

# BONDINGS

Vol. 30, No. 4

A Publication of New Ways Ministry

Winter 2010-11

## What is a Catholic response to gay suicide?

By James Martin, S.J.

[www.americamagazine.org/blog](http://www.americamagazine.org/blog)  
October 4, 2010

It's impossible not to be moved by the terrible stories of the five youths who recently took their own lives because they were being harassed as gays and lesbians. In New York the story of Tyler Clementi, the Rutgers freshman who was filmed having a romantic encounter with another man, which was then live-streamed by his "friends," seemed particularly harrowing. A despairing Clementi, age 18, ended his life by jumping off of the George Washington Bridge. Any suicide is an unspeakable tragedy, just as any murder of any kind is a tragedy, but there is something especially sad about a young person believing that their life will never be, or can never be, better. The Christian heart is, as Jesus's heart was, "moved with pity."

This rash of deaths has prompted a response, especially on college campuses, and the "It Gets Better" project, which has adult gays and lesbians reminding youth that as one matures "it gets better." Essentially, it is an argument against despair and suicide. Sadly, many of the people interviewed speak of overcoming the hatred that they felt in Christian churches, schools and other organizations

We Catholics, at least as I see it, can do a better job in reaching out to young gays and lesbians. On the positive side, the USCCB's document "Always Our Children" is a fine start, especially for parents who have homosexual children. And many large dioceses and archdioceses, like the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, have excellent outreach programs for gay and lesbian Catholics. And of course on the local level many gays and lesbians feel not only welcomed by their pastors and pastoral staffs, but have become key members of their parishes communities, serving in a variety of roles. Without them our church would be immeasurably poorer.

But often the Catholic message to gay and lesbian Catholics starts off with the "Thou shall nots" instead of the "Thou Shalls." We invariably start off with "Thou Shall Not Have Sex" instead of "Thou

Are a Beloved Creation of God," or "Thou Art a Full Member of the Community," or "Thou Have Much to Bring to the Church." To what other group is the "Thou Shall Not" our opening line? For example, have you ever been to a gathering of Catholic married couples where the opening line was "Thou Shall Not Commit Adultery"? Or a gathering of Catholic business leaders where the opening line was, "Thou Shall Not Steal"? We are all "loved sinners," as Jesuits like to say, but people--especially young people, especially people on the margins, and especially young people on the margins--should be reminded of the "loved" part before the "sinner" part.

Simply speaking about outreach to gays and lesbians brings forth such swift and terrible condemnations in some Catholic circles these days that it surely must make the gay Catholic want to say to his or her church, as Jesus said to St. Peter, "Do you love me?"

It's a sad irony, because there is one life-changing resource in the Christian tradition that can transform those who feel unloved--that is, Jesus. The Son of God reached out specifically to those on the margins, specifically to those who felt rejected, specifically to those who felt excluded from the community. For Jesus, as the theologian James Alison has written, there was no "other." And there is much in the Catholic tradition in particular that can help gays and lesbians as well. To begin with, the lives of the saints, which show us



Tyler Clementi

how God builds on the individuality of each person to create something wonderful and holy, are powerful messages to all who feel too "different" to be part of the Body of Christ. (Even specific episodes from the lives of

the saints--like the story of St. Francis of Assisi leaping off his horse to tend to the leper, the outcast, and being rewarded with a mystical vision--speak of the Christian call to reach out precisely to those who feel most marginalized.) The voluminous writings of popes and theologians on human dig-

nity all speak to the great gift that every person's life represents. Or the *Catechism*, which states (in a line often ignored) that gays and lesbians must be welcomed with "respect, sensitivity and compassion." They can also reach "Christian perfection," that is, holiness, says the *Catechism*.

Those places in our tradition might all be good places to start when it comes to outreach, especially with youth (and not just with gay and lesbian youth, but with all who feel excluded). And if pro-life means trying to avoid anything that will threaten any life, from natural conception to natural death, then we should be finding ways to protect all life, which also means preventing suicides, and preventing gay suicides. In any event, there is much for us, the church, still to do. †

### *A Prayer When I Feel Hated*

Loving God, you made me who I am.  
I praise you and I love you, for I am wonderfully made,  
in your own image.

But when people make fun of me,  
I feel hurt and embarrassed and even ashamed.  
So please God, help me remember my own goodness,  
which lies in you.  
Help me remember my dignity, which you gave me  
when I was conceived.  
Help me remember that I can live a life of love,  
because you created my heart.

Be with me, loving God, when people hate me,  
and help me to respond how you would want me to:  
with a love that respects others, but also respects me.  
Help me find friends who love me for who I am.  
Help me, most of all, to be a loving person.

And God, help me remember that Jesus loves me.  
For he was seen as an outcast, too.  
He was misunderstood, too.  
He was beaten and spat upon.  
Jesus understands me, and loves me with a special  
love,  
because of the way you made me.  
And when I am feeling lonely,  
help me to remember  
that Jesus welcomed everyone as a friend.  
Jesus reminded everyone that God loved them.  
Jesus encouraged everyone to embrace their dignity,  
even when others were blind to seeing that dignity.  
Jesus loved everyone with the boundless love that you  
gave him.  
And he loves me, too.

One more thing, God:  
Help me remember that nothing is impossible with you,  
that you have a way of making things better,  
and that you can find a way of love for me, even if I  
can't see it right now.  
Help me remember all these things in the heart you cre-  
ated, loving God.

Amen.

—James Martin, SJ

## Minnesota pastor challenges Nienstedt's DVD campaign

By Tom Roberts

[Ncronline.org](http://Ncronline.org)  
October 5, 2010

A Minnesota pastor, in a letter to the editor of a major newspaper, has sharply criticized the campaign against same-sex marriage spearheaded by his archbishop, John C. Nienstedt, of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

Fr. Michael Tegeder, 62, pastor of St. Edward Parish, Bloomington, took issue with the content of a 18-minute DVD sent by Minnesota bishops to more than 400,000 Catholics throughout the state. "The premise of the DVD," wrote Tegeder, in a letter published Oct. 2 by the *Star-Tribune*, "is that same-sex couples and their committed relationships are a grave threat to marriage."

The real threat to marriage, the pastor argued, is poverty, citing an earlier report on the effects of the economic downturn on marriage.

