegation to El Salvador, we met with LGBT people. They told us about the danger of coming out in El Salvador and how some of their good friends were killed. El Salvador is a very Catholic country. When asked about support from the church, they said Catholic bishops and priests were their biggest enemies.

Outside the Catholic Church, others see homosexuality differently:

Tim Cook, CEO of Apple, said, "I'm proud to be gay, and I consider being gay among the greatest gifts God has given me."

In 1973, the American Psychiatric Association declared that homosexuality is a normal variation of human sexuality.

On June 26, 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that same-sex marriage was a constitutional right.

According to the Human Rights Campaign, "Nearly two-thirds of LGBT Americans report having experienced discrimination in their personal lives," and "only

19 states explicitly prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation."

Today, 25 countries have legalized gay marriage, while 75 nations treat homosexual behavior as a crime. In 10 countries, it is punishable by death.

When we are born, we do not choose our race, gender, or sexual orientation. No matter how hard we may try to justify discrimination against others, including using the Bible and tradition, in the end, it is not the way of a loving God who created everyone of equal

worth and dignity. There are no exceptions.

It is time for the Catholic Church and other churches to change the oppressive teachings on homosexuality. †

Roy Bourgeois, a former Roman Catholic priest and the author of My Journey From Silence to Solidarity, is a nationally-known speaker on conscience and church reform. He founded the School of the Americas Watch, which holds an annual protest against the training of Latin American soldiers at Ft. Benning, GA. He was nominated for the 2010 Nobel Peace.



Roy Bourgeois

New Ways Ministry's blog
Bondings 2.0

The best way to keep up on the latest
Catholic LGBT news and opinions!

Updated daily!
Share your ideas with others!

NewWaysMinistryBlog.wordpress.com

Chaput: No Communion for unwed, gay and some divorced couples

By David O'Reilly
Philadelphia Inquirer
July 7, 2016

Divorced and civilly remarried Catholics, as well as cohabitating unmarried couples, must "refrain from sexual intimacy" to receive Holy Communion in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, Archbishop Charles J. Chaput has asserted in a new set of pastoral guidelines.

Released Friday, the guidelines instruct clergy and other archdiocesan leaders on implementing *Amoris Laetitia*, a major document on family that Pope Francis issued in April.

His six-page instruction, which appears on the archdiocesan website, may be the first of its kind issued by the bishop of any American diocese in response to *Amoris Laetitia*, Latin for "the joy of love."

Acknowledging that it is a "hard teaching," Chaput goes on to say that Catholics in same-sex partnerships, those remarried without a church annulment, and cohabitating persons may not serve on parish councils, instruct the faithful, serve as lectors, or dispense Communion.

Allowing persons in such "irregular" relationships, "no matter how sincere," to hold positions of responsibility would "offer a serious counter-witness to Catholic belief, which can only produce moral confusion in the community," according to Chaput.

Known as an apostolic exhortation, it does not carry the weight of an encyclical but is viewed as a major teaching of the church.

Chaput served on the synod, or gathering of bishops, that advised Francis in 2015 on the creation of *Amoris*, and was elected by those bishops to advise Francis after the synod. In June, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops named him chairman of a five-bishop committee to help promote the teachings of *Amoris Laetitia* in this country.

The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University estimates that there are 4.5 million Catholics in this country who are divorced and remarried without an annulment.

In his pastoral guidelines, Chaput praises *Amoris* for its "sections of exceptional beauty," and notes that it will serve as "key resources in revising and upgrading our [archdiocesan] marriage preparation program."

Chaput was not available to discuss the guidelines, but the Rev. Dennis Gill, director of the archdiocesan Office for Liturgy, described them Tuesday as "much larger than Communion and irregular relationships."

It was issued, Gill said, "as a way of

applying all of *Amoris Laetitia*," which he said urges pastors to "accompany married couples in every type of situation" and also to be "companions" to those who fall short of the church's teachings and to guide them toward holiness.

