

BONDINGS

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A Publication of New Ways Ministry

Spring 2010

Gay group director responds to cardinal's criticism

National Catholic Reporter
February 7, 2010

Francis DeBernardo, executive director of New Ways Ministry, responding to sharp criticisms regarding his organization's ministries, said the group will continue its bridge-building work between lesbian/gay Catholics and the Catholic church.

His statement came after Chicago Cardinal Francis George unexpectedly issued a statement Feb. 5 questioning the organization's Catholic identity.

DeBernardo said George's remark "will not impede or slow us in our efforts to work for justice for lesbian/gay people in the church and society."

The Maryland-based organization defines itself as "a gay-positive ministry

of advocacy and justice for lesbian and gay Catholics." It says it works for "reconciliation within the larger Christian and civil communities."

"We are astonished that Cardinal George released such a statement, since New Ways Ministry has never been contacted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to discuss the nature of our work. We were not even extended the basic courtesy of being informed of the statement as it was being released to the press. Instead, we learned about it only by reading a press account.

"When dealing with such a sensitive topic as homosexuality, it is not surprising that questions will arise from individual church leaders. Yet, for more than three decades, New Ways Ministry

has had its programs reviewed by scores of Catholic bishops, theologians, and pastoral leaders, and we have always been found to be firmly in line with authentic Catholic teaching.

"If the USCCB had concerns about our ministry, why didn't they contact us before a judgment was made? Why was New Ways Ministry not given an opportunity to explain our positions?"

"For almost 33 years New Ways Ministry has been sustained spiritually by the prayers of millions of Catholics, and we owe it to these supporters to continue the work to which God has called us.

In the unexpected statement, George, who is the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, denounced New Ways for its criticism of

Catholic efforts to defend marriage as the union of one man and one woman and said it does not offer "an authentic interpretation of Catholic teaching."

George said that since the founding of New Ways Ministry in 1977, "serious questions" have been raised about the group's adherence to church teaching on homosexuality.

"No one should be misled by the claim that New Ways Ministry provides an authentic interpretation of Catholic teaching and an authentic Catholic pastoral practice," George said. "Like other groups that claim to be Catholic but deny central aspects of church teaching, New Ways Ministry has no approval or recognition from the Catholic Church and...

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Fortunate sons

How two parents of gay sons are breaking down the barriers between Catholicism and gay rights

By Jessica Carreras
Pridesource.com
December 3, 2009

"I was totally ignorant when I found out I had a gay son," Tom Nelson of Farmington Hills says candidly to *Between The Lines*, sitting at the local Panera Bread with his wife, Linda Karle-Nelson, sipping his coffee and surrounded by strangers.

He says the words "gay son" openly, loudly, as though he is discussing something as simple and non-controversial as the weather.

The truth is that Tom, 80, and Linda, 69, have come a long way to be able to speak freely about gay issues. But now that they've started, they won't stop.

Both Tom and Linda are board members of Fortunate Families, a group created by and for Catholic families with lesbian and gay children. They participate in PFLAG Detroit. They advocate for gay rights through letters and speaking to legislators. And they work hard to ensure that parents like them can love their God and their children.

Their story is both universal and unique to parents of LGBT kids: grappling with the clash of religion and family, learning and altering their beliefs, and ultimately, becoming two of the most impassioned allies Michigan's gay community has ever known.

Linda and Tom were both widowed by the loss of their first spouses. Both Tom's son, Mark, and Linda's son, John - now ages 50 and 40, respectively - came out to their parents in their 20s.

"I was in trauma," Linda recalls of her son telling her he is gay. "And I stayed that way for quite a long time. I didn't tell anybody."

With coaxing from her son, Linda joined the Detroit chapter of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. There, she met Tom and his wife Trish. Several years after Tom's loss of his wife in 2004 to cancer, he and Linda married, combining their families and their activism.

A lot has changed in the family's composition, as have Tom and Linda's views on LGBT rights. But now that they have both come to terms with their gay



Tom Nelson and Linda Karle-Nelson

sons, they want to share their message with the world - particularly other parents.

The couple is involved in several religious LGBT ally efforts, including the Always Our Children program, which targets local congregations willing to hear stories from and support for family members of LGBT people. They also started a PFLAG group in Manistee, Mich., a conservative area where

they have a vacation home.

But Fortunate Families remains a large part of their activism, where Linda is vice president and Tom serves as a board member.

The Rochester, N.Y.-based group is comprised of Catholic families of LGBT people across the U.S. It provides resources, event listings and personal stories.

The support from other Catholic

parents of gay and lesbian children, Tom and Linda maintain, is crucial. They are part of Fortunate Families' Listening Parents Network, which connects parents with members of the network who can provide a listening ear and their wisdom.

"They have no role model on how to be a parent to gay and lesbian kids," Linda says of their work with the network.

"It's probably the most moving experience any person can have, to listen to another person's struggle," Tom adds. "It's a confrontation between everything they've been brought up to believe from a religious training standpoint that seems opposed to their love for their children."

Tom should know. A devout Catholic, he went through the same transformation that many religious parents of gay kids face. But what the father of six realized is that family comes first. And he credits his son, Mark, for having taught him that. "Having a gay child makes you suddenly realize that the unconditional love of a parent supercedes any religious doctrine," Tom insists. "It just puts that on

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Editorial: Clericalism's malign influence

The Tablet—United Kingdom
January 2, 2010

The crisis surrounding the sexual abuse of children by priests has been used, particularly in the United States, to raise a hue and cry against homosexuality among the clergy. The fault, in other words, was too much tolerance. This illiberal scapegoating has enabled some conservative church leaders to divert attention from deeper structural and cultural problems that led not just to the abuse itself but to the scandal of the many notorious cover-ups by senior church officials. These often left abusers free to continue their abuse and do even more damage to young people. The story of the Dublin Archdiocese, laid bare before Christmas by an Irish gov-

ernment inquiry, is but the latest to dishonour the Church's reputation. The resignation of the bishops concerned is only the beginning of the reckoning.

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin, a former papal diplomat, is emerging as one of the few heroes of this sorry affair. He chose Fr Timothy Radcliffe, former Master of the Dominicans, to grasp the real nettle behind the sex-abuse crisis, which is not about homosexuality but about the pervasive culture of clericalism in the Catholic Church. Invited by Archbishop Martin just before Christmas to address the clergy of Dublin Archdiocese, who were still stunned by the disclosures of the inquiry, Fr Radcliffe went straight to the point. Clericalism put priests on pedestals where they were untouchable (and

bishops even more so), from which great height they proceeded to load the people with burdens they could not bear - often to do with sexual morality.

"Unlike the Pharisees," he said, "the yoke of Jesus is light. If we think about our beloved Church in recent centuries, we do seem to have been more like Pharisees, laying heavy burdens on the shoulders of the people. Often this has been associated with sexual behaviour. We have told families with large numbers of children that no contraception is permitted, and young people who cannot afford to get married that their sexual behaviour must be strictly controlled, and gay people that nothing is permitted - and that they should be ashamed of their sexuality. Re-

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

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

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

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John McNeill receives 2009 Bridge Building Award



Front: Charles Chiarelli, John J. McNeill, Francis DeBernardo. **Back:** Matthew Myers, Mary Byers, and Elizabeth Linehan, RSM.

The Board of New Ways Ministry instituted the Bridge Building Award to acknowledge those individuals who by their scholarship, leadership, or witness have promoted discussion, understanding, and reconciliation between the lesbian/gay community and the Catholic Church. On October 4, 2009, New Ways Ministry presented the Bridge Building Award to John J. McNeill at the Desmond Tutu Center in New York City. New Ways Ministry board members Mary Byers and Elizabeth Linehan, RSM, presented the award. The citation appears below:

"John McNeill, over thirty years ago, your theological voice inaugurated a new era of justice and equality for lesbian/gay people in the Catholic Church. That voice has echoed far and wide over the decades and through the sanctuaries of many other Christian churches, opening up new discussions and expanding the boundaries of religious thought.

Through hardship and turmoil, you have remained steadfastly dependent on the mercy of God, teaching us all how to speak, act, and live courageously. Your cheerful soul has overcome the harsh strictures designed to diminish you, and your example has inspired countless multitudes to remain strong in the faith.

Your compassionate heart has helped to heal the wounds of so many who have been broken by homophobia. Through retreats, through writing, through lectures, and through pastoral leadership, you have renewed not only individuals, but the very structure of the Church itself.

For your many gifts and achievements, John, and specifically, as it says on the plaque, "For groundbreaking scholarship, compassionate ministry, and personal witness that promotes justice for gay/lesbian Catholics," New Ways Ministry is proud to present you with its Bridge Building Award."

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Astoria characters: The proud parader

By Nancy Ruhling
HuffingtonPost.com
March 3, 2010

The kettle is on the stove, the cats are on the couch, the St. Pat's statue is on the table, and Brendan Fay is elbow-deep in the paperwork and politics of parade preparations.

As Brendan knows only too well, March is Irish season in New York, the time when the city shows its true colors. In the palette of Brendan's St. Pat's for All Parade & Fair, the hues run not only to the orange and the green but also to every color of the rainbow.

"Parades are very important community cultural events," says Brendan, a human-rights activist/documentary filmmaker who is a frequent spokesman for the gay and lesbian community. "They allow us to celebrate our uniqueness and show that we belong. The Irish have always prided themselves on being a hospitable people, which is why this hurts so much." "This" refers to the fact that the famed Manhattan St. Patrick's Day Parade excludes gays and lesbians. Brendan and his peers were allowed to march on Fifth Avenue only once -- in 1991 with then-Mayor David Dinkins. "Most people remember the jeers, but I remember the cheers," he says. "It changed my life because it allowed me to come out in a very public way and to unite the three significant parts of my life -- Irish, Catholic and gay."

After getting arrested more times than he can remember for "crashing" the parade -- "the police knew me so well that they used to say, 'I guess you'll be our house guest again this St. Patrick's'" -- he co-founded Queens'

St. Pat's for All, the parade with the biggest heart, the mightiest message and the slimmest support...

Brendan wears his Catholic Irishness like a prize medal. He was born in Athy, a small town in County Kildare, in 1958 and moved to the town of Drogheda when he was 10. He was what the Irish called a working-class lad but what Americans would classify as *Angela's Ashes* poor. His dad toiled in an asbestos factory while his mother stayed at home to care for him, his older brother and five sisters...