"In every serious study, poverty is the top reason for marital breakdowns,"

wrote Tegeder. "It is very hard to make the case that a small percentage of the population who bond with members of their own sex and seek to live in a committed relationship with members of their own sex could have anything but a positive effect on the general population's appreciation of stable, faithful, life-giving unions."

The DVD promotes a state constitutional amendment that would limit marriage to one man and one woman. Tegeder said the amendment "does not allow even for civil unions, and it would limit current rights for gay and lesbian citizens. We as Catholics can have our own beliefs about marriage. But we must recognize that people of other faiths and of no faith have conscientious beliefs as well."

The DVDs were mailed out in late September and contain a six minute address by Nienstedt and a 12-minute presentation produced by the Knights of Columbus. According to a report in the

(Continued on page 3)

# BONDINGS

Winter 2010-11

Vol. 30, No. 4

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

Mary Byers  
Frank O'Donnell, SM  
Rev. Paul Thomas

**Board of Advisors**

Cornelius Hubbuch, CFX  
Anna Koop, SL  
Elizabeth Linehan, RSM  
Patricia McDermott, RSM  
Rev. Joe Muth  
Matthew Myers

**Staff**

Francis DeBernardo, Executive Director  
Kelly Stewart, Staff Associate

**Co-Founders**

Sr. Jeannine Gramick  
Rev. Robert Nugent

*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.

**New Ways Ministry**

4012 29th Street  
Mount Rainier, Maryland 20712  
(301) 277-5674  
Info@NewWaysMinistry.org

## Canadian bishop condemns alleged hate crime

*Cbc.ca*  
November 4, 2010

The leader of the Catholic church on Prince Edward Island is denouncing an alleged hate crime that took place last month.

In October, a gay couple's home in Little Pond was burned down. The couple, who escaped uninjured, believe the fire was started because of their sexual orientation.

One of the men told a reporter that shortly after they moved into the community, they received a church card in their mailbox condemning gay sexuality as sinful.

Bishop Richard Grecco said the news is very upsetting.



Bishop Richard Grecco

"Hatred is a sin and any action that comes out of hatred is not only a sin, but in this case a crime and it must be denounced by all churches," he said.

"Anybody that claims to perpetrate these kinds of hate crimes in the name of religion — what they're doing is abusing and misusing religion and doing it harm."

Grecco said the church rejects violence and hatred.

He said church followers should love all people, even those who may live a lifestyle the church disagrees with.

Although Grecco has not formally asked his priests to talk about the issue on Sunday, he hopes they will.

The fire is the subject of a criminal investigation, but police say they don't have enough evidence to suggest it was motivated by homophobia. †

## San Antonio Archdiocese Says No More Dignity Mass at Catholic parish

By Michael Jones  
*Gayrights.change.org*  
October 23, 2010

For 15 years, LGBT Catholics and allies were able to worship at St. Ann Catholic Church in San Antonio. On a weekly basis these folks would filter into the pews, and honor that age-old commandment to keep holy the Sabbath. Priests and other Catholics interested in building a better relationship between the Church and the LGBT community would attend, setting aside whatever divisions might exist the other six days of the week, and focus on reconciliation, forgiveness, and a little love between neighbors.

But in a memo released by their acting head bishop, the Archdiocese of San Antonio has said goodbye to reconciliation, forgiveness, and the whole 'love thy neighbor' mission, and instead are telling LGBT people in San Antonio that they're no longer welcome in Church. Well, that is, unless they want to change their sexual orientation.

Auxiliary Bishop Oscar Cantú, the interim head of the San Antonio archdiocese, said that creating a safe space for LGBT Catholics (and their friends and families) to worship was contradictory to the tenets of Catholicism, and that simply allowing LGBT Catholics to worship as a group made Jesus weep, and could simply not be tolerated. His suggestion? That LGBT Catholics pledge celibacy if they really want to worship.

The sad part is that for 15 years this has been a non-issue, as leaders within the Archdiocese felt it more important to welcome all folks to the table, rather than exclude a heaping portion of the population. But as with many Catholic dioceses around the country, the politicization of the issue of homosexuality has taken center stage. Gone are the days where many churches can be counted on to focus on poverty, homelessness, hunger, education, and health care

as their top social priorities. In are the days where church leaders want to denounce gay people, even if most folks in the pews have friends and family who identify as LGBT.

The actions of the Archdiocese, however, aren't going to keep LGBT Catholics from speaking out. Fred Anthony Garza, the President of a local chapter of Dignity, said that the definition of Church isn't a building, but rather a community of people. If the San Antonio Archdiocese won't let the LGBT community inside its doors without pre-conditions, then LGBT Catholics will just find another place to meet.

"We will continue to meet in a more welcoming environment. There are many people who believe that the Catholic Church needs to do a better job of providing care for lesbian and gay people and our families," Garza said, according to mySanAntonio.com.

His comments were echoed by local priests who interacted with LGBT Catholics, and said that the Archdiocese is missing a grand opportunity to put politics aside, and focus on community.

"We need to provide good preaching and good teaching to this community," said Father Eddie Bernal. "I have met some of the most wonderful people in my life in Dignity. They've changed my life for the better. And I've learned so much."

If only there were more Fr. Bernals in the Archdiocese, instead of Bishop Cantú. Send the Archdiocese of San Antonio a message that you disagree with their decision to squash a 15-year service that has had a positive impact on both straight and LGBT Catholics alike. There are so many more important issues facing our communities and our globe. Does the subject of homosexuality, and the decision by church leaders to focus on treating LGBT people like outcasts, really have to own so much space within today's Catholic Church?