Just what message Pope Francis intended to send to his pastors in *Amoris* has been a topic of some dispute, however.

In an oft-cited line, Francis wrote that the church and clergy have wasted "pastoral energy on denouncing a decadent world without proactively proposing ways to finding true happiness."

He also wrote that "it can no longer simply be said that all those in any 'irregular' situation are living in a state of mortal sin and are deprived of sanctifying grace."

But Gill was emphatic that the latter sentence does not permit Catholic clergy to decide on their own that an unmarried couple may receive Communion.

"There are people challenging the wisdom of that statement," said Gill, a

professor at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary. "A lot of teachers and theologians feel it may not have been as well expressed as it should have been."

Chaput also noted that in spite of Francis' exhortation that clergy be sympathetic to those whose sexual relationships seem to marginalize them, the pope "states clearly that neither Church teaching nor the canonical discipline concerning marriage has changed."

The Rev. Thomas Reese, former editor of the Jesuit magazine *America* and a columnist for the weekly *National Catholic Reporter*, said that in *Amoris Laetitia*, "Francis is clearly open to the possibility of divorced and remarried Catholics receiving Holy Communion."

"But I think he'd also leave this to the discretion of the local bishop," Reese said, "which means that Chaput can do what he wants in his diocese, but a neighboring bishop may take a much more open position."

What Francis did in *Amoris*, Reese said, "was articulate certain principles and

allow local churches to interpret and implement them in the way they see best."

The Diocese of Camden did not return a request for comment.

Michael Rocks, president of the Philadelphia chapter of Dignity, a group for homosexual Catholics who believe it is permissible to be sexually active, said Tuesday he was not aware of Chaput's guidelines but that "they will not affect us, because we have a non-relationship with the archdiocese."

Pope John Paul II barred Dignity from meeting on any church property.

"But I wonder how they tell if straight people are following the sexual rules of the church," Rocks said. "How do they tell if the president of the parish council isn't into child pornography or having a sexual relationship?"

He said he was "not surprised" that Chaput would bar persons in unsanctioned relationships from holding positions of responsibility. "I can't imagine him saying anything else," Rocks said. ✦

Girl barred from her prom for wearing a suit attends another school's dance

By Sarah Larimer
The Washington Post
May 23, 2016

Aniya Wolf had planned to go to her school's prom, and her mother, Carolyn, told WHTM in Harrisburg, Pa., that the family had even purchased a new suit for Aniya to wear.

This sartorial choice wasn't anything particularly new, Aniya and Carolyn told the ABC affiliate. Carolyn Wolf told the station that she thought her daughter was "beautiful" in a suit. Aniya Wolf said she has always been "more masculine."

Wolf's school, Bishop McDevitt High School in Harrisburg, took issue with her prom attire, though. "The dress code for the prom specified girls must wear formal dresses," said a statement from the school, which was posted by WHTM. "It also stated that students who failed to follow the dress code would not be admitted."

Wolf and her family said the school's rules for the dance came as a last-minute surprise; they had previously signed a dress code that didn't explicitly state dresses had to be worn — and then Wolf was presented with another dress code the day of the Bishop McDevitt dance, Wolf wrote on Facebook.

The Catholic school, however, said parents had been notified of the regula-

tions months ago.

Whatever the case, Wolf's plans for attending her own prom were stymied: *The Associated Press* reports that she was "thrown out" of the event. "Sadly, I was not admitted into the Prom," she wrote on Facebook in early May. "I was forced to leave."

But another high school then stepped



Bishop McDevitt high school student Aniya Wolf arrives with her date for the 2016 William Penn high school prom.

in, and on Saturday night Wolf attended the prom for William Penn Senior High School, in York, Pa.

"We do embrace all," Brandon Carter, the public school's principal, told the *York Daily Record*.

Wolf wore a suit, as she had planned all along.

"This is Aniya," Carolyn Wolf told WHTM. "This is who Aniya has been since she's very young. And she would not look right in a dress. She looks great in a suit."