To keep his faith, he started making documentaries about gay Catholic heroes, including ACT-UP spokesman Robert Rygor and FDNY Chaplain Mychal Judge, who was a casualty of the 9/11 attacks. He latest film, *Uncommon Jesuit*, is about gay pioneer priest John McNeill...

"I still make a formal request every year to be in the other parades," he says. "But nobody ever gets back to me. But it will happen in my lifetime. My dream is that St. Pats for All will be a model for all Irish parades in New York City and will spread to other boroughs. Already, gays and lesbians are marching in other ethnic parades."

St. Pats for All, he reminds, is part of his greater mission.

"I'll continue my civil-rights crusades to help people the world over," Brendan says. "I'm taking a stand every day, whether it's attending a rally for marriage equality or organizing a lunchtime vigil at a foreign embassy to protest laws, such as those in Uganda, that permit the death penalty for lesbian and gay persons."

And so he will march this March and every March until the rest of the world gets in step with him. ✚

Catholic Charities health-plan change called 'devastating'

By William Wan & Michelle Boorstein
Washington Post
March 5, 2010

The former chief operating officer of Catholic Charities has called on the organization to reverse its recent decision to change health benefits for employees' spouses, a move designed to avoid legitimizing same-sex marriage.

Tim Sawina, who was until last year one of the group's highest-ranking executives, called the elimination of spousal health benefits "devastating" and "wrong" in a letter Wednesday to the governing board of the social service organization.

The move to change benefits is the most recent fallout from a struggle between the Catholic Archdiocese of Washington and District officials, who passed legislation last year to legalize same-sex marriage.

Rather than provide health coverage to same-sex partners, Archbishop Donald W. Wuerl decided to cut benefits for spouses of all future Catholic Charities employees, new spouses of current employees and existing spouses of current employees not already on the plan. Wuerl has said the benefits change is justifiable under Catholic teaching as long as the employees are paid a just wage.

But by eliminating such benefits, Sawina said, Catholic Charities is driving current employees to look for jobs elsewhere, handicapping the group's recruitment efforts and losing the respect of the D.C. community.

"Some, including the archbishop, have argued that by providing health care to a gay or lesbian spouse we are somehow legitimizing gay marriage," said Sawina, a former priest. "Providing health care to a gay or lesbian partner - a basic human right, according to Church teaching -- is an end in itself and no more legitimizes that marriage than giving communion to a divorced person legitimizes divorce, or giving food or shelter to an alcoholic legitimizes alcoholism."

The archdiocese responded to Sawina's letter Thursday, calling it an inaccurate portrayal of the Church's position and saying that his appeal to the organization's board of directors would have

no effect, because the board can't overturn the archbishop's decision.

Spokeswoman Susan Gibbs said that Wuerl made his decision working with a committee of theologians, Catholic Charities executives and legal experts. He presented his final decision to the board Saturday. Afterward, he asked

board members for a show of hands in support of the policy, and they responded with "overwhelming support," Gibbs said.

Board member Mary Burke Morris declined to elaborate on the board's actions but said

that for some, it was "a reluctant decision."

Sawina worked at Catholic Charities for 12 years. He left in July, and he and the organization said they had agreed to keep the circumstances of his departure confidential.

In his letter, Sawina expressed concern over the organization's future. "Its

goodwill and name are being squandered," he wrote. "More importantly, the greatest asset of the agency -- its staff -- feel a profound sense of humiliation and shame. Many are actively looking to leave. Catholic Charities will be forever handicapped in attracting new staff with such a draconian benefit plan."

Many Catholic Charities employees did not return calls or declined to talk, citing worries of being fired.

"People are really upset," one employee said, speaking on condition of anonymity for fear of losing his job. "You don't do this kind of job for the money. You're not getting paid a lot to start with. You're working in pretty rough areas, doing pretty tough work for the needy. If recruiting was hard before, it's going to be even worse now."

One employee provided by Catholic Charities this week agreed to be named. Michelle Mendez, staff attorney for immigrant legal services, also described dismay about the spousal benefit reduction but said she remained committed to the organization's work and mission.

Gibbs said that the archdiocese is not surprised that workers expressed discouragement but blamed it in part on media coverage of the issue. †

"Providing health care to a gay or lesbian partner—a basic human right, according to Church teaching—is an end in itself and no more legitimizes that marriage than giving communion to a divorced person legitimizes divorce, or giving food or shelter to an alcoholic legitimizes alcoholism."

Gay groups praise report on gay priests and sexual abuse

By Daniel Burke
Religion News Service
November 18, 2009

Gay Catholics and victims of clergy sexual abuse are hailing preliminary results of a study commissioned by U.S. Catholic bishops that says gay priests are no more likely than straight clergy to sexually abuse minors.

Still, some bishops gathered here for the final day of their semi-annual meeting said it is premature to say whether the church leaders who had asserted such a link were wrong.

Researchers from New York's John Jay College of Criminal Justice on Tuesday (Nov. 17) presented initial findings from their multi-year study of the clergy sexual abuse scandal, which has resulted in some 14,000 claims of abuse and cost the U.S. Catholic Church about \$2.6 billion in settlements since 1950.

The study, which is due to be completed next year, was commissioned by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops after the scandal overtook the U.S. church in 2002.

In a presentation to the bishops on Tuesday, Margaret Smith of John Jay said: "What we are suggesting is that the idea of sexual identity be separated from the problem of sexual abuse. At this point, we do not find a connection between homosexual identity and the increased likelihood of subsequent abuse from the data that we have right now."

Marianne Duddy-Burke, executive director of the gay Catholic group DignityUSA, called the report "very welcome news for gay people, gay priests, and our families and friends."

She said the John Jay report confirms other studies in concluding that sexual orientation is not connected to pedophilia or other sex crimes. "We hope that the hierarchy of the Catholic Church will finally accept this finding, since it has been

borne out through their own study," Duddy-Burke said.

Some bishops, however, said it is too early to draw conclusions about the researchers' findings.

"I wouldn't put a lot of credence in it," said Archbishop John Nienstedt of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

After the abuse crisis rocked the church in 2002, Nienstedt helped lead a Vatican investigation of U.S. seminaries aimed at rooting out homosexuality, and served on a committee that drew up new sex abuse prevention policies for U.S. dioceses. He has also written that homosexual orientation is the result of childhood trauma.

Smith and her co-author, Karen Terry, stressed on Tuesday that access to young boys, rather than a homosexual orientation, was largely responsible for the high percentage of male abuse cases. "It's important to separate the sexual identity and the behavior," Terry said. "Someone can commit sexual acts that

might be of a homosexual nature but not have a homosexual identity."

Still, Nienstedt said "a priest has to be accessible to all his people, and someone with a strong same-sex attraction would not be good to have in the pastoral care of people."

Cardinal Sean O'Malley of Boston said Wednesday that the researchers' conclusions still "need to be teased out."

"I think it needs to be explained better than it was," he said. "I think that's why you saw some of the bishops challenge (the researchers)."

In 2005, the Vatican issued new guidelines barring men with "deep-seated homosexual tendencies" from the priesthood. Bishop Edward Braxton of Belleville, Ill., asked Smith and Terry on Tuesday whether homosexuality should continue to be a factor in excluding some clergy candidates.

"If that exclusion were based on the fact that that person would be more probable than any other candidate to abuse, we do not find that at this time,"

Smith responded.

But the view that gay men are largely responsible for the sexual abuse scandal pervades the church hierarchy, said David Gibson, a Catholic journalist and author, and will not necessarily be overcome by the John Jay study.

"I think it will give cover to the bishops who want to continue to admit gay men into the seminary, as I think a majority of them want to do," Gibson said. "For those bishops dead-set against having any homosexuals in the priesthood, it won't make a difference."

David Clohessy, national director of the Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests, said that "the fixation on gay priests" as the cause of the sex scandal "is part of a long litany of simplistic, wrong-headed solutions and scape-goating," by the Catholic hierarchy.

"Sadly, many Catholics have already reached that conclusion though, due to the bishops' spin," Clohessy said. "The real issue continues to be the bishops' bad behavior." †

Demonstrators demand Notre Dame address gay issue

By Margaret Fosmoe
South Bend Tribune
January 28, 2010

Waving rainbow flags and carrying a banner reading, "No home under the dome," about 225 students, faculty and community residents demonstrated today at the University of Notre Dame in favor of adding sexual orientation to the campus anti-discrimination policy.

The activists also are asking that the university formally recognize a student

group to serve the needs of gay, lesbian and bisexual students and their allies.

The activists gathered in bitter cold temperatures at noon today near Notre Dame's main gate on Angela Boulevard. Most of the participants wore jeans, white shirts and purple tape over their mouths to symbolize the silence organizers say is imposed on gay, lesbian and bisexual students on campus.

"It's a very important cause. Everyone here deserves to feel safe and respected," said participant Chris Collins, a Notre Dame junior from Virginia.

The group then marched in silence to the Main Building to deliver a letter stating their concerns to the Rev. John I. Jenkins, Notre Dame's president.

At the front door of the building, they were stopped by a campus security police officer. About 40 faculty members then attempted to enter the building to deliver the letter, and they also were stopped.

An administrative assistant in Jenkins' office eventually came to the front steps, accepted the letter and said she would deliver it. †

Group carves out niche at Catholic University

By Jenna Johnson
Washington Post
December 11, 2009

Every Wednesday morning, 150 officials at Catholic University receive an e-mail about a gay student's struggles on campus.

There's a graduate student who doesn't mention her girlfriend to classmates or professors for fear of being lectured. An undergraduate who held her girlfriend's hand and was called an ugly name. Another student learned his roommate's mother tried to have her son re-signed when she learned he was gay.

Every Wednesday night, more than three dozen students gather to discuss what Catholic can do to welcome, affirm and protect its gay students, staff members and others.

So far, the administration has not been receptive to the group's Wednesday efforts. This summer they rejected an application from the group, CUAllies, to be an official student club. Doing so would have led to supporting an advocacy group for positions contrary to church teachings, Catholic spokesman Victor Nakas said in a statement.

"What else could be their purpose?" Nakas said.