It is definitely time to speak up. †

### TO SUBSCRIBE COMPLETE AND RETURN THE FORM

Enclosed is:

\_\_\_\_\_ \$25.00 in the US or Canada

\_\_\_\_\_ \$35.00 outside US or Canada

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

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

Mail to:

**New Ways Ministry**  
4012 29th Street  
Mount Rainier, MD 20712



## Fortunate Families' First Conference Held

Fortunate Families, a national organization for Catholic parents of LGBT people, held its first conference, entitled "Joining Hands, Reaching Out," on October 22-24, 2010, in Techny, Illinois. Over 50 parents from across the nation attended the meeting. Pictured above is a panel session, featuring leaders of several Catholic pro-LGBT groups. At the podium, introducing the panelists is Deb Word, a Fortunate Families board member. At the table, from left to right are Mary Ellen Lopata, co-founder of Fortunate Families, Marianne Duddy-Burke, executive director of DignityUSA, Francis DeBernardo, executive director of New Ways Ministry, and Sheila Nelson, board president of the Catholic Association of Lesbian/Gay Ministries. (Tom Nelson Photograph)

# Catholic students denied communion at St. John's Abbey, Minn.

*During Mass, students and others wearing protest buttons and sashes received Archbishop John Nienstedt's hand of blessing rather than the Eucharist.*

By Paul Walsh  
and Maria Elena Baca  
Startribune.com  
October 6, 2010

About 25 college students and community members at St. John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minn., were denied communion by Twin Cities Roman Catholic Archbishop John C. Nienstedt because they were displaying rainbow buttons and sashes in protest of the church's stand on gay relationships.

The conflict between the archbishop and the group, mostly students from the Catholic St. John's University and the College of St. Benedict, occurred during evening mass Sept. 26.

It came amid news that the state's bishops were mailing 400,000 DVDs to Minnesota Catholics, spelling out church teachings on gay marriage.

The St. John's action was coordinated by students, including members of People Representing the Sexual Minority (PRiSM), which represents gay and lesbian students and their friends and allies. That Sunday, according to those at the mass, about two dozen worshipers positioned themselves to receive communion from Nienstedt, who was saying his first student mass at the abbey. Some reached for the communion wafer but were denied it. Rather, the archbishop raised his hand in blessing.

The archdiocese long has denied communion to members of the Rainbow Sash Movement, who wear the colors to mass in protest of the church's stance in opposition to homosexual relationships. Its leader, Brian McNeil, said the action at St. John's was not connected to his group.

Archdiocese spokesman Dennis McGrath said the church has told McNeil's group "for years you cannot receive communion if you wear the rainbow sash, because it's a political statement, a sign of protest. Going to the communion rail is the most sacred part of our faith, the eucharist. We don't allow any-

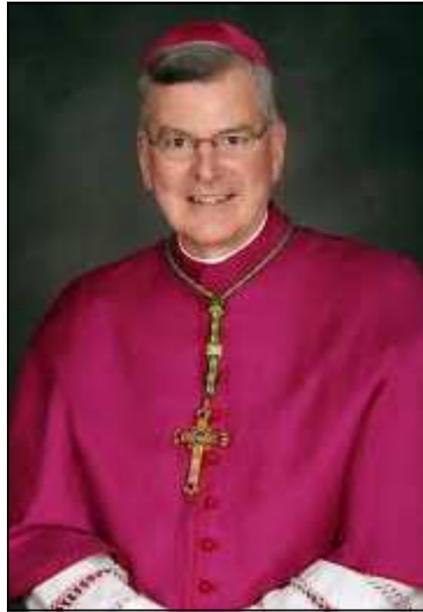
body to make political statements or any kind of protest."

St. Benedict theology junior Elizabeth Gleich, PRiSM vice president, said, "We were making a statement during the eucharist, and many have disagreed with that. But when we have no other way of dialoguing with our church, no other way of telling him how we feel, how else to do it than in liturgy?"

She said their complaint is with church hierarchy, not with the colleges.

Another student, senior Andrew Grausam, said he sat behind the group. "It was sad to see the mass politicized like that," Grausam said. "And even though I wholeheartedly disagree with the archbishop on this issue, I was hurt to see my worship become a place of demonstration."

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC), which describes itself as the nation's largest civil rights organization on behalf of gays, lesbians, bisexual and



Archbishop John Nienstedt

transgender people, expressed outrage at Nienstedt's actions.

"Jesus didn't play politics with communion," Harry Knox, the HRC's religion and faith program director, said Tuesday in a statement. "He offered his body and blood for everyone."

In the Twin Cities area, at least two efforts have gathered hundreds of DVDs from Catholics opposed to its message. Minneapolis artist Lucinda Naylor estimated Tuesday that she'd gathered about 600. A group called Return the DVD has received about 1,000 in its Burnsville post office box, and also has garnered about \$5,000 in donations to help the poor, said organizer Bob Radecki.

The archdiocese has received about 100 DVDs back by mail, McGrath said. The campaign was made possible by anonymous donors and not by church funds, he said.

The U.S. Postal Service will not return bulk-mailed items. Spokesman Pete Nowacki said there's no way of knowing how many have been received and discarded. †

## Equally Blessed Protests Denial of Communion in Minnesota

Equally Blessed stands with Minnesota Catholics who are taking their support for equality into Mass by wearing a rainbow ribbon or pin. About two dozen people who wore these symbols to a Mass recently celebrated by Archbishop John C. Nienstedt were denied Communion by the Archbishop.

"These Catholics took a courageous step to demonstrate their support for gay and lesbian people in their state, who are feeling disheartened by the recent actions of the bishops," said Marianne Duddy-Burke, a spokesperson for Equally Blessed, a coalition of Catholics working for justice and full inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Catho-

lics in the church and society. "The rainbows they wore speak of God's covenant with all people, and sent a message of hope to gay Catholics and family members at that Mass. The Archbishop refused them Communion based on his own interpretation of Church teaching. He acted in a way that is totally opposed to Jesus' message of welcome to all."

The bishops of Minnesota recently mailed 400,000 DVDs about the Church's teaching on marriage to Catholics across the state. The message in the DVDs urges recipients to vote for candidates articulating views opposed to marriage equality.

"Catholics in the pews are increasingly becoming more vocal in their

support of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender people and issues," said Francis DeBernardo, another spokesperson for Equally Blessed. "Instead of imposing punitive measures, bishops should be responding by listening to the lived faith of the people in their flocks."

*Equally Blessed is a coalition of faithful Catholics who support full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people both in the church and in civil society. Equally Blessed includes four organizations that have spent a combined 112 years working on behalf of LGBT people and their families: Call to Action, DignityUSA, Fortunate Families, and New Ways Ministry †*

## Minnesota pastor challenges Archbishop Nienstedt's DVD campaign

(Continued from page 1)

Start Tribune, Dennis McGrath, spokesman for the archdiocese, said the bishops "felt the situation had gotten to the point that they had to do something. They couldn't stand by and let this thing go any further. The same-sex marriage train was chugging along." McGrath also said the mailing was paid for with a private donation. Nienstedt has described the DVD as a "teaching tool" for voters in advance of the November gubernatorial election. Two candidates running support same-sex marriage and one doesn't.