Bishop McDevitt High School did not immediately return a message from *The Post* on Monday.

"I love McDevitt. I love my school, I love the coaches, I love the teachers. They're all great," Aniya Wolf told WHTM. "They've never frowned upon me for the way I've dressed before in the past. But they did make me feel very discriminated against."

Carter, the William Penn principal, said a social studies teacher raised the issue with him and asked if the invite could be extended, according to the *Daily Record*. "We've had many students that have worn whatever they felt comfortable in ... it was just never an issue," the social studies teacher, Maggie Mafnas, told the newspaper. ✦

What Pope can teach bishops about reaching out to LGBT people

By John Gehring
Religion News Service
June 29, 2016

Pope Francis again made an international news splash earlier this week when he said that Catholic leaders should apologize to gay people and seek forgiveness for the way the church has harmed them.

The pope's welcoming words of healing should not only prompt sober reflection, but tangible action in Catholic dioceses across the country. Words are not enough to heal the wounds many LGBT Catholics have suffered in the face of indifference and exclusion.

His honesty offers a unique opportunity for Catholic clergy in the United States to hit the reset button.

While research shows most Catholics support same-sex marriage, the church does not have to change its teachings on marriage to take immediate steps that would demonstrate a commitment to building bridges with the LGBT community. Some Catholic parishes in San Francisco, Boston and New York have long been welcoming places for gays and lesbians. Still, in many parishes, gays and lesbians are tolerated but not embraced, talked to but not heard.

Catholic clergy can institutionalize the pope's words of solidarity by creating

real opportunities for what Francis calls "accompaniment" and "encounter."

Pastors in the 195 Catholic dioceses across the country could take a first step by hosting listening sessions with gay Catholics and LGBT leaders. There would be disagreement and room for civil debate, but this posture of humility and respect would send a powerful signal that the nation's largest church wants to learn from the varied experiences of gay, lesbian and transgendered people.

An outstretched hand is usually received better than a wagging finger. Catholic leaders could also be doing more to speak out against discrimination on the job and in housing. Gays and lesbians can now marry legally, but in more than half the states it's legal to discriminate against a gay person in the workplace or in housing. A patchwork of laws across the country leaves millions of LGBT citizens with second-class status.

Catholics should be at the forefront of fighting these injustices. When the U.S. Senate passed a bipartisan Employee Non-discrimination Act in 2013, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops said that it wanted to "work with leaders and all people of good will to end all forms of unjust discrimination" but then opposed the legislation on the grounds that it undermined marriage and threatened religious liberty.

Catholic leaders in the U.S. can and must do better.

There are legitimate disagreements between Catholic institutions and the government over how to most appropriately balance religious conscience rights with LGBT equality. But these are often policy debates that arise from the complications of seeking to honor two goods, not fundamental clashes of good and evil.

The U.S. bishops' conference should lower the rhetorical temperature, and act more like pastors than lawyers. Whether it's decrying President Obama's 2014 executive order that prohibited federal contractors from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity as "extreme," or blasting the U.S. Supreme Court ruling upholding the right to a same-sex civil marriage as a "tragic error," the bishops' approach has done little to persuade most people to their side and only pours salt on old wounds.

Francis doesn't want to uproot the church's traditional teachings on marriage or sexuality, but he does want to humanize the conversation. And he's not afraid to shake things up.

"Pope Francis is speaking about gays and lesbians in ways that would have gotten anyone else disciplined, censured or silenced ten years ago," tweeted the Rev. James Martin, a prominent Jesuit priest

who is editor at large at *America* magazine.

The late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin of Chicago, pained by the divisions inside the U.S. church, set up a common ground project in the 1990s with the goal of spurring dialogue between Catholic conservatives and progressives on a range of contentious issues. The effort limped along without much success in the years after his death. As new battles rage that pit religious liberty against LGBT rights, a reinvigorated commitment to common ground and the common good is needed now more than ever.