Additionally, he said all students already have access to support services, such as the health center, counseling, public safety and campus ministry.

Still, CUAllies managed to build a presence and a member list this fall.

Although only approved student organizations can reserve space for meetings or events, all students have the right to gather informally on campus. Although only student organizations can advertise their meetings and events on campus bulletin boards, any student can tape a poster to his or her own door in the dorms or wear the group's signature blue T-shirts.

"We might not be an official group, but we're winning," said Robby Diesu, a senior political theory major from New York who is a founder of the group. "We have our own community. . . . It's empowering."

But the group has a self-imposed list of topics that are off-limits: pre-marital sex, gay sex, birth control, gay marriage and behavior not permitted by the Catholic church.

Despite the university's refusal to sanction the group, the students say they want to respect the campus's conservative nature and rules. Instead, they focus on helping gay students who are trying to navigate campus and educating the rest of the student body about gay issues.

"Everything that we are doing, it's Catholic, it's what the church is about," said David Freerksen, a junior economics major from Delaware who came out in middle school and converted to Catholicism in high school because of the religion's emphasis on community service.

For decades, public and private universities have grappled with how to support gay students and protect them from verbal or physical attacks. Religious schools also have the challenge of upholding church teachings, such as the Catholic stance that it is not sinful to be attracted to someone of the same sex but it is sinful to act on such desires.

This delicate balance often puts gay students in a "conflicted state of acceptance," said Shane L. Windmeyer, executive director of Campus Pride, a na-

tional organization that helps colleges assess their gay friendliness. "The church wants to love the person and hate the sin. But what does that really mean?"

So visible support for gay students



-- such as a resource center, rainbow stickers, club tables and awareness weeks -- is especially important at religious schools, he said. But such actions do not change campus attitudes overnight, he said.

Today, about 100 of the more than 220 Catholic colleges in the U.S. have a club dedicated to gay students, according to several gay rights advocacy groups. A few schools have gone further: The country's largest Catholic university, DePaul University in Chicago, started a LGBTQ Studies program (lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender/queer) in 2005. In the mid-1990s, the University of Notre Dame started the Core Council for Gay and Lesbian Students, which advises administrators. Georgetown University has had an official group for gay students since the 1980s and last fall it opened a resource center for gay students, the first of its kind at a U.S. Jesuit university.

The Rev. Kevin O'Brien, Georgetown's executive director of campus ministry, said if gay students are not supported by their professors, residence hall advisers, mentors, coaches

and others, there is a risk they will engage in risky behaviors, commit suicide, drop out of school or leave the church.

"That's exactly the type of stuff any type of religion would want to avoid," he said. "The point is, we're trying to care for our students: mind, body and spirit."

Catholic University used to have a gay-straight alliance, the Organization for Lesbian and Gay Student Rights, which was formed in 1979 and was officially recognized as a student organization in 1988. The group's original constitution stated that it will not permit "any ambiguous use of the University's name to imply that the University approves of homosexual lifestyles as morally neutral, of homosexual activity, or of homosexual behavior."

The group was forced to dissolve several years ago because it became an advocacy group, Nakas said.

"The university has chosen not to go down that path again," he said, adding that the university would not comment on what other institutions choose to do.

The campus's conservative policies and formerly disconnected gay community created an environment where gay students didn't know who they could trust or where they could go for help, and there was a general lack of understanding among the student body, CUAllies members said.

Being denied campus recognition has revealed to students which administrators and faculty members support them. One professor purchased the group Web domain, and about 30 faculty members have signed a petition in favor of the group.

"There are pockets of acceptance and pockets of tolerance," said Lauren

Crook, a senior sociology major from Florida. But it's not those pockets that CUAllies are trying to reach and educate, she said: "It's the rest of the university, the 3,000 other people on campus. That's our goal."

The idea for CUAllies arose this spring after the campus newspaper published a student column that criticized actor Sean Penn for using his Oscar win for the movie "Milk" as a platform for gay rights advocacy. A few gay students wrote letters to the editor and then met each other and learned they faced similar problems.

The newspaper then published an editorial cartoon showing the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception and a sign showing symbols for gays and lesbians and an arrow pointing to Catholic's campus. The headline read: "No longer underground."

At least 2,000 copies of that paper were taken from the paper's distribution sites and thrown into recycling bins. Several copies of the paper were torn up outside the newspaper office and a copy of the cartoon was ripped out of the paper and taped to the wall.

Meanwhile, CUAllies began to take form. Organizers collected testimony from gay students and alumni, which they began to e-mail to administrators in early September.

The first e-mail was from a 2008 alum who realized he was gay in fourth grade, founded a gay-straight alliance at his high school and stunned his friends when he decided to attend Catholic. He was convinced it was an accepting place, but found instead "it was a culture shock." Someone wrote an anti-gay slur on his dorm door and he overheard students talking derogatively about him. "I felt like I had nowhere to turn."

That e-mail, like all of the e-mails since, ends with a quote from a 1997 pastoral message U.S. bishops wrote to the parents of gay children: "All homosexual persons have a right to be welcomed into the community." †

Fortunate sons

Continued from page 1

the side. I know my son is not disordered, as the church would have me believe."

He and Linda want other parents to learn that, too, even though their church may tell them otherwise. "It's our goal through the Listening Parents Network to reach out to families that have no where else to turn," he says. "We've got a long ways to go to reach the people we need to reach."

Likewise, the couple recognizes that changing the hearts and minds of the congregation is only half of the job of allies. The clergy need to change, too.

Linda and Tom relay that it's difficult to get anti-LGBT churches to let them speak or put out literature there. Even pastors who are accepting are often unwilling to go against the archbishop or cardinal, weary of being dismissed from their position.

"There's been some pretty severe consequences in areas where the pastor is supportive of the gay community and they've really taken a hit for it," Tom shares. "They've been removed from their pastorate, or worse. The clergy who support us do so at some risk to

their welfare."

Changing the mind of the historically anti-gay Catholic church is all but impossible. But the primary concern of Fortunate Families and couples like Tom and Linda is helping other parents. Unfortunately, they can often be hard to reach as well.

"A lot of times people are afraid to come (to Always Our Children engagements) because of what might come of identifying themselves with this issue," Linda says. "Are people going to think I'm gay or I have a gay kid? It's the same thing with the PFLAG in Manistee."

"That has got to be one of the most difficult things we face, is reaching people who are really homophobic," adds Tom. "It's so hard to do without becoming strident, and I think stridency is a thing we need to guard against because you don't win people over to your viewpoint by being obnoxious."

"On other hand, there are times where you need to confront."

Tom knows all about walking that line. When the local cardinal asked Catholic churches to publicly support

Proposal 2 in 2004, which banned same-sex marriages in Michigan, Tom couldn't help but speak up.

"Just before the election (the cardinal) put out an audio tape and told every parish they had to play it on Sunday," Tom remembers. "They started to play that tape and I had a wave of emotion come over me that's indescribable. . . . I walked to the altar, turned around and faced the congregation and in my loudest voice, I said, 'This is a message of hate. It hurts me, it hurts my family and it hurts my friends. I don't come to church on Sunday to hear a message of hate. I have to leave.'"

In that case, Tom's pastor called later that day and apologized for playing the tape, promising never to do such a thing again.

The outcome of their activism is not always so productive, but Tom and Linda keep going just the same. They have a story to tell and wisdom to share. So they talk - a lot, and openly, and to whomever will listen. Or, perhaps more importantly, to those who won't. In their community. In their church. Even, sometimes, in a Panera Bread. †

Georgetown University tries to be Catholic and gay-friendly

By Jenna Johnson
Washington Post
December 11, 2009

Sivagami "Shiva" Subbaraman was leading a workshop about making college campuses more gay-friendly in February 2008 when a Georgetown University student burst into the room with news: The university president had agreed to open a resource center for gay students and hire a full-time director to run it.

Everyone in the room laughed.

"Not Georgetown," Subbaraman recalls saying, astonished that a university founded by Jesuits was supporting so publicly a community that long has felt shunned by the Catholic Church. "You must mean at GW [George Washington University]."

But less than two months later, Subbaraman interviewed to be that director. She left her job at the University of Maryland's Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Equity and, last August, helped open the LGBTQ Resource Center, the first of its kind at a Jesuit university in the United States. (At Georgetown, LGBTQ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning.)

"This is the biggest unmapped frontier in faith," said Subbaraman, a lesbian who grew up in a Hindu family in India and attended a Catholic high school and college.

The center has two full-time staff members, a rarity at college resource centers, who provide training sessions and workshops for faculty members and student leaders. They also help students find services on campus and plan events such as Coming Out Week festivities in October and Lavender Graduation, an additional graduation ceremony for gay students.

Plus, the center is a regular hangout spot for many students and a place they can go to talk about problems they have encountered. On Monday nights, students gather for an LGBTQ prayer group.

Before the center opened, the gay community at Georgetown was disjointed, said Carlos León-Ojeda, a Georgetown senior and co-chair of the student organization GUPride. "There were groups of friends, but any community was very small."

The center was the university's response to two reported anti-gay attacks on students near campus in fall 2007. In one of the two cases, a sophomore was charged with assaulting a fellow student. Prosecutors later dropped the case, citing a lack of evidence, but the event generated publicity and student protests.

Within weeks, Georgetown President John J. DeGioia organized work groups to study how hate crimes are reported, what additional resources gay students needed and how the entire campus was educated on including and understanding gay students.

Before doing so, DeGioia met with church leaders to explain what he wanted to do and how his plan would follow church teachings and not advocate for positions contrary to those of the church.

"At a Catholic and Jesuit university, we most certainly can 'advocate' for LGBTQ students. We can and must advocate for respect, inclusion, understanding, safety, mentoring, dignity, growth and equal opportunity. We can and must advocate for freedom from prejudice, exclusion, discrimination, and homophobia," DeGioia said during a meeting with students and others in October 2007, according to a copy of his remarks.

At Georgetown, students are encouraged to question their faith, learn about

other religions and discuss sensitive topics such as the culture of casual sex on college campuses, said the Rev. Kevin O'Brien, executive director of campus ministry. Such discussions are integral to the university's mission and do not conflict with its Catholic identity, he said.

"We don't have a political agenda. We don't have a lifestyle agenda. We're concerned about helping our young people," he said. "It's something that we're really proud of."