Tegeger's letter is the latest example of push back against the DVD effort by Catholics. Lucinda Naylor, artist in residence at the Basilica of St. Mary for the past 15 years, was recently suspended from that position when she went public with her opposition to the church campaign. She has asked other Catholics opposed to the effort to send the DVDs to her for an art project. She told the Minnesota Independent that she was thinking of doing something related to water or flames, "since both are important Catholic symbols of the Holy Spirit."

She'll receive help from another group, ReturnTheDVD.org, formed recently by a group of Catholics opposed to the initiative.

In his letter, Tegeger said it was "most scandalous" that Nienstedt

"comprised his office with the use of anonymous money." He said the campaign leaves the impression "that political funding is at work here."

He also cited comments last spring, reported in the German press and in the British Catholic publication *The Tablet*, by Austrian Cardinal Christoph Schönborn of Vienna, who told an interviewer that the church "should give more consideration to the quality of homosexual relationships. A stable relationship is certainly better than if someone chooses to be promiscuous." *The Tablet* also reported that the cardinal said lasting gay relationships deserve respect.

Schönborn, as Tegeger noted, is a close friend of Pope Benedict XVI and a principal author of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

In an interview Oct. 4 with *NCR*, Tegeger said he had received overwhelmingly positive response to his letter, but had not yet received any reaction from Nienstedt.

Asked if he feared reprisal, he recalled that he'd already been threatened by the archbishop "with excommunication and interdict" for installing a cremation garden at the church. When he was called on the carpet, he said, he was able to produce documentation that showed his parish had complied with all of the diocesan and state regulations. He said he's heard nothing further. "You have to

know how to defend yourself," he said, "because a lot of what we're being told we have to follow just isn't true."

He also referred to Paul's instruction to Timothy to be "strong, loving and wise." While being strong "in our convictions, including our conviction about marriage," said Tegeger, "we also have to be wise and loving." It is those last two qualities, he said, that he finds "so missing in this DVD campaign."

He recalled the theme of a recent sermon he'd given on the rich man and Lazarus. The names of the rich and famous are easily known today, he said, "but Jesus turns that around in this story. It's the rich man who doesn't have a name." In the story, Tegeger said, Jesus also wants to expand the idea of brother. What struck him in the DVD campaign, he said, "is that there were no names in it. It's all ideology, all a theoretical viewpoint."

He couldn't help thinking, he said, of the two gay men in a long, committed relationship, who have adopted two boys "out of a hell hole of a Russian orphanage" and recently spent thousands to help one of their sons overcome a learning disability." One's view of the issue, he said, changes profoundly when you get to know people's names and their circumstances.

"In this very difficult world where there are many divisive issues, we've got

to begin getting to know each others' names. We're all up in arms about something that is about love, about people trying to find some happiness in this very difficult world. I've been to the mountain. I laughed when he sent that letter threatening excommunication and interdict," Tegeger said.

"If he throws me out I can walk away from this with my head up ... I love ministry. I wake up at 5 every day and stay busy until midnight. I love it. I'm energized by the opportunities." But some things just need to be said, he remarked.

"This man is leading us in the wrong direction," on this issue, he said of Nienstedt. "We have to call it for what it is - it's bullying behavior. It's not the work of Jesus Christ. It's not the work of Jesus Christ."

On the matter of obedience, he quoted from a book that he's reading by Msgr. Dennis Murphy, *A View from the Trenches: Ups and Downs of Today's Parish Priest*: "One dimension of this obedience that has become clearer in recent years is that there is more to this promise than a pledge or a commitment made only to a bishop. It encompasses obedience commitment to the church, and especially to the church understood as the people of the diocese within which the priest serves." †

"That says it all," said Tegeger.

# Yes to civil unions and yes to my Catholic faith

By Kristen McQueary  
Southtownstar.com  
December 5, 2010

Let's talk about sex, shall we? Because that's really what last week's civil union vote in Springfield was all about.

For years, I've struggled with my own church's recoil toward homosexual behavior. I am Catholic.

My confusion is twofold: If you believe homosexuals are born gay, as I do, then you believe God created them that way. Under no circumstance should they - as made-to-order miracles of God - be expected to refrain from the natural urges that guide their relationships.

Sexuality is inherent. It's chemical. So between consenting, loving adults, sexual activity should be viewed as a natural progression of a relationship, no matter the body parts involved.

I'm also confused about the Catholic church's aggressive lobbying against civil unions and abortion while devoting far fewer resources to a host of issues in Springfield that counter Catholic teaching.

Let me give you a few examples. Then we'll get back to the sex.

During Mass shortly before the November election, my church deacon reminded us to vote for candidates who oppose abortion. That was the singular message during a 15-minute homily.

Voting based on that one issue? Not my cup of tea.

In fact, single-issue voting, in my opinion, is an ignorant way to cast a bal-

lot.

With the state and country in fiscal shambles, with troops in Afghanistan and Iraq, with health care policy facing dramatic change, with an unemployment rate of 10 percent, with Chicago Public School children gunned down by gangsters, with examples of wasteful spending splashed across front pages, with foreclosures dumping families into homeless shelters, with the state \$6 billion behind in money it owes to small businesses - no, I'm not going to vote based solely on a candidate's position on abortion.

In the governor's race, for example, Gov. Pat Quinn faced state Sen. Bill Brady (R-Bloomington). Quinn supports abortion rights. Brady, reflecting Catholic doctrine, believes life starts with conception. Ending that life is murder.

My deacon would have wanted me to vote for Brady, period.

Here is what I wrestled with: Brady also voted against increases in the minimum wage, which is a pitiful, unliveable wage; against expanded health care for the working poor and their children; and against a tax credit for working, poor families (meanwhile approving tax credits for business owners).

Was the Catholic lobby rattling his cage about those votes? Was the Catholic lobby even involved as those bills moved to the floor?