In his headline-grabbing comments, Francis quoted the catechism of the Catholic Church, which teaches that gays and lesbians "must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity," and that "every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided." Those are unambiguous words. But they are only words on a page unless the church puts them into practice. ✦

John Gehring is Catholic program director at Faith in Public Life and author of "The Francis Effect: A Radical Pope's Challenge to the American Catholic Church"



PARISHES

Alabama

Decatur: Annunciation of the Lord
Montgomery: St. Bede

Arizona

Chandler: St. Andrew
Glendale: St. Thomas More
Mesa: St. Bridget
Phoenix: St. Matthew
Scottsdale: St. Patrick
Tucson: St. Cyril of Alexandria,
Ss. Peter and Paul, St. Pius X,
Our Mother of Sorrows, St. Odilia

California

Berkeley: Holy Spirit Parish
Burney: St. Francis of Assisi
Carlsbad: St. Patrick
Claremont: Our Lady of Assumption
El Cajon: St. Luke
Encino: Our Lady of Grace
Escondido: St. Timothy
Fremont: St. Joseph-Mission San Jose
Goleta: St. Mark Univ. Parish
Hawthorne: St. Joseph (Spanish)
Hayward: All Saints
LaPuente: St. Martha
Lemon Grove: St. John of the Cross
Long Beach: St. Matthew
Los Angeles: Blessed Sacrament,
Christ the King, Mother of Good
Counsel, St. Camillus Center-LA
USC Medical Center (Spanish),
St. Agatha, St. Paul the Apostle
North Hollywood: St. Jane Frances de
Chantal, St. Patrick
Oakland: Our Lady of Lourdes
Oceanside: St. Thomas More
Orange: Holy Family Cathedral
Pasadena: Assumption of the B.V.M.
Ross: St. Anselm
Sacramento: St. Francis of Assisi
San Carlos: St. Charles
San Diego: Ascension, St. Jude Shrine,
Catholic Community of UC, San
Diego
San Francisco: Most Holy Redeemer,
Old St. Mary Cathedral, St. Agnes,
St. Dominic, St. Teresa of Avila
San Jose: St. Julie Billiart,
St. Martin of Tours (Emmaus
Community)
San Luis Obispo: Mission San Luis
San Raphael: Church of San Raphael &
Mission San Raphael Arcangel
Santa Barbara: OL of Guadalupe
Santa Cruz: Holy Cross
Santa Monica: St. Monica
Simi Valley: St. Rose of Lima
Spring Valley: Santa Sophia
Stanford: Catholic Community at Stan-
ford University
South Pasadena: Holy Family
Valinda: St. Martha
Vernon: Holy Angels Catholic Church
of the Deaf
Walnut Creek: St. John Vianney
West Hollywood: St. Ambrose,
St. Victor
Whittier: St. Mary of the Assumption

Colorado

Arvada: Spirit of Christ
Avon: St. Edward
Colorado Springs: Sacred Heart
Denver: St. Dominic, Christ the King,
Our Lady of Mount Carmel
Lafayette: Immaculate Conception
Littleton: Light of the World,
St. Frances Cabrini

Connecticut

Hartford: St. Patrick-St. Anthony

Gay-friendly Catholic Parishes & Communities

Below is a list of known gay-friendly Catholic parishes and intentional Eucharistic communities. Thank you for helping us add to this growing list! If you are aware of a parish or community that is welcomes LGBT Catholics, please let us know. Tell us if this welcome is because of a support program, spirituality group, mission statement, participation in LGBT community events, or involvement with parents. Parishes are listed first and intentional Eucharistic communities follow. For links to many of these parishes' websites, go to www.NewWaysMinistry.org

Delaware

North Wilmington: Holy Child
Wilmington: St. Joseph

District of Columbia

Holy Trinity, St. Matthew Cathedral

Florida

Daytona Beach: Our Lady of Lourdes
Flagler Beach: Santa Maria del Mar
Ft. Lauderdale: St. Anthony,
St. Maurice
Kissimmee: Holy Redeemer
St. Petersburg: Holy Cross
Tampa: Sacred Heart, Christ the King