Gay students at Georgetown first organized in the 1970s, just after the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from its official list of mental disorders. The students repeatedly petitioned the university for recognition and resources. They were denied over and over.

In the 1980s two groups representing gay undergraduates and law students sued Georgetown under the D.C. Human Rights Act, which says it is illegal to discriminate based on sexual orientation. In 1987, an appeals court decided



that although the university is not required to endorse the group, it cannot deny students access to resources and benefits enjoyed by other campus clubs. Today that group is called GUPride.

In 2002, students again petitioned the administration, this time for a resource center. They were turned down, but as a compromise, in 2004, the university dedicated a part-time employee to advise gay student on what resources were available on campus.

The center was a major victory, said Zack Pesavento, who graduated from the Georgetown School of Foreign Ser-

vice in 2008 and was involved with the petition. The center indicates to students that they are welcome on campus, and it helps them figure out who they are, a process that can be made more confusing by religion, he said.

"I have my gay identity and my Catholic identity, and these are two things that are very important to me. But they grew very separately," said Pesavento, now a communications consultant. "I needed to live and be as one integrated person."

But opening the center has not solved all of Georgetown's anti-gay problems. In October, a female student wearing a gay rights T-shirt was attacked by two men near campus and called names. On Halloween night, a male student was sent to the hospital after a man called him an anti-gay slur and beat him in a neighborhood near campus. About the same time, a note was posted on the door of the resource center that called Subbaraman a name and told her to leave campus.

"It takes a long time to change the culture of a campus," Subbaraman said. "I don't want just the center to be a safe space. All of campus should be a safe space." †

Gay-friendly Catholic Colleges and Universities

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



California

Belmont: Notre Dame de Namur University
Goleta: St. Mark's University
Los Angeles: Loyola Marymount University, Mount Saint Mary's College
Moraga: St. Mary's College
Ranchos Palos Verde: Marymount College
San Diego: University of San Diego
San Francisco: University of San Francisco
Santa Clara: Santa Clara University

Colorado

Denver: Regis University

Connecticut

Fairfield: Fairfield University, Sacred Heart University
New Haven: Albertus Magnus College
West Hartford: Saint Joseph College

District of Columbia

Georgetown University, Trinity University

Florida

Miami Gardens: St. Thomas University
Miami Shores: Barry University

Hawaii

Honolulu: Chaminade University

Illinois

Chicago: DePaul University, Loyola University, St. Xavier University
Romeoville: Lewis University

Indiana

Notre Dame: Holy Cross College, St. Mary's College, University of Notre Dame

Iowa

Dubuque: Loras College

Kentucky

Louisville: Spalding University, Bellarmine University

Louisiana

New Orleans: Loyola University

Maryland

Baltimore: College of Notre Dame of Maryland, Loyola College of Maryland

Massachusetts

Boston: Emmanuel College, Boston College

Chestnut Hill:

Boston College
Easton: Stonehill College
North Andover: Merrimack College
Weston: Regis College
Worcester: Assumption College, College of the Holy Cross

Michigan

Detroit: University of Detroit Mercy
Grand Rapids: Aquinas College

Minnesota

Collegeville: St. John's University
Duluth: College of St. Scholastica
Minneapolis: College of St. Catherine
St. Joseph: College of Saint Benedict
St. Paul: St. Thomas University
Winona: St. Mary's University of Minnesota

Missouri

Kansas City: Avila University, Rockhurst University
St. Louis: Fontbonne University, St. Louis University

Montana

Helena: Carroll College

Nebraska

Omaha: Creighton University

New Hampshire

Nashua: Rivier College

New Jersey

Caldwell: Caldwell College
Jersey City: St. Peter's College
South Orange: Seton Hall

New York

Albany: College of Saint Rose
Bronx: Fordham University, Manhattan College
Buffalo: Canisius College
Loudonville: Sienna College
New Rochelle: College of New Rochelle, Iona College
Poughkeepsie: Marist College
Riverdale: College of Mount St. Vincent
Rochester: Nazareth College of Rochester, St. John Fisher College
St. Bonaventure: St. Bonaventure University
Sparkill: St. Thomas Aquinas College
Syracuse: LeMoyne College
Queens: St. John's University

Ohio

Cincinnati: Xavier University
Cleveland Heights: John Carroll University
Dayton: University of Dayton
Pepper Pike: Ursuline College
South Euclid: Notre Dame College
Sylvania: Lourdes College

Oregon

Marylhurst: Marylhurst University
Portland: University of Portland

Pennsylvania

Cresson: Mount Aloysius College
Dallas: Misericordia University
Erie: Mercyhurst College
Greensburg: Seton Hill University
Philadelphia: Chestnut Hill College, LaSalle University, St. Joseph's University
Pittsburgh: Carlow University, Duquesne University
Radnor: Cabrini College
Reading: Alvernia University
Scranton: Marywood University
Villanova: Villanova University

Rhode Island

Newport: Salve Regina University
Providence: Providence College

Texas

Austin: Saint Edward's University
San Antonio: University of the Incarnate Word, Our Lady of the Lake University

Vermont

Colchester: Saint Michael's College

Washington

Lacey: St. Martin's College
Seattle: Seattle University
Spokane: Gonzaga University

West Virginia

Wheeling: Wheeling Jesuit University

Wisconsin

De Pere: St. Norbert College
Madison: Edgewood College
Milwaukee: Alverno College, Cardinal Stritch University, Marquette University

Canada

Toronto: Regis College

Gay-rights activists protest at Holy Name Cathedral

Dozens decry Catholic Church's opposition to same-sex marriage

By Megan Twohey
Chicago Tribune
February 14, 2010

Attending Mass at Holy Name Cathedral was supposed to be one of the final Valentine's Day weekend treats for Cindy White and her husband, who had traveled to Chicago from Hampshire, Ill., to celebrate the romantic holiday.

Instead, the couple found themselves wading through nearly 100 men and women who had gathered outside the cathedral Sunday morning to protest the Catholic Church's opposition to gay marriage and other stances that they see as unjust to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people.

The protesters waved rainbow flags and shouted slogans like, "Hey, hey, ho, ho, homophobia has got to go!" and, "Holy Name, holy shame!"

It wasn't the first time gay-rights activists have protested on Valentine's Day as a chance to champion equal rights and target the Catholic Church.

Last year, the Gay Liberation Network helped organize a march from the city building in which marriage licenses are issued to Holy Name to show support for gay marriage, said Andy Thayer, the group's co-founder.

"We want to drag the church's bigotry out of the closet," said Thayer, 49.

Protester Andrew Ciscel, of Chicago, said Valentine's Day should be viewed as Freedom to Marry Day. He passed out pamphlets calling on members of the Catholic community to withhold their weekly tithes, confront their priest and criticize the "rigid definition of families and the patriarchal posture of the church."

Colleen Dolan, spokeswoman for the Chicago Archdiocese, said the protesters were misdirected.

"They may not like it, but it's the teaching of the church that marriage is between one man and one woman," Dolan said. "Those of us in the church don't get to choose what the teachings are."

Many parishioners and visitors to the cathedral criticized the protest.

"They're really annoying," a flustered White said, after pushing her way through the crowd. "They took up all

the parking. And I just don't agree with them."

Josie Beavers, 27, of Chicago, stood with the protesters but lamented some of their harsh language.

"I'm upset by their angry tone," Beavers said. "On Valentine's Day, we should be celebrating love. I'd rather focus on what I'm for than what I'm against." †



Gay-rights activists rally Sunday at Holy Name Cathedral in Chicago to oppose the Catholic Church's stance against same-sex marriage. Photo: Stacey Wescott

If God loves unconditionally, why can't we?

By April Flores
BaltimoreOutLoud.com
February 10, 2010

I'm Catholic and I used to proudly celebrate Catholic Schools Week; however, due to a collision of my religion and my personal life, I did not participate in this year's festivities. I devoted over twenty-five years of my life to Catholic education and was only married to my wife, Jennifer Simmons, for one month before the Archdiocese of Baltimore (AOB) involuntarily terminated my contract.

This past July I was told by Michelly Merrick, director of human resources for the AOB, that the Archdiocese learned of my civil ceremony and that they thought it best for everyone that I resign from Sacred Heart of Mary School. I disagree, which is why I refused to resign. In a second meeting with the AOB, they stated that there are similar cases to mine, but those are not being investigated because names were not given. Other employees are not adhering to Catholic moral standards, yet I am the only person punished. How is that just?

Anyone that truly knows me can attest to the fact that I am a selfless, dedicated, and effective teacher who is loved and respected by students, parents, and colleagues. This is evident by the overwhelming support I received from my Catholic community when they learned of my termination. I received only support until I faced a panel of five archdiocesan administrators at an optional hearing, at which my students and parents protested my dismissal.

According to Dr. Ronald Valenti, the superintendent of the AOB, the panel unanimously decided to uphold the decision of the Archdiocese to terminate my contract. In retrospect, I should have questioned the panel and asked them if they

believed that Jesus would prohibit a lesbian from teaching his word or if Jesus would shun me the way the Archdiocese has.

I was terminated because I am guilty of "behavior that seriously offends the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Baltimore [and I] failed to uphold the moral values of chastity." I understand these claims, but I believe that my termination remains civilly discriminatory, morally wrong, and an enormous disservice to my students.

Catholicism preaches to love everyone despite existing differences; however, I am being castigated for being different. If God loves unconditionally, why can't we? My termination clearly implies that Catholicism holds that it is

sinful to be a lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender individual. How can the Archdiocese terminate me, but justify accepting tuition money from parents of LGBT students?

Some Catholics are outraged and are disgusted with the Church's stance regarding homosexuality. How long will the Church ignore these congregants? People are seeking change, the Church needs to do so as well. What type of message should be sent? One that is loving, forgiving, and accepting of all people or one where it is socially and religiously acceptable for discrimination to exist?

Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice

everywhere." And Gandhi said, "Be the change you wish to see in the world." There is no Maryland state or federal law that protects LGBT individuals from being discriminated against by religious institutions. I believe that this is an injustice and I am doing my part to be the change I wish to see in the world. I want to see religious institutions waive their rights of discriminating against LGBT individuals; however, this requires people to positively appeal for change.