Because as I sit in the pew listening to scripture and singing from the hymnal, the message consistently is focused on helping the needy. Yet the Catholic

church focuses more resources toward opposing civil unions while virtually ignoring debate over reasonable social program expansion.

"Not all issues have the same moral weight," explained Robert Gilligan, executive director of the Catholic Conference of Illinois. "This is a bedrock principle of Catholic social teaching, a call to family and to protecting life from conception to natural death."

The church does get involved in other issues, but "there are not as many groups defending traditional marriage," he said. "There are many other voices on those other issues."

As for the sex part, the church believes condoning same-sex marriage is detrimental to traditional marriage.

Frankly, I don't get that either. Whether gay people unite in a civil union impacts my heterosexual marriage zero percent.

Apparently, the church still hopes to convert gay people to heterosexuality. Marriage is an incentive to that. So removing that incentive and allowing "marriage" between gay people means fewer homosexuals will choose heterosexual unions.

But come on. Does that make sense?

It doesn't to me. Gay people are gay, right down to their genetic core. Nudging them into heterosexual relationships is wrong and will, most of the time, end in painful divorce.

Southland Catholic legislators who supported last week's civil unions bill included state Sen. Edward Maloney (D-

Chicago).

"It was not an easy vote. I really struggled with it. But one comment that stuck with me was from a person in the church I really respect, and that was, 'Any loving relationship is a blessed relationship,'" Maloney said.

"If you read the bill, it is not an attack on marriage," added state Sen. Maggie Crotty (D-Oak Forest), also a Catholic. "When we wake up, married couples have nothing to fear. This was not a religious issue. It really deals with the rights of persons who want to enter into a partnership."

The church also believes man plus woman equals children. Procreation is the bedrock of the Catholic faith.

But God doesn't always allow men and women to procreate the old-fashioned way. Millions of heterosexual married couples choose not to have children or physically cannot. If they rely too heavily on science to treat infertility, the church blasts them, too.

Lastly, you should know I am a proud Catholic. I am Catholic because I respect, follow and support the church's missionary devotions and its humble, service-based teachings.

But because of my liberal views on gay marriage, the church would prefer to cleanse me of its pews. I am not "pure."

But guess what?

I'm not leaving. I was baptized, confirmed and married into the faith, and I'm staying put.

Right where God calls me to be. †

## Nuns blast U.S. bishops over silence on gay teen suicide

By Lou Chibbaro Jr. |  
www.washingtonblade.com,  
November 18, 2010

An organization of American Catholic nuns has denounced the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops for reiterating its opposition to legalizing same-sex marriage at its annual meeting in Baltimore this week while remaining silent on anti-gay bullying and gay teen suicide.

In a statement (*see box below*) released Tuesday, the National Coalition of American Nuns accused the bishops of acting like "blinded Pharisees" for waging a fight against marriage equality while failing to speak out on gay teen suicides brought about by school bullying and harassment.

"More than a month has gone by since the media broke the news about a series of gay suicides," the nuns' statement says. "During that time, the U.S.

Catholic Bishops failed to make a single statement regarding these tragic, preventable deaths."

The statement adds, "Not one bishop's voice was raised to condemn a culture where youths are bullied for being who God created them to be and are sometimes pushed by society's judgments to attempt suicide."

The Conference of Catholic Bishops, which represents Roman Catholic bishops in the U.S., held its annual fall General Assembly meeting this week in Baltimore.

Don Clemmer, a spokesperson for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said Archbishop Joseph Kurtz of Louisville, Ky., the newly elected vice president of the bishops' conference, gave a presentation on the marriage issue before the conference's Ad Hoc Committee on Defense of Marriage.

He said Cardinal Frances George of

Chicago, the outgoing president of the conference, announced to the gathering that the ad hoc committee was being elevated to an official subcommittee of the Conference of Bishops.

Clemmer said he was not aware of any discussion or agenda items at the Baltimore meeting addressing gay teen suicide or anti-gay harassment or bullying. He said the final two days of the meeting set for Wednesday and today were closed to the public and it was possible that items not posted on the public agenda could be discussed.

"The National Coalition of Catholic Nuns calls on all U.S. Catholics to rise up and say, 'Enough, enough!'" says the nuns' statement. "No more discriminatory rhetoric and repressive measures from men who lay heavy burdens on the shoulders of others and do not lift one finger of human kindness and compassion," it says "We all need to work for a

holy and just society and church."

Sister Jeannine Gramick, a longtime supporter of LGBT rights from the D.C.-Baltimore area, is a board member and executive coordinator of the National Coalition of American Nuns.

In a separate statement, the LGBT-supportive group Catholics for Equality expressed concern that the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops broke a long-standing tradition this week by not electing its current vice president, Bishop Gerald Kicanas of Tucson, Ariz., as the new president.

Kicanas, who Catholics for Equality describes as a "social justice champion," was bypassed for the president's position when the Conference of Bishops elected instead Archbishop Timothy Dolan of New York, an outspoken opponent of same-sex marriage equality and LGBT rights, according to Catholics for Equality.

The group noted that the bishops' conference elected Archbishop Kurtz, the head of the Ad Hoc Committee for the Defense of Marriage, as its new vice president.

"Archbishop Kurtz ... has led the Catholic hierarchy's national campaign to deny marriage and family rights to gay and lesbian citizens," Catholics for Equality said in a statement released Wednesday.

"That campaign has been financially assisted by the national office of the Knights of Columbus, most recently through the production of videos that demean and discredit gay and lesbian relationship, as well as single parent and extended family households," the statement says.

"In his report from the Ad Hoc Committee for the Defense of Marriage, Archbishop Kurtz makes it clear that our bishops are waging a new political campaign to change the laws in our country," said Ariello Alioto, a Catholics for Equality board member. †

### Nuns to Bishops: Condemn Bullying, Not Marriage

On behalf of GLBT Catholics, their families and friends, and thoughtful Catholics across the United States, the National Coalition of American Nuns is appalled at the lack of sensitivity of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to lesbian and gay persons.

More than a month has gone by since the media broke the news about a series of gay suicides. During that time, the US Catholic Bishops failed to make a single statement regarding these tragic, preventable deaths. Not one bishop's voice was raised to condemn a culture where youths are bullied for being who God created them to be and are sometimes pushed by society's judgments to attempt suicide. Many people have accused certain segments of organized religion, including the Catholic hierarchy, of fueling these attacks and contributing to suicides.