Georgia

Atlanta: Shrine of the Immaculate
Conception

Idaho

Boise: St. Mary

Illinois

Berwyn: St. Mary of the Celle
Chicago: Immaculate Conception,
St. Clement, St. Gertrude,
St. Gregory, St. Peter, St. Sylvester,
St. Teresa of Avila, St. Thomas the
Apostle, Our Lady of Lourdes, Our
Lady of Mt. Carmel,
Old St. Patrick
Clarendon Hills: Notre Dame
Country Club Hills: St. Emeric
Evanston: St. Nicholas
Inverness: Holy Family
Johnston City: St. Paul
Morton Grove: St. Martha
Oak Park: Ascension, St. Catherine of
Sienna-St. Lucy
Schaumburg: St. Marcelline

Indiana

Indianapolis: St. Thomas Aquinas

Iowa

Coralville: St. Thomas More

Kentucky

Louisville: Epiphany, Cathedral of the
Assumption, St. William

Louisiana

New Orleans: St. Augustine

Maine

Portland: Sacred Heart-St. Dominic
Saco: Most Holy Trinity

Maryland

Baltimore: Corpus Christi,
St. Francis of Assisi, St. Ignatius,
St. Matthew,
St. Vincent dePaul
Columbia: St. John the Evangelist
Gaithersburg: St. Rose of Lima
Hagerstown: St. Ann
Severn: St. Bernadette

Massachusetts

Boston: Paulist Center, St. Anthony
Shrine, St. Cecilia
East Longmeadow: St. Michael
Newton: St. Ignatius
Provincetown: St. Peter
Sharon: Our Lady of Sorrows
Springfield: Sacred Heart

Michigan

Ann Arbor: St. Mary Student Parish
Detroit: St. Leo, Christ the King, Gesu
Parish
St. Ignace: St. Ignatius Loyola
Westland: Ss. Simon and Jude

Minnesota

Minneapolis: St. Frances Cabrini,
St. Joan of Arc

Missouri

Kansas City: Guardian Angels,
St. James
St. Joseph: St. Francis Xavier

St. Louis: St. Cronan, St. Margaret of
Scotland, St. Pius V

Montana

Billings: Holy Rosary, St. Pius X

Nebraska

Omaha: Holy Family, Sacred Heart

Nevada

Las Vegas: Christ the King,
Guardian Angel Cathedral

New Hampshire

Merrimack: St. John Neumann
Pelham: St. Patrick

New Jersey

Keyport: St. Joseph
Lawrenceville: St. Ann
Long Beach Island: St. Francis of
Assisi
Maplewood: St. Joseph
South Plainfield: Sacred Heart
Tinton Falls: St. Anselm

New Mexico

Albuquerque: Holy Family,
Shrine of St. Bernadette
Espanola: Sacred Heart of Jesus

New York

Albany: St. Vincent DePaul
Baldwinsville: St. Augustine
Bellmore: St. Barnabas the Apostle
Bellport: Mary Immaculate
Binghamton: St. Francis of Assisi
Brooklyn: St. Andrew the Apostle,
St. Boniface, St. Athanasius,
St. Augustine, Immac.Heart of Mary
Deer Park: Ss. Cyril and Methodius
East Islip: St. Mary
Elmira: St. Mary
Fairport: Church of the Assumption
Henrietta: Good Shepherd
Manhattan: Holy Name of Jesus,
St. Francis Xavier, St. Paul the
Apostle, Church of the Ascension,
St. Francis of Assisi, St. Francis de
Sales
Pittsford: Church of Transfiguration
Rochester: Blessed Sacrament,
St. Mary (Downtown), St. Monica
Syracuse: St. Lucy, All Saints
Utica: Our Lady of Mount Carmel,
Historic Old St. John's
Wading River: St. John the Baptist
Wantaugh: St. Frances de Chantal
Westbury: St. Brigid