I encourage everyone, especially Catholics, who are enraged, disappointed, or bothered by this story to appeal for change for our LGBT community. Only then, will I reconsider celebrating Catholic Schools Week. †

Gay group director responds to cardinal's criticism

Continued from page 1

cannot speak on behalf of the Catholic faithful in the United States," he added.

The George remarks might be related to a program New Ways Ministry plans for the Chicago area March 12-14, 2010. The program describes its purpose as following:

-How can Catholic communities respond compassionately and faithfully to the gifts, needs, and life experiences of lesbian/gay people and their families?

-What skills, knowledge, and talents are needed to address lesbian/gay issues in Catholic environments?

-What role can pastoral leaders play in building bridges between faith communities and those who feel

alienated and ostracized because of sexual orientation issues?

This weekend of prayer, presentations, dialogue, and planning is designed to assist those seeking ways to include lesbian/gay people and issues in their home parishes, schools, or other ministerial settings.

The New Ways Ministry web site says that staff members DeBernardo and Matthew Myers "will facilitate prayer, presentations, and dialogue throughout the weekend."

New Ways Ministry was co-founded in 1977 by then Notre Dame (now Loretto) Sister Jeannine Gramick and Salvatorian Father Robert Nugent, who were ordered by the Vatican in 1999 to stop their ministry because

"ambiguities and errors" in their approach caused confusion for the Catholic people and harmed the church community.

After they continued to speak and write about homosexuality, the two were directed in 2000 not to speak publicly or write about the topic or about the Vatican actions. Nugent accepted the discipline and is in parish ministry. Gramick continues her ministry to gays and lesbians.

Because she defied the Vatican ban and faced expulsion by the School Sisters of Notre Dame, she left the order and joined the Sisters of Loretto in 2001. She made her final vows with her new order in June 2004, and her activities are still associated with New Ways Ministry. †

Gays reject Catholic Church's attempt to 'cure' them

By Jeff Strickler
Minneapolis Star-Tribune
November 17, 2009

Gay and lesbian Roman Catholics who contact the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis for spiritual guidance can find themselves directed toward programs aimed at helping them become celibate.

Called reparative therapy, the programs are provoking national -- and even international -- protests from critics who say they are ineffective at best and, in some cases, harmful.

Many see the programs as an example of the Vatican's swing toward conservatism, and an insulting blow to a decade of bridge-building between the church and the gay community.

"[Retired Archbishop] Harry Flynn came to us -- we didn't go to them, they came to us -- in the late 1990s and asked us to serve as resource people for the church," said Michael Bayly, executive coordinator of the Catholic Pastoral Committee on Sexual Minorities (CPCSM). "Then a new pope comes in. Now the archdiocese won't even take our phone calls."

So they are speaking out on their own. They're hosting a forum Tuesday at St. Martin's Table Restaurant and Bookstore in Minneapolis that they say will shine a spotlight on what they term the "pseudo-scientific organizations" that endorse reparative therapy.

Under the auspices of its Office of Marriage and Family, the Catholic church's programs are modeled after Al-

coholics Anonymous and its sister program for the families of addicts, Al-Anon. The programs, called Courage (AA) and Encourage (Al-Anon), are



intended to help gays remain chaste.

The chaplain of the local Courage chapter, the Rev. James Livingston, was out of town Monday and unavailable to comment. In explaining the programs, the archdiocese's website contains links to material that some gays find objectionable. That includes a Q&A with the director of Courage's national office, the Rev. Paul Check, in which he says, "People are relieved to know the condition [of homosexuality] is both treatable and preventable."

"Homosexuality is not an illness," objected David McCaffrey, one of the people who founded CPCSM in 1980. "You shouldn't be treating it because there's nothing to treat."

Check also was not available to comment, but a person in his office became angry when she heard about the forum. Although not an official spokesperson, she said, "We don't tell anyone what to do. We just try to help them live

according to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church."

A decade ago, the CPCSM was asked to conduct sensitivity training sessions for the archdiocese. "That's how much things have changed recently," Bayly said.

He pointed to an article last November in the Catholic Spirit, the archdiocese's newspaper, endorsing the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH). Describing itself as a non-profit educational organization serving people with "unwanted homosexual attraction," it maintains that through therapy, homosexuals can "develop their heterosexual potential."

In 2006, the American Psychological Association (APA) issued a statement challenging reparative or "conversion" therapy: "The APA's concern about the positions espoused by NARTH and so-called conversion therapy is that they are not supported by the science," it said. "There is simply no sufficiently scientifically sound evidence that sexual orientation can be changed."

NARTH does have its supporters, however. In 2003, Psychology Today

magazine ran an editorial citing data "which suggests that sexual orientation conversion therapy is at least sometimes successful."

NARTH is not connected to the Catholic Church and is endorsed by some Protestant denominations, also.

Minnesotans aren't the only ones objecting. There have been protest marches outside NARTH meetings in Dallas and London, and there's a NARTH protest page on Facebook.

Tonight's forum features a panel that includes Bayly; Dr. Simon Rosser, a professor in the University of Minnesota's School of Public Health, and Philip Lowe Jr., a former member of the Twin Cities chapter of Courage.

They will present an APA report that recommends that therapists address the

distress of Catholic homosexuals "but not aim to alter sexual orientation," which it says "has the potential to be harmful."

"There is simply no sufficiently scientifically sound evidence that sexual orientation can be changed."

Lowe spent 15 months in the Courage program in hopes of finding a way to reconcile his religion and his sexuality.

"I went to weekly meetings, I went to confession, I did everything you were supposed to do," he said. Through it all, he battled with the feeling that he was supposed to distance himself from who he is. "It wasn't a positive experience."

He quit the group and the church a year ago. He has since found a new partner and a new church home, St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral in Minneapolis.

"We've been embraced by that community," he said. "I wish that everyone could experience that."

So, why don't other homosexuals leave the church?

"We identify the church as the people in it, not the hierarchy that runs it," McCaffrey said. "Besides, we've been Roman Catholics all of our lives. It's part of our lives. It's who we are."

Bayly doesn't expect the forum to change the church's stance on homosexuality, but he does hope that it might open a line of communication.

"All we're trying to do is start a discussion," he said. "We're trying to do a little consciousness-raising about the needs and gifts of the gay and lesbian community." †

Tensions rise in St. Louis as gays protest Catholic involvement in anti-gay Maine marriage vote

www.Towleroad.com
December 15, 2009

Some dedicated activists in St. Louis have been holding weekend protests against the Catholic Church since Maine's marriage equality law was voted down in November. This past Sunday was the group's third protest.

"About 65 members of a groups Show Me No Hate and the Catholic Action Network lined the sidewalk in front of the Cathedral Sunday afternoon. It's the latest in a series of Sunday demonstrations following news that Archbishop Robert Carlson donated \$10,000 to help veto a gay marriage law in the state of Maine. On Sunday four protestors attempted to

stand alongside their cars parked at a 45 degree angle in front of the church holding signs that read, 'Honk for Equality' or 'Separation of Church and Hate.' That's when they claim police muffled their protest by ordering them back on the sidewalk. There were no arrests and no allegations of police getting physical. But organizer Ed Reggi captured a tense exchange with an officer on video tape in which he was warned to 'prepare for arrest,' when he refused at first to step back on the sidewalk. The officer on the video tells Reggi that he is not allowed on the street and that his holding of signs there was disturbing traffic and had prompted several 911 calls."

The Archdiocese released a state-

ment that it had nothing to do with the fact that the police were there.

The police also released a statement: "Several of the protestors told police that they wanted to get arrested for the media attention. They have been doing these protests every week for several weeks now with no arrests, so this is their way of getting media attention. If someone is alleging officer misconduct, we encourage them to contact the Internal Affairs Division." †

Clericalism's malign influence

Continued from page 1

ardless of the rights or wrongs of church teaching, this has been experienced by our people as a heavy burden." He added: "You can imagine the anger of a woman who has had child after child and can cope no more, or a young gay person, when they hear what even a few priests have been up to."

The message of his address, the second part of which The Tablet publishes today, is that the crisis must be seen as a moment of fundamental change. The clerical culture that emerged from the reforms of the Council of Trent, he said, stressed rank and power. "This terrible crisis of sexual abuse is deeply linked to

the way that power can corrupt human relationships." God will use the crisis by "demolishing our high towers and our clerical pretensions to glory and grandeur so that the Church may be a place in which we may encounter God and each other more intimately". Fr Radcliffe's incisive analysis, while undoubtedly spot on, leaves one disturbing issue unexplored. This Church where power still "corrupts personal relationships" was supposed to have been reformed root and branch by the Second Vatican Council nearly 50 years ago. The challenge now is to ascertain what went wrong. †

Next Steps

Developing Catholic Lesbian/Gay Ministry

A weekend workshop
for all interested in lesbian/gay ministry.



October 29-31,
2010

La Salette
Retreat Center

Attleboro,
Massachusetts

Sponsored by
New Ways Ministry
www.NewWaysMinistry.org
info@NewWaysMinistry.org

Crowd outside Boulder church protests barring of child from Catholic school

By Yesenia Robles
Denver Post
March 8, 2010

A crowd holding signs protesting the treatment of a student with lesbian parents exchanged smiles and waves with parishioners walking into a Boulder church for Sunday Mass.

Before Mass started, church members citing their Catholic hospitality crossed the street to offer donuts and fresh coffee to the group of about 30 protesters.

Despite the friendly gestures, protest signs underscored why demonstrators were there.

"Teach acceptance. Celebrate all of God's children," read one banner.

Last week, a standing policy of the Archdiocese of Denver denied a child from enrolling in the Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic School for kindergarten next year because the student's parents are lesbians.

Currently the student is in the



Ella Lyons, 7, stands next to her father, Jeff Lyons, right, with a group outside Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Boulder on Sunday.

Photo by Matt McClain.

school's preschool program and will be allowed to finish the year, according to Jeanette DeMelo, a spokeswoman for the archdiocese.

"It's clear if they only accept students with perfect parents, they would

have almost nobody," said Beth Osnes, an organizer for the protest. "I know they have the right to, but why would they want to?"

Inside the church, the Rev. Bill Breslin addressed the issue in his sermon. He also posted his comments on his blog.

"If a child of gay parents comes to our school, and we teach that gay marriage is against the will of God, then the child will think that we are saying their parents are bad,"

Breslin said on his blog. "We don't want to put any child in that tough position."