The annual meeting in Baltimore of the US Catholic Bishops this week offered an opportunity to decry these horrendous events. Instead, the bishops have chosen to discuss "the defense of marriage," their well-funded attack on same-gender couples.

Like blinded Pharisees, they fail to see that the Catholic community is embarrassed by their silence in the face of brutality and incensed by their push of a political agenda

against marriage equality—all at a time when their credibility on sexual matters is at a record low.

The bishops have not learned from the Minnesota experience, where Catholics returned the anti-gay DVD's the hierarchy sent to each household in the state. The anger of Minnesota Catholics is erupting all across our country. Faithful Catholics believe their bishops should be preaching a message of concern and understanding, instead of rejection and hate.

The National Coalition of American Nuns calls on all US Catholics to rise up and say, "Enough, enough! No more discriminatory rhetoric and repressive measures from men who lay heavy burdens on the shoulders of others and do not lift one finger of human kindness and compassion."

Founded in 1969 to study and to speak out on issues of justice in church and society, the National Coalition of American Nuns (NCAN) consists of approximately 500 Catholic sisters from different congregations of women religious in the United States. NCAN, 12434 Klinger St., Detroit, MI 48212, 313-891-2192, www.ncan.us, bethrin@prodigy.net. †

# Sullivan v. Gallagher: Catholics Debate LGBT Rights At Georgetown

By Sarah Posner  
Religion Dispatches.org  
December 9, 2010

If you were anywhere near Georgetown University last night, you might have felt the earth tremble beneath your feet. In a cavernous auditorium at the revered Catholic institution, to an audience of about 300 students, faculty, and members of the public, *Atlantic* blogger Andrew Sullivan thanked God for homosexuality.

Sullivan was speaking at what was billed as a "family" event -- as in a discussion among fellow Catholics -- co-sponsored by the College Democrats and College Republicans and publicized by the pro-LGBT group Catholics for Equality. With *Washington Post* columnist and Georgetown professor E.J. Dionne serving as moderator, Sullivan went toe to toe with Maggie Gallagher, the pundit and driving force behind the anti-gay group National Organization for Marriage.

That such an event was held at a Catholic institution was historic, Catholics for Equality founding board member Joe Palacios told me. Palacios, a priest, is also an adjunct professor at Georgetown.

As advertised, the gathering had much in common with a family holiday dinner: passive aggressive recriminations, eye rolls, and a regular playing of the victim card. That, at least, was what Gallagher brought to the table.

Gallagher is insistent upon the primacy of natural law; that God's intent for marriage was for procreation and absent that possibility, marriage isn't marriage. (She offered an exemption for infertility, something about which she has previously written, unconvincingly.) The audience was largely in disagreement with her, but NOM supporters were out in force, passing out buttons that (deceptively) proclaimed in large letters support for "marriage equality;" below, the graphic depicted a man and a woman figure = marriage. That's the equality, for Gallagher. "I do support marriage equality," she said, echoing the button, but "I don't think gay unions are marriage."



Andrew Sullivan

Someone send them back for a grade school vocabulary lesson.

Only with ice water running through one's veins could one have been unmoved

by Sullivan's recounting of his Catholic boyhood, his sexual awakening as an adolescent, and, as he told it, what a lucky bloke he considered himself to be when he discovered sexual desire. As he has done in his writing, Sullivan celebrated his gayness, describing his sexuality as a divine gift, and that "the first person I came out to was God." Even the persistence of the teenage erection was depicted as a wondrous joy. That same-sex sexual desire -- not just civil rights -- is equally celebrated in God's eyes was both a divine (double entendre intended) and human argument to which Gallagher had no decent (again, double entendre intended) rebuttal.

Sexual desire, Gallagher insisted, "is not an appetite, it is a vocation" to create babies. But to dismiss gay desire as just an appetite of course missed the entire



Maggie Gallagher

point of Sullivan's disquisition on love and the sacredness of his own marriage. As he put it to her, "You keep sexualizing the homosexual relationship in a

"You keep sexualizing the homosexual relationship in a way that you wouldn't sexualize the heterosexual relationship."

—Andrew Sullivan

way that you wouldn't sexualize the heterosexual relationship."

Sullivan, a devout Catholic, condemned the Catholic hierarchy for "dehumanizing" LGBT people through its teachings, which elicited an angry reaction from Gallagher.

"One way of making a kid feel awful is to call him intrinsically disordered," was Sullivan's retort. Gallagher attempted to fudge the Catholic teaching on that matter, claiming

all are sinners and other sexual sin is also considered disordered. Sullivan further incensed her with his assertion

that the reason why the hierarchy has a problem with gay people is that many of them are gay, and then engaged in a fully justifiable rant about the church sex abuse scandals.

Gallagher's chief protest as self-appointed martyr, an article of faith in the religious anti-gay movement, is that LGBT equality spells a lack of freedom for religious people, an effort to "repress and marginalize" them. Yet her own most unseemly moment -- and there were many -- was NOM's distribution of a sheet of paper about Catholics for Equality, "In Their Own Words," intended to smear the group as an anti-Catholic tool of evil liberals. Its most telling portions: two mentions of associations of groups that work with Catholics for Equality with "noted atheist" George Soros. (The sheet also falsely depicted People for the American Way as "an anti-religious group.")

The invoking of Soros was stunning: the standard conservative false smear against Soros is that he betrayed his own Jewish people to the Nazis, while another popularized falsehood in the anti-gay movement centers on an attempt to link homosexuality to Nazism. There was, of course, no need to debate Catholics for Equality's mission by mentioning Soros. The fact that NOM did speaks to an effort to deploy conservative tropes about who is or isn't the "real" religious person, and to drop code that political adversaries betray God to support evil.

But it was Gallagher who had the gall to call out Catholics for Equality in her prepared remarks. "There is still time to repent," she said without a shred of self-reflection. "Truth and love will prevail." †

## Irish priest banned from writing because of pro-gay stance

By Patsy McGarry  
IrishTimes.com  
November 13, 2010

An Irish Catholic priest has been banned by the Vatican from publishing any more of his writings after he suggested homosexuality is "simply a facet of the human condition".