North Carolina

Charlotte: St. Peter
Durham: Immaculate Conception
Fayetteville: St. Patrick
Raleigh: St. Francis of Assisi

Ohio

Akron: St. Bernard
Cincinnati: St. George-St. Monica,
St. Robert Bellarmine
Cleveland: Blessed Trinity,
St. Malachi, St. Martha
Columbus: St. Thomas More
Newman Center
Fairlawn: St. Hilary
Mentor: St. John Vianney
University Heights: Church of Gesu
Westlake: St. Ladislav
Wooster: St. Mary of the Immaculate
Conception

Oregon

Beaverton: Mission of the Atonement
Portland: St. Andrew, St. Francis of
Assisi, St. Phillip Neri, Down-
town Chapel (St. Vincent de Paul)

Pennsylvania

Philadelphia: Old St. Joseph,
Old St. Mary, St. John the
Evangelist, St. Vincent DePaul

Rhode Island

Providence: St. Francis Chapel,
St. Mary's
Wickford: St. Bernard

Tennessee

Memphis: Cathedral of the
Immaculate Conception

Texas

Colleyville: Good Shepherd
Dallas: Holy Trinity
El Paso: All Saints
Houston: St. Anne

Virginia

Arlington: Our Lady Queen of Peace
Richmond: Cathedral of the Sacred
Heart, Sacred Heart Parish
Roanoke: St. Gerard
Triangle: St. Francis
Virginia Beach: St. Nicholas

Washington

Seattle: Christ Our Hope, St. Benedict,
St. Joseph, Prince of Peace
Newman Center
Tacoma: St. Leo

Wisconsin

Madison: Our Lady Queen of Peace
Menomonee Falls: Good Shepherd
Milwaukee: Good Shepherd,
Prince of Peace, Trinity-Guadalupe

Canada

Montreal: Holy Cross
Ottawa: St. Joseph
Toronto: Our Lady of Lourdes

England

London: Church of the Immaculate
Conception (Mayfair)

INTENTIONAL EUCHARISTIC COMMUNITIES

Arizona

Scottsdale: Franciscan Renewal
Center

California

Orange: Koinonia
Pleasanton: Catholic Community of
Pleasanton
San Diego: Mary Magdalene Catholic
Community

Colorado

Colorado Springs: Benet Hill Monastery

District of Columbia

Communitas

Florida

Tampa: Franciscan Center

Maryland

Catonsville: Living Water Inclusive
Catholic Community
Greenbelt: Greenbelt Catholic Comm.

Michigan

Grand Rapids: Marywood
Kalamazoo: Lambda Catholics

Minnesota

Minneapolis: Spirit of St. Stephen's
Catholic Community

Oregon

Portland: Journey and Koinonia
Catholic Community

Virginia

Arlington: NOVA Catholic Community

Washington

Olympia: Holy Wisdom Inclusive
Catholic Community

Wisconsin

Madison: Holy Wisdom Monastery

In the wake of Orlando, Catholics reach out to LGBT community

By Madeline Zukowski
The Fond du Lac Reporter
Fond du Lac, Wisconsin
July 19, 2016

FOND DU LAC - As news of the gay nightclub shooting June 12 in Orlando, Florida, hit the Fond du Lac community, the Sisters of St. Agnes were quick to respond.

The sisters hosted a vigil days after the shooting, in which 150 people gathered in Veterans Park to remember the 50 killed and 53 injured. It was the largest attendance that any of the sisters' vigils had received, said Sister Sally Brickner, the justice, peace and integrity of creation coordinator for the sisterhood in Fond du Lac.

The support came from people who "really do feel that discrimination is wrong, (that) hate crimes are wrong," Brickner said.

The fact that the sisters reached out so quickly might be surprising to some, given that the Roman Catholic Church has a checkered history when it comes to the LGBT. But as the St. Agnes sisters showed that evening, support for this community exists within the Catholic faith.