DeMelo said the schools do not ask questions about sexual orientation during enrollment, but once they found out, they had to address it according to their

policy.

"We're not trying to weed out people," DeMelo said. "But when they can't agree with our Catholic philosophy, it really makes it difficult to be a strong part of the school community; it's a difficult situation."

For the protesters outside who heard about the sermon, the justification was not enough.

"It's not the teachings of Jesus. We are all created equal," said Joellen Raderstorff, a Boulder resident.

For Osnes, the suffering of members of the gay and lesbian community hits close to home.

"I was the youngest of 10 in a big Catholic family," Osnes said. "One of my much older sisters was gay, Janet Behner."

Osnes said her sister died having experienced a lot of pain from being marginalized for being gay.

"We just don't want to see them suffering anymore," Osnes said. †

U.S. Christian Leaders' Statement on "Anti-Homosexuality Act of 2009"

Our Christian faith recognizes violence, harassment and unjust treatment of any human being as a betrayal of Jesus' commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves. As followers of the teachings of Christ, we must express profound dismay at a bill currently before the Parliament in Uganda. The "Anti-Homosexuality Act of 2009" would enforce lifetime prison sentences and in some cases the death penalty for homosexual behavior, as well as punish citizens for not reporting their gay and lesbian neighbors to the authorities.

As Americans, some may wonder why we are raising our voices to oppose a measure proposed in a nation so far away from home. We do so to bear witness to our Christian values, and to express our condemnation of an injustice in which groups and leaders within the American Christian community are being implicated. We appeal to all Christian leaders in our own country to speak out against this unjust legislation.

In our efforts to imitate the Good Samaritan, we stand in solidarity with those Ugandans beaten and left abandoned by the side of the road because of hatred, bigotry and fear. Especially during this holy season of Advent, when the global Christian community prepares in hope for the light of Christ to break through the darkness, we pray that they are comforted by God's love.

Regardless of the diverse theological views of our religious traditions regarding the morality of homosexuality, in our churches, communities and families, we seek to embrace our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters as God's children worthy of respect and love. Yet we are painfully aware that in our country gays and lesbians still face hostility and violence. We recognize that such treatment degrades the human family, threatens the common good and defies the teachings of our Lord -- wherever it occurs.

Thomas P. Melady

Former U.S. Ambassador to Uganda and the Vatican

Ronald J. Sider

President
Evangelicals for Social Action

Rocco Puopolo, SX

Executive Director
Africa Faith and Justice Network

James E. Hug, S.J.

President
Center of Concern

Rev. Samuel Rodriguez

President
National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference

Institute Leadership Team of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas

T. Michael McNulty, SJ

Justice and Peace Director
Conference of Major Superiors of Men

Marie Lucey, OSF

Associate Director for Social Mission
Leadership Conference of Women Religious

Bryan N. Massingale, S.T.D.

President, Catholic Theological Society of America
Associate Professor of Theological Ethics
Marquette University

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Department of Politics
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Christine Firer Hinze

Professor, Christian Ethics
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Aloysius P. Kelley S.J. Professor of Catholic Studies
Fairfield University

J. Matthew Ashley

Associate Professor of Systematic Theology
Director of Graduate Studies
Department of Theology
University of Notre Dame

John Sniegocki

Associate Professor of Christian Ethics
Xavier University

Nancy Dallavalle

Chair, Department of Religious Studies
Fairfield University

M. Shawn Copeland

Associate Professor of Systematic Theology
Boston College

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International News

Portugal

Catholic Portugal set to legalize gay marriage

By Ann Le Coz
Agence France Presse
January 6, 2010

Catholic Portugal, traditionally one of Europe's most socially conservative countries, is expected to approve the legalisation of gay marriage on Friday with a minimum of fuss.

With the governing Socialists and other left-wing parties enjoying a strong majority, the new law is likely to sail through the first reading debate and gain final approval before a visit by Pope Benedict XVI, due in Portugal in May.

In contrast to Spain, where the lead-up to the legalisation of gay marriage in 2005 brought hundreds of thousands of demonstrators onto the streets, the bill in Portugal has provoked only muted opposition even from the right.

While normally vocal on the role of marriage and the family in society, the Catholic Church has refused to mobilise on a subject which, according to Lisbon's Cardinal Patriarch Jose Policarpo, is "parliament's responsibility".

"I think the Portuguese people have learnt one of the fundamental tenets of democracy: respect for the rights of the individual," Miguel Vale de Almeida, Portugal's first openly-gay lawmaker who was elected in September, told AFP.

Vale de Almeida, who is the Socialists' pointman on the legislation, said there is now a political majority in favour of gay marriage and that it is "too simplistic to link Catholicism and conservatism."

According to poll conducted late last

year by the Eurosondagem institute, while a strong majority (68.4 percent) of Portuguese are opposed to adoptions by same-sex couples, they are more evenly divided when it comes to gay marriage with 49.5 percent against, with 45.5 percent in favour.

On Tuesday, campaigners handed a petition with more than 90,000 signatures to demand a referendum on the subject into parliament.

But having had its fingers burnt by two referendums which preceded the legalisation of abortion in 2007, the government has ruled out consulting with the public as the measure was part of its manifesto in last year's election.

Prime Minister Jose Socrates' Socialists may have lost their majority in the September 27 election, but still command the support of other left-wing parties in parliament who should guarantee that the gay marriage bill is passed.

While opposed to the concept of same-sex "marriages", the centre-right opposition Social Democrat party says it is favour of a civil partnership that would give gays and lesbians the same rights as heterosexual couples minus adoptions...

If the gay marriage proposals do pass through parliament, they will have to go through a parliamentary commission before coming back for the final approval.

According to media reports, both the government and the Catholic Church wants the gay marriage issue to be resolved before the visit of the pope, scheduled for May 11-14. †

Netherlands

Dutch gays, Catholic Church put aside dispute

By Associated Press
Washington Post
March 3, 2010

Dutch gay rights groups have called for an end to protests against a Catholic church southwest of Amsterdam after it said it would no longer seek to bar homosexuals from taking communion.

The Sint-Jan church in Den Bosch says it will leave it up to believers to decide whether they are ready to receive

communion.

Mass at the church on Sunday was disturbed by protests. The demonstrations began last month after an openly gay man in a nearby village was chosen for a prominent role during Dutch carnival celebrations but was refused communion by his local priest - offending many in the village.

Most Dutch people support gay rights, but the Catholic Church teaches that homosexual activity is sinful. †

Uganda

Uganda's Catholic bishops oppose anti-gay bill

By Kilian Melloy
The Edge—Boston, MA
January 13, 2010

Uganda's Catholic Bishops have come out against a bill that would impose the death penalty on gays who repeatedly have sexual encounters with other men, or have sex if they are HIV-positive.

The statement issued by the bishops references the New Testament directives that urge Christians to show compassion and love toward others. However, the missive, which on Dec. 23 was posted in its entirety at the Web site for the Christian broadcaster Radio Sapientia also refers to same-sex intimacy and relationships as "sinful," and speaks of "converting" gays.

The statement, by the Archbishop of Kampala, Dr. Cyrian Kizito Lwanga, begins by praising the Ugandan government for its "effort to protect the traditional family and its values," and goes on to specify that, "Church teaching remains that homosexual acts are immoral and are violations of divine and natural law." The statement cites the Old Testament Book of Leviticus, which, among other directives (including prohibitions against the eating of shellfish, the preparation of dishes that include both meat and dairy, and the wearing of fabrics made from blended fibers) condemns men "lying" with one another.

"However, the Church equally teaches the Christian message of respect, compassion, and sensitivity," the statement continues. "The Church has always asked its followers to hate the sin but to love the sinner." The Archbishop's statement, which was issued in the name of "the Catholic Bishops of Uganda," continued, "Homosexuals have the need of conversion and repentance. They also need support, understanding and love as all strive to be members of the Kingdom of God.

"The recent tabled Anti-Homosexuality Bill does not pass a test of a Christian caring approach to this issue," the statement adds. "The targeting of the sinner, not the sin, is the core flaw of the proposed Bill. The introduction of the death penalty

and imprisonment for homosexual acts targets people rather than seeking to counsel and to reach out in compassion to those who need conversion, repentance, support and hope."

The statement also responded to provisions in the bill that would penalize those who know about same-sex relationships but do not report them to the authorities, saying that the measure could lead to "the breach of confidentiality and professional ethics of persons such as Parents, Priests, Counselors, Teachers, Doctors and Leaders, at a time when they offer support and advise for rehabilitation of homosexuals.

"The proposed Bill does not contain clauses encouraging homosexuals to be rehabilitated," the statement continues. "The criminalizing of such reaching out is at odds with the core values of the Christian faith."

Ugandan Catholic Bishops are not the only people of faith responding to the threat of the proposed new law. American Jewish World Service (AJWS) has established a fund to combat the bill and to promote grassroots human rights work in the African nation. In a Jan. 8 story, Advocate.com quoted from an AJWS release that contained remarks by the group's president, Ruth Messinger, who said, "AJWS's work is propelled by a very basic value: the essential dignity of every human being."

Added Messinger, "Through the creation of the 'Urgent LGBT Uganda Fund,' in conjunction with our broader advocacy efforts, AJWS is taking the lead in the Jewish community and in the broader faith-based community to ensure that all people--regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity--can realize their full, true selves."

International pressure has mounted ever since the bill was introduced by Ugandan lawmaker David Bahati. The Ugandan government asked Bahati to withdraw the measure, but Bahati refused to do so. Ugandan president Yoweri Museveni has said that the punishment's outlined by the measure are too harsh.

An Anglican Bishop of Kampala, Dr. David Zac Niringiye, had previously spoken in defense of the Ugandan people to weight the bill's merits without external interference. †

Mexico

Mexico City move to allow gay marriage

By Sarah Miller Llana
Christian Science Monitor
December 22, 2009

In legalizing gay marriage, Mexico City is now the vanguard of the coalescing gay rights movement across Latin America.

With a vote of 39-to-20, legislators in the capital approved a bill that will make Mexico City the first city in Latin America to approve gay marriage - angering the Catholic Church and politicians from the nation's conservative ruling party.