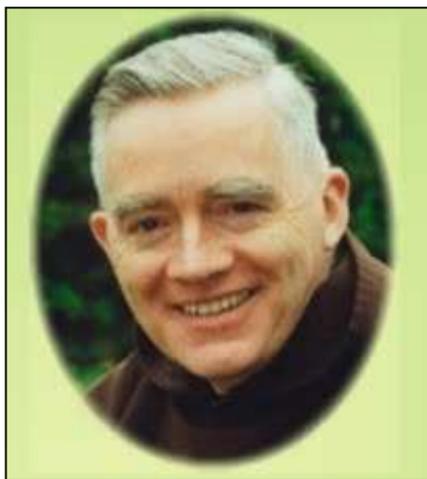
This follows an article on homosexuality by Capuchin priest Fr Owen O'Sullivan, published in last March's edition of the *Furrow* magazine. Described as "a journal for the contemporary Church", the *Furrow* is published at St Patrick's College Maynooth.

Commenting on teachings that "homosexuality is unnatural", Fr O'Sullivan wrote that "nature is a loose peg on which to hang a theology of human relationships". The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* listed nine meanings for "nature" and 14 for "natural", he said.

He noted it was argued that the natural purpose of sexuality is procreation "and that, since homosexual relationships are not procreative of life, they are therefore unnatural".

Throughout history "same-sex attraction and acts have been a consistent feature of human life . . . Same-sex attraction is simply a facet of the human condition," he said. He recalled church teaching says it is not wrong to be gay, "but it is wrong to act gay".

He suggested: "Imagine someone

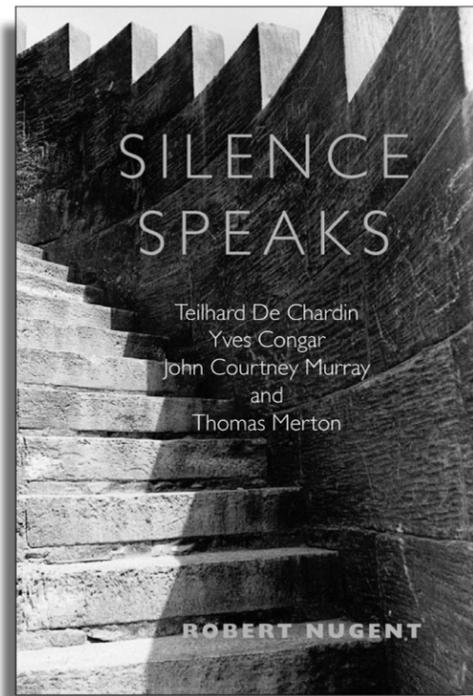


Fr. Owen O'Sullivan, OFM Cap.

saying... 'There's nothing in itself wrong with being Irish... But that doesn't mean you may act on it. So, no more Guinness, going to Croke Park, singing rebel songs into the early hours of the morning, waving Tricolours, no more craic.'

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith at the Vatican contacted the Capuchin secretary general in Rome with an instruction Fr O'Sullivan was no longer to write for publication without first having his articles approved by it.

Capuchin headquarters in Rome contacted Fr O'Sullivan's superiors. Contacted by *The Irish Times*, Fr O'Sullivan did not feel free to discuss it nor did Fr Ronan Drury, editor of the *Furrow*. †



## SILENCE SPEAKS

Teilhard de Chardin, Yves Congar, John Courtney Murray, and Thomas Merton

ROBERT NUGENT; Introduction by Richard Gaillardetz

Recounts the interaction between these four theologians and ecclesiastical authorities and describes the effects of disciplinary actions taken against them by Vatican authorities on both their personal and spiritual lives.

"An invaluable resource for understanding the Catholic Church." —James Martin, SJ

978-0-8091-4649-9 144 pp. 5 3/8 x 8 \$14.95 Paperback



Available from bookstores or from Paulist Press  
Orders: 1-800-218-1903 • fax: 1-800-836-3161

www.paulistpress.com

# Welcome is mixed for gays on Catholic campuses

By Catherine M. Odell  
Ncronline.org  
November 15, 2010

As warm September days gave way to a crisp October, most college students across the country heard something about the Sept. 22 suicide of Rutgers freshman Tyler Clementi. The 18-year-old jumped off the George Washington Bridge in New York when fellow freshmen streamed a video on the Internet of Clementi in a homosexual encounter.

Gay college students, including some at the nation's 230 Catholic colleges, held candlelight vigils to remember Clementi and bear witness to the agony that gay young people often live with every day.

University of Notre Dame senior Brandon Buchanan said he couldn't imagine how painful and humiliating it must have been to be "outed" as Clementi was. He came out on his own. "I honestly don't think Notre Dame people think it [anti-gay bullying and suicide] could happen here," he told the student newspaper, *The Observer*. "I would disagree."

Clementi might have been thinking of an anti-gay cartoon that was published in the *Observer* last January. In the cartoon, a character posed the question, "What's the best way to turn a fruit into a vegetable?" The answer: "A baseball bat." A firestorm of protests followed -- on and off the Indiana campus. Although some at Notre Dame said that the cartoon slipped into the paper because the editor never saw it, many on campus were appalled. In the spring, the university hosted programs to air the issue, highlight gay rights and let gays tell their own stories.

Particularly on Catholic campuses, gay students live and pursue their education in the midst of an intensifying Catholic debate over homosexuality. Acceptance of traditional church teaching that homosexual inclinations are disordered, and that same-sex marriage violates natural law, is decreasing among Catholics overall. Support for gay marriage among Catholics has now grown to 45 percent, according to the Pew Research Center.

"Our current college students have just grown up in a culture where they have been exposed to gay people in their families, in their schools, in their church communities, in the media," explained Marianne Duddy-Burke, executive director of DignityUSA. It's easy to see, she says, why the Catholic college student population is even more accepting of the gay agenda than their parents.

DignityUSA is a member of Equally Blessed, a new coalition of four established Catholic organizations that have supported gay rights for many years. Duddy-Burke serves as a spokesperson for that coalition.