Indeed, two area Catholic churches have programs offering support, not judgment, toward the community. The Catechism, a summary of beliefs of the Catholic faith, states that the acts performed in a homosexual relationship are "intrinsically disordered." Even so, people with nonheterosexual drives should be treated with respect and not be discriminated against, the church teaches. Furthermore, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops states that gays and lesbians living chaste lives are welcome to minister within the church.

"The church never condemns the person, it's always the act," said Rev. Ryan Pruess, the pastor at Holy Family Catholic Community Parish in Fond du Lac.

Issues surrounding gays are often contentious between church leadership and lay members, said Francis DeBernardo, executive director of New Ways Ministry, a Maryland-based Catholic ministry of justice and reconciliation for LGBT

people and the church.

"The bishops in this country, with some notable exceptions, have been very negative in their approach to LGBT issues," he said.

By contrast, lay members are generally more open, he said.

And both use church teachings to bolster their views and conduct.

The bishops take their position from the viewpoint of sexual ethics. The church approves of sexual activity only within marriage, defined in the church as vows exchanged between one man and one woman.

Meanwhile, many lay members ground their beliefs in social justice, which dovetails with the church's teaching that every human being is born with human dignity and must be treated equally by law and in society. "Catholic support of LGBT people is done because the people are Catholic, not in spite of being Catholic," DeBernardo said.

Following the church's teachings on social justice, both Holy Family and Good Shepherd Catholic Church, which is in Menomonee Falls in Waukesha County, have developed programs that welcome the LGBT.

All God's Family, the group at Holy Family, meets five to six times a year. It is comprised of gays and lesbians and their families. Pruess, who attends many meetings, said that while the group spends time reflecting on scripture, a majority of the meetings center around discussion about faith stories and teachings on acceptance and rejection.

"The needs of each other really come out," Pruess said. "You find people really want to share and be heard by others."

Gay & Straight in Christ, the group in Menomonee Falls, has a similar approach. It was founded by Ann Castiglione, who said she occasionally receives comments from other Catholics happy to know the group exists. Many of them know an LGBT person who left Catholicism because of its perceived attitude on sexuality, she said.

"It's just important that everyone be welcome in our church," Castiglione said. Gays and lesbians still don't "feel welcome, so we're trying to do something about that in our little corner of the world." In the late 1970s, discussions regarding sexuality in the church were common. Theologians criticized the church's stance on sexual ethics, claiming that sexuality is more than just an activity. It involves the whole person, their emotions and their psychological well-being.

However, with two conservative popes in leadership in the past 30 years, that discussion fell to the wayside.

Under the leadership of Pope Francis, elected by the papal enclave on March 13, 2013, a greater openness and less judgment toward gays and lesbians permeated

the faith.

"If someone is gay and searching for the Lord and has good will, then who am I to judge him?" Francis said at a press conference in July 2013.

Pope Francis was named Person of the Year for 2013 by *The Advocate*, a gay national magazine.

"Everyone's the same," said Barbara Lent, the coordinator of All God's Family at Holy Family. "It's just who you love. You really have a right to love who you want to love."

With groups like the one at Holy Family, lay people and a handful of church leaders are trying to change social norms.

"Sometimes that takes time, but you got to keep doing it," Lent said. †



The Sisters of St. Agnes organized a vigil June 12 at Veterans Park in Fond du Lac to honor those who died in the Orlando shooting. (Photo: Doug Raflik/USA TODAY NETWORK-)

New Ways Ministry Calls Church Leaders to Condemn Anti-LGBT Violence

Bondings 2.0
NewWaysMinistryBlog.wordpress.com
June 26, 2016

The following is a statement of Francis DeBernardo, New Ways Ministry's Executive Director, in response to the mass shooting at a gay and lesbian nightclub in Orlando, Florida, earlier that day.

Words truly cannot express the horror, anguish, anger, and revulsion at the news of the mass murder of at least 50 people at a gay and lesbian nightclub in Orlando, Florida. Such an action should instill in all people around the globe a commitment to end gun violence and to protect the lives of LGBT people.