The bill redefines the definition of marriage, paving the way for same-sex couples to wed as early as February. Leftist mayor Marcelo Ebrard, from the Democratic Revolution Party (PRD), now must sign the bill into law, which he is expected to do.

Members of Mexican President Felipe Calderón's National Action Party (PAN) have said they will fight the measure in court, as has happened in the US. The bill follows other controversial moves in left-leaning Mexico City, which also legalized abortion in a woman's first trimester of pregnancy.

But it also comes as deeply Catholic Latin America has increasingly embraced gay rights, once taboo. Buenos Aires became the first city in the region to legalize civil unions when it did so in 2002. Other cities in Mexico and Brazil have followed. Uruguay has done so nationwide. But no place in Latin America currently allows

gay marriage.

Marriage between gays has been legalized in a handful of countries, including Canada and Spain. Some US states permit gay marriage, though the right has been fought and rebanned in other states...

The Mexico City bill would change the definition of marriage in the city civic code from that of a union between a man and woman to "the free uniting of two people." It would also allow gay couples to adopt and be included on one another's insurance.

While gay activists and many politicians praised the move, others condemned it.

"They have given Mexicans the most bitter Christmas," Armando Martinez, the president of the College of Catholic Attorneys, was quoted as saying in the Associated Press. "They are permitting adoption [by gay couples] and in one stroke of the pen have erased the term 'mother' and 'father.'"

That sentiment is echoed on the streets of Mexico City.

"These things, like gay marriage, are not familiar to us here like they are in Europe," says city resident Roberto Nava, explaining that he is troubled by bill because he sees it as a political tool to capture votes instead of a reflection of a changing society. "What is hardest for me to accept is the adoption of children by two men." †

Mind the gap: Teaching doesn't meet gay Catholics in the pews

By Bryan Cones
U.S. Catholic
December 15, 2009

Which path do we choose when the twain of experience and church teaching don't meet?

Over three decades of Mass-going, I've explored pretty much every avenue of distraction to make the time pass: pester-



ing my brothers, making faces at buddies who were serving, and, in my adult years, reading the bulletin. I've found all but the last to earn me trouble, but I think I've found a new and completely respectable remedy to my wandering attention: A beautiful brown-eyed girl named Isa.

With no kids of my own, I admit to being an occasional baby-thief—did I mention Isa is 11 months old?—and Isa's parents are happy to let me have her for as long as I can handle her. There's only one sticking point: To borrow the title of a controversial children's book, Isa has two mommies.

I realize some might be surprised to hear of a family like Isa's at a Catholic church, or even troubled by their presence. After all, both the Vatican and the U.S. bishops have been unequivocal in their rejection of same-sex relationships and parenting. The U.S. bishops put it plainly in their November 2009 pastoral

letter on marriage: "The legal recognition of same-sex unions poses a multifaceted threat to the very fabric of society." Vatican documents have argued that placing children for adoption with same-sex couples is to commit a kind of violence against those children.

Such language is, I'm sure, hard on Isa's Catholic parents, trying as they are to raise a child as a committed couple. I

know it is hard on the parents of gay and lesbian Catholics: I'll never forget the father who, at a conference on the church and homosexuality, expressed to the two retired bishops in attendance both grief and outrage that his partnered lesbian daughter was not welcome in the church he had faithfully raised her in.

On the one hand, there is the Catholic Church's clear and consistent teaching that a homosexual orientation is an "objective disorder" and that sex between people of the same gender is "intrinsically evil," that is, can never be morally justified. That stance logically progresses to opposition to gay marriage and parenting, which is no doubt shared by many Catholics who are alarmed at attempts to change the legal definition of marriage.

On the other hand, others, myself included, hear a different story from gay and lesbian Catholics, especially when

they speak of their aspirations to commitment and family life. To think of Isa's family as "a multifaceted threat" is profoundly jarring to say the least. I'm sure I'm not the only Catholic who feels stuck between the teaching of the church and my own experience, though Catholics are certainly not free to dismiss the former just because it contradicts the latter.

At the same time the profound disconnect between the experience of conscientious baptized people and church teaching should concern all of us. The wider the chasm, the greater the danger that people will simply reject church teaching as out of touch, not only undermining its authority on matters of sexuality but also on other pressing moral issues. One need only consider the nearly complete divergence between the church's teaching on birth control and the decisions of Catholic married couples to find a case in point.

In its Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, the Second Vatican Council proclaimed that "the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age...are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ." That aspiration must extend to the gay and lesbian members of Christ's body, even and perhaps especially when the distance between church teaching and their lives is great.

How we share

those joys and hopes, griefs and anxieties, is an open question, but I see no danger in bishops sitting down with gay and lesbian Catholics to speak about these issues. A meeting of the minds may be unlikely, but a meeting of hearts isn't out of the question. The first law of the gospel, after all, is charity, and it is charity that has often been a casualty in the church's debate about homosexuality.

As for me, I can only say that my experience of the "catholic," or universal, dimension of the church would be profoundly diminished if Isa's family wasn't a part of my Sunday assembly. Though life in Christ's body is not always neat or easy, sticking together makes us, or so I hope, a fuller sign to the world of the love God extends to all people. ✦

Financial Report New Ways Ministry July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009

Revenues		%/Total
Contributions	\$ 67,220.32	36.8
Grants	\$ 42,770.00	23.4
Investments	\$ 3,830.78	2.1
Programs	\$ 53,596.66	29.4
Publications	\$ 764.22	.4
Other	\$ 14,462.54	7.9
Total Revenue	\$182,644.52	100.0
Expenses		
<u>Programs</u>		
Training Weekends	\$ 27,997.32	15.8
Dialogue Sessions	\$ 10,969.02	6.2
Networking Project	\$ 17,616.63	10.0
Retreats	\$ 22,756.57	12.9
Womanjourney Weavings	\$ 16,894.09	9.5
Publications	\$ 4,283.62	2.4
Bondings	\$ 21,383.61	12.1
Pilgrimage	\$ 28,672.28	16.2
<u>Management</u>	\$ 23,672.16	13.4
<u>Fundraising</u>	\$ 2,712.64	1.5
Total Expenses	\$176,957.94	100.0
Fund balance, beginning of year	\$436,277.64	
Excess for year	\$ 5,686.58	
Other changes in net assets	\$ -73,054.33	
Fund balance, end of year*	\$368,909.89	

* Approximately \$260,000 of the current fund balance represents a reserve for twelve months operational expenses. The fund balance also includes land, building, and equipment assets of approximately \$90,000.

New Ways Ministry is grateful to the following donors:

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'In Good Conscience' Screening



The documentary, "In Good Conscience: Sister Jeannine Gramick's Journey of Faith," was screened on March 6, 2010 by PFLAG Baltimore County. **Front row, left to right:** Aliza Stewart, Sue Hillis, Sr. Jeannine, Erma Durkin. **Back row:** Mark Patro, President of PFLAG Baltimore County Chapter.



Gay-friendly Catholic Parishes

Below is a partial list of known "gay-friendly" Catholic parishes. Thank you for helping us add to this growing list! If you are aware of such a parish that is known as welcoming to lesbian/gay Catholics as members and active parishioners, please let us know. Tell us if this welcome is because of a support program, spirituality group, mission statement, participation in gay community events, or involvement with parents.

Alabama

Montgomery: St. Bede

Arizona

Mesa: Christ the King
Scottsdale: Franciscan Renewal Center
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
Carlesbad: St. Patrick
Claremont: Our Lady of the 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. Paul the Apostle
North Hollywood: Blessed Sacrament, St. Jane Frances de Chantal, St. Patrick
Oakland: Our Lady of Lourdes
Oceanside: St. Thomas More
Orange: Holy Family Cathedral, Koinoia
Pleasanton: Catholic Community of Pleasanton
Sacramento: St. Francis of Assisi
San Carlos: St. Charles
San Diego: Ascension, San Rafael, St. Jude Shrine
San Francisco: Most Holy Redeemer, Old St. Mary Cathedral, St. Agnes, St. Dominic
San Jose: St. Julie Billiard, St. Martin of Tours (Emmaus Community)
San Luis Obispo: Old Mission of San Luis Obispo
San Rafael: Church of San Rafael & Mission San Rafael Archangel
Santa Barbara: OL of Guadalupe
Santa Clara: GALA
Santa Cruz: Holy Cross
Santa Monica: St. Monica
Simi Valley: St. Rose of Lima
Spring Valley: Santa Sophia
Valinda: St. Martha
Vernon: Holy Angels 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: Our Lady of Guadalupe, Sacred Heart
Denver: St. Dominic, Christ the King, Mount Carmel

Fort Collins: Blessed John XXIII
Genessee: St. Frances Cabrini Shrine
Highlands Ranch: Pax Christi
Littleton: Light of the World

Connecticut

Hartford: St. Patrick-St. Anthony

District of Columbia

Holy Trinity, St. Aloysius, St. Matthew Cathedral

Florida

Cocoa Beach: Our Savior
Ft. Lauderdale: St. Anthony, St. Maurice
Naples: St. John the Evangelist
St. Petersburg: Holy Cross
Tampa: Franciscan Center, Sacred Heart, Christ the King

Georgia

Atlanta: Shrine of the Immaculate Conception

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 Mt. Carmel, Old St. Patrick
Clarendon Hills: Notre Dame
Country Club Hills: St. Emeric
Evanston: St. Nicholas
Morton Grove: St. Martha
Oak Park: Ascension, St. Catherine of Sienna-St. Lucy
Schaumburg: St. Marcelline

Indiana

Evansville: St. Mary
Indianapolis: St. Thomas Aquinas

Iowa

Iowa City: 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. Matthew, St. Philip and James, 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
Sharon: Our Lady of Sorrows
Springfield: Sacred Heart
Worcester: Holy Cross College

Michigan

Ann Arbor: St. Mary Student Parish
Detroit: St. Leo, Christ the King
Kalamazoo: Lambda Catholics
St. Ignace: St. Ignatius Loyola

Minnesota

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

Missouri

Kansas City: Guardian Angels, St. Francis Xavier, St. James
St. Joseph: St. Francis Xavier
St. Louis: St. Cronan, St. Margaret of Scotland, St. Pius V

Montana

Billings: Holy Rosary

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

Clifton: St. Brendan
Lawrenceville: St. Ann
Long Beach Island: St. Francis of Assisi
Trenton Falls: St. Anselm