Adding to the anguish of this tragedy is the response of most Catholic leaders. The Vatican's initial statement expressed sorrow and condemnation, and hope "that ways may be found, as soon as possible, to

effectively identify and contrast the causes of such terrible and absurd violence . . ." But the Vatican did not refer to the fact that this violence was directed at the LGBT community.

Similarly, Archbishop Joseph Kurtz, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, made no direct reference to the LGBT community in his statement, noting only that the incident should call people to "ever greater resolve in protecting the life and dignity of every single person."

While individual bishops have reacted publicly to the violence, the only statement thus far from a Catholic leader which mentions the gay and lesbian community is Chicago's Archbishop Blase Cupich. In sympathy, Archbishop Cupich stated that "our prayers and hearts are with . . . our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters." Such simple words should not be difficult for

Catholic leaders to mention in the face of such vicious horror. Archbishop Cupich is to be praised for being a light in the darkness.

Clearly the targeting of a gay nightclub shows that, homophobia is a major factor which causes "terrible and absurd violence." This attack highlights the fact that around the globe, every day, LGBT people face oppression, intimidation, and violence. Homophobic and transphobic attitudes and behaviors are carried out all-too-commonly in the form of discriminatory practices, verbal abuse, bullying, imprisonment, physical and sexual abuse, torture, and death. In many cases, this brutality is sanctioned by governments and religious leaders who propagate homophobic and transphobic messages. The Vatican and other church leaders have yet to speak clearly and definitively on these contemporary issues despite the fact that

official church teaching would support condemnations of these hate-filled messages, practices, and laws.

As we pray for an end to gun violence and an end to violence directed against LGBT people, we also include in our prayers the hope that Muslim people will not become victims of a backlash against them because of the shooter's religious background. Such a response is as vicious and senseless as the violence perpetrated against the nightclub victims.

The Orlando murders should move all Catholic leaders to reflect on how their silence about homophobic and transphobic attitudes and violence contributes to behaviors which treat LGBT people as less than human and deserving of punishment. This sad moment in our history should become a time when Catholic leaders speak loudly and clearly, with one voice, that attacks on LGBT people must stop. †

Catholic Theological Society Gives Top Honor to Openly Gay Scholar

By Francis DeBernardo
Bondings 2.0
NewWaysMinistryBlog.wordpress.com
July 18 2016

The most prestigious U.S. Catholic theological organization for the first time has awarded its highest honor to an openly gay scholar, the first.

The Catholic Theological Society of America (CTSA), the primary professional associations for this area's scholars, presented its John Courtney Murray Award to Orlando Espin, a professor of systematic theology at the University of San Diego, a Catholic school in southern California. Espin, who was awarded the honor at the society's meeting in June,

was cited for his work on intercultural issues. The citation announcing the award praised him for having "wrestled with problems associated with the historical and contemporary legacies of colonization, slavery, racism, and prejudice against LGBT persons."

In his acceptance speech, Espin included thanks to his husband, Ricardo Gallego, who was present at the meeting, which occurred in Puerto Rico. Gallego is director of Latino Services at the San Diego LGBT Community Center. They have been married since 2008, though they have been a couple for 23 years.

In a statement to Bondings 2.0, Espin said that he thanked Gallego for his work with vulnerable minority populations, not-

ing: "I write theology. He lives it." His speech received a standing ovation.

The citation additionally praised Espin for being "a pioneer and leader in the field of Latino/Latina theology" who "has played a central part in promoting the highest scholarly standards for Hispanic/Latino theology." According to *The National Catholic Reporter*, Espin also "founded



Orlando Espin

and directs the Center for the Study of Latino/a Catholicism. He is also a founder of the Academy of Catholic Hispanic Theologians of the United States (ACHTUS) and has twice served as its president." He is only the third ethnic minority to receive this prestigious award, and the first openly gay theologian to do so. Espin led a workshop on LGBT ministry in the Latino/a community during New Ways Ministry's Seventh National Symposium in 2012. †