New Mexico

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

New York

Baldwinsville: St. Augustine
Bellmore: St. Barnabas the Apostle
Bellport: Mary Immaculate
Brooklyn: St. Andrew the Apostle, St. Boniface, St. Athanasius, St. Augustine
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
Melville: St. Elizabeth
Pittsford: Church of the Transfiguration
Rochester: Blessed Sacrament, St. Mary (Downtown), St. Monica
Syracuse: St. Lucy, All Saints
Utica: St. Francis DeSales
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: Ascension of Our Lord, St. Malachi, St. Martha
Columbus: St. Thomas More Newman Center
Mentor: St. John Vianney
University Heights: Church of the Gesu
Westlake: St. Ladislav
Wooster: St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception

Oregon

Beaverton: Mission of the Atonement
Portland: Journey and Koinonia Catholic Community, St. Andrew, St. Phillip Neri, Downtown Chapel (St. Vincent de Paul)

Pennsylvania

Huntingdon: Most Holy Trinity
Philadelphia: Old St. Joseph, Old St. Mary, St. John the Evangelist, St. Vincent DePaul
York: St. Joseph

Rhode Island

Providence: St. Francis Chapel
Wickford: St. Bernard

Tennessee

Memphis: Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception

Texas

Colleyville: Good Shepherd
Dallas: Holy Trinity
Houston: St. Anne
Plano: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

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

Pullman: Sacred Heart
Seattle: St. Benedict, Prince of Peace Newman Center
Tacoma: St. Leo

Wisconsin

Madison: Our Lady Queen of Peace, St. Benedict Center Sunday Assembly
Menomonee Falls: Good Shepherd
Milwaukee: Good Shepherd, Prince of Peace, Trinity-Guadalupe

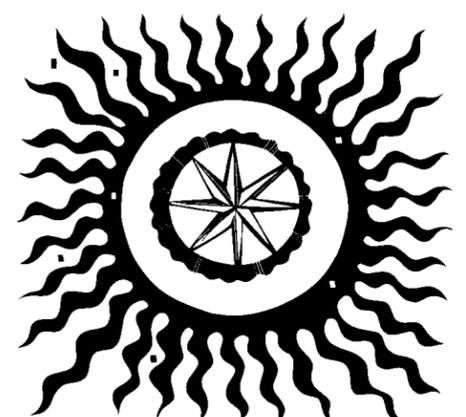
Canada

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

England

London: Our Lady of the Assumption & St. Gregory

To add your faith community to our list, please contact New Ways Ministry at info@newwaysministry.org or call 301-277-5674.



Why this gay man takes heart from the feast of the Holy Family

By Michael Bayly
Thewildreed.blogspot.com
December 28, 2009

Yesterday, Mum and I attended Mass at St. Agnes Roman Catholic Church in Port Macquarie. It was the Feast of the Holy Family, and as I sat waiting for the homily to begin I braced myself for a diatribe against perceived threats to the family – such as gay marriage. But I need not have worried.

Don't get me wrong, I'm sure there are some members of the clerical leadership in the Australian church who would choose to use such a feast day to malign the lives and relationships of gay people. But, by-and-large, I've discovered, the Australian Catholic Church reflects the wider "live and let live" ethos of Australian society. That, of course, is a far cry from the current case in the United States.

What the priest at yesterday's Mass *did* talk about actually resonated with me as a gay Catholic man. He noted that, contrary to the rosy, holy card images we're so often presented with, the reality is that Jesus' family knew conflict and misunderstanding – just like any other family. Of course, nowhere is this more evident than in the story of the finding of the boy Jesus in the Temple.



This story served as yesterday's Gospel reading, and in it we are presented with a young Jesus disobeying his parents; confusing, perhaps even disappointing them – all so that he can be true to the person he knew God had called him to be. As I listened to the priest describe this popular story of the Holy Family in this way, I realized that it is something to which many gay people can relate. Accordingly, it's something to which many *families* can relate.

Like Jesus, young people coming into awareness of who they are sexually often have to retreat from their families so as to attune themselves to and embrace what's awakening within them. For many gay people, answers and support are initially found outside the family. Parents are seldom the first to know that their child is gay.

These were my thoughts as I reflected upon yesterday the young Jesus leaving his family and the caravan bound for Nazareth so as to seek out the wisdom and insights of those in the Temple. I'm sure that as they busily prepared to leave Jerusalem, Mary and Joseph had instructed Jesus "not to wander off." And yet that's exactly what he did. He required answers and experiences beyond those which his family could provide, and so he went in search of them. This to me seems a healthy thing; a sacred journey or quest, if you like.

Once found by his parents, Jesus, in a way, "comes out" to them. He's not the boy they thought he was. There's definitely something *different* about him. He challenges them, confuses them, and, no doubt, disappoints them. Yet despite all of this they accept him as he is and, as a family, they resume their journey home together.

Sound familiar? I hope it resonates with you – especially if you're gay, because here's the bottom line: God calls gay people to something very special; something very *sacred*. God calls us to journeys of faith and consciousness that often compel us to "wander off" and seek answers elsewhere, despite the disapproval of others – even our parents, even "Mother Church." And, no, this "something" is not a life of sexual abstinence – as the clerical leadership of the Roman expression of Catholicism would have us believe. Rather it's a life of *abundance* as the *relational* beings that God created us to be. And, yes, God created some of us with relational capacities that are gay in orientation. Accordingly, for most gay people, a life of abundance means seeking, building, and maintaining a loving relationship with another of the same gender – a relationship that is experienced and expressed as something that is both sacred and sexual. I've come to believe that the seeking, building, and maintaining of such a relationship is *always* about "doing God's work."

I take to heart and am nourished and encouraged by the journeys in consciousness and compassion conveyed in the trusting, loving and accepting relational dynamics of Jesus and his family. They are journeys in and of faith. And, for me, they are what make this family – and so many others – *holy*. †

Discussions continue about nondiscrimination policy at John Carroll following protest

By Ed Wittenberg
Sun News—Cleveland
February 13, 2010

John Carroll University students and faculty may be making some headway in trying to persuade JCU's administration to include sexual orientation in the university's nondiscrimination policy, according to a JCU professor.

Paul Shick, professor of math and science and chairman of the JCU faculty council, said a meeting Sunday with the Rev. Robert L. Niehoff, university president, to discuss the matter was "very positive and productive."

Shick said about 200 people attended the meeting, including about 150 students and 30-40 faculty members.

"(Niehoff) seemed very enthusiastic about the prospect of change," Shick said. "He said he would make more of an effort to reach out to the student community."

Niehoff had agreed to the meeting after about 15 JCU students — showing support for the university's gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community — walked onto the basketball court during halftime of JCU's home game Feb. 3 against Mount Union College.

The students staged a peaceful protest, as they sat down at midcourt, waving rainbow flags and holding signs asking for tolerance...

No students were arrested, Deputy Police Chief James Rohal said.

"It was an orderly protest," Rohal said. "All the students were respectful and cooperative when police escorted them off. We didn't have any problems with them."

The student protesters were reacting to a draft community standards statement issued by Niehoff last week.

In the statement, Niehoff said the university adheres to "traditional Catholic moral teaching that properly locates sexual activity within the relationship of a man and a woman united for life through marriage as husband and wife."

The statement was issued as a supplement to the nondiscrimination policy, rather than changing it.

Jonathan Smith, vice president and executive assistant to the president at JCU, described Sunday's meeting as "a respectful conversation" with no protests. He said about 100 students, faculty and staff attended.

"Father Niehoff provided insight on how the university arrived at a draft community standards statement," Smith said.

"He also discussed the education process needed on our campus regarding this issue, explaining that we have work to do before we could change the nondiscrimination policy while we maintain our Catholic character."

Smith said the meeting "ended on a good note, with the students having a clearer understanding of Father Niehoff's message."

Shick said the students are "very committed to this cause."

"They made their points clearly and forcefully (at Sunday's meeting)," he said. "It was an occasion for the faculty to be proud of the students."

"This community statement is a draft statement," Shick said. "The faculty views it as a starting point for dialogue on community standards."

"We still feel strongly that in addition to that statement, the university should change the legal nondiscrimination policy." †

Pope speaks on creation

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Pope Benedict linked the Catholic Church's opposition to gay marriage to concern about the environment, suggesting that laws undermining "the differences between the sexes" were threats to creation.

He issued the admonition in a speech to ambassadors accredited to the Vatican, an annual appointment during which the pontiff reflects on issues the Vatican wants to highlight to the diplomatic corps. The main theme of the address was the environment and the protection of creation.

"Creatures differ from one another and can be protected, or endangered in different ways, as we know from daily experience. One such attack comes from laws or proposals, which, in the name of fighting discrimination, strike at the biological basis of the difference between the sexes," he said. "I am thinking, for example, of certain countries in Europe or North and South America."

This was a clear reference to legislation either enacted or proposed in several parts of the world. Last month, Mexico City became the first capital in Catholic Latin America to allow same-sex marriage.

In California, the U.S. state's ban on gay marriage went to trial on Monday in a federal case that plaintiffs hope to take all the way to the Supreme Court and overturn bans throughout the nation.

Gay marriage is legal in several U.S. states and in some European countries.

In his speech to diplomats from more than 170 countries, the pontiff criticized the "economic and political resistance" to fighting environmental degradation that was exemplified in the negotiations to draft a new climate treaty at last month's summit in Copenhagen.

Officials from 193 countries met at the summit, which ended Dec. 19 having failed to produce a successor treaty to the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. It produced instead a nonbinding accord that included few concrete steps to combat global warming.

Pope Benedict didn't name countries responsible for bogging down negotiations, but he listed as the victims island nations at risk of rising seas, and Africa, where the battle for natural resources and overexploitation of land has resulted in wars.

"To cultivate peace, one must protect creation," the pope told the ambassadors. The pontiff said the same "self-centered and materialistic" way of thinking that sparked the world-wide financial meltdown also was endangering creation. To combat it will require a new way of thinking and a new lifestyle -- and an acknowledgment that the question is a moral one, he said.

"The protection of creation is not principally a response to an aesthetic need, but much more to a moral need, inasmuch as nature expresses a plan of love and truth, which is prior to us and which comes from God," he said. †