U.S. Catholic colleges offer top quality education and openly gay students are often willing to trade a less welcoming environment for the educational benefits and career payoff. New Ways Ministry, a Catholic gay advocacy group founded in 1977, publishes an online listing of "Gay-friendly Catholic Colleges and Universities." A "gay-friendly" college, the Web site says, is one that offers "some type of lesbian/gay student group or support group." Currently, there are 107 schools listed.

Although Notre Dame is on that list, Liam Dacey, who graduated from Notre Dame in 2004, agreed with Buchanan's sentiments: Notre Dame is not *that* welcoming to gays. Unlike other Catholic schools, Notre Dame will not recognize or fund gay groups or clubs.

"We see a huge variety [in Catholic colleges]," reported Duddy-Burke, though she maintains that most Catholic

college campuses do a good job with gay ministry even if it's done "under the radar. You have places like the Georgetown model where they actually have a program and space for gays and lesbians. Then you have campuses like Marquette where a lesbian [Jodi O'Brien] was offered a deanship and was then rejected. What does that say to gay students on campus?"

In 2004, Georgetown University in Washington created an Office of LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning) Community Resources and hired a part-time coordinator. Officials at the Jesuit university were discussing the need to expand the outreach when anti-gay attacks on Georgetown students were reported in the fall of 2007.

Georgetown's president, John J. DeGioia, acted quickly, establishing three working groups. A new LGBTQ Resource Center was the result. It recently opened with two full-time staff members, new programming and a new campus alert system.

DeGioia and Georgetown administrators make it clear that they are advocating for the students -- not a gay agenda. "As a Catholic and Jesuit university, a university administrator cannot advocate for policies or practices that are counter to Catholic teaching," DeGioia told the Georgetown community.

At Notre Dame, Holy Cross Sr. Mary Lou Gude was assistant vice president for student affairs from 1998 to 2006. She now serves neighboring St. Mary's College as vice president for mission. Though Notre Dame has not established a center for the gay community like Georgetown did, she thinks good progress was made.



Marquette University students protest May 6 after the Jesuit university in Milwaukee rescinded a job offer to professor Jodi O'Brien to be dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Marquette's president said the offer to O'Brien, a department chair at Jesuit-run Seattle University, was premature. Some Marquette students and faculty angry over the decision suggested it was because O'Brien is openly gay.

"Sister M.L.," as students, faculty and administrators called her, said she spent much of her time working to create a better campus response to gay students. The resulting Core Council for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Questioning Students still acts today as the only official resource for gays at Notre Dame. It is overseen by the vice president for student affairs.

Dacey said he still feels frustration that Notre Dame undergrads do not have a recognized student club, let alone a center. He serves as chair of GALA-ND/SMC, an alumni organization of about 1000 gay and lesbian graduates of Notre Dame and nearby St. Mary's College. Because the university will not fund a club, GALA-ND/SMC does. "We fund their social activities and have a scholarship for a current Notre Dame or St.



Elizabeth Gleich, center, meets with fellow Minnesota student activists following the Sept. 26 Mass in which they were denied Communion for wearing rainbow sashes as a sign of protest against the church's position on homosexuality. (Sophouen T. Chhin Photo)

Mary's student to a GLBT leadership camp," he said.

Dacey contends that there is a sort of "brick wall" erected around gays at Notre Dame. The president, Holy Cross Fr. John Jenkins, he reports, has not met with GALA-ND/SMC. "He sent me an e-mail and said that he will not meet with us," Dacey said.

Because gay students who are out are often activists, clashes over gay issues are likely to play out on Catholic campuses.

On Sept. 26, Archbishop John C. Nienstadt of Minneapolis-St. Paul refused to give Communion to 25 gay ac-

This September, Anthony Garrison started work as the interim director at the newly opened Office for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Student Services at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. Following the lead of Georgetown and Seattle Universities -- both Jesuit schools -- Loyola Marymount established an office devoted to answering gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender needs. Previously, the needs of these students were addressed by the director of Intercultural Affairs, Garrison reported.

"What was happening was great," Garrison said, "but the efforts needed to be expanded. This is just another population that we're supporting." The new center, Garrison said, includes a resource center, a lounge for students to hang out, and a technology center.

At Seattle University, outreach is a combined effort from Campus Ministry and the Office of Multicultural Affairs. Jesuit Fr. Michael Bayard is Seattle's director of Campus Ministry and sees the pairing of these two university offices as ideal. Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students constitute a minority that needs a particular ministry, and they have their own unique culture.

Ten years ago, according to Bayard, Seattle University began to offer weekend retreats for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students each spring. The retreats, now called "Colors Retreats," supported students exploring sexuality. The retreats helped them to look at faith, the social implications of being gay, safe sex, dealing with community responses, and making friends.

Not everyone endorses the higher profile outreach to gay students emerging on some Catholic campuses. In a late September opinion column in Loyola Marymount's student newspaper, the *Los Angeles Loyolan*, one student expressed the hope that his university would not compromise Catholic teaching for gay outreach.

The university, Kenneth Valahos wrote, should post its mission statement as a Catholic university next to its new office, saying: "We love and support the LGBT student, but we do not support the sin of a homosexual lifestyle."

But gay outreach, Seattle University's Bayard argued, does echo essential Catholic teaching. At a Catholic institution like Seattle University, ministry to the gay and lesbian student population answers questions about what Catholicism means. "We feel we are called to be very inclusively Catholic," concluded Bayard, "regardless of faith, gender orientation, and ethnicity. We should try to create a welcoming community for all." +

tivists from St. John's University and the College of St. Benedict in Minnesota. They came to Mass wearing rainbow sashes to protest the church's position on homosexuality. A spokesman for the archdiocese later explained that the archbishop had offered a blessing rather than the Eucharist because wearing rainbow sashes had constituted "a political statement, a sign of protest" and wasn't an appropriate disposition for receiving the Eucharist.

Elizabeth Gleich, a junior and theology major at the College of St. Benedict and one of the rainbow sash protesters argued, "When we have no other way of dialoguing with our church, no other way of telling him [the bishop] how we feel, how else to do it than in liturgy?"

Some Catholic colleges are now presenting their gay ministries as outreach to minority populations.

# Catholic school pulls op-ed on gay issues from website

By Mila Koumpilova  
pioneerpress.com  
November 16, 2010

Senior Sean Simonson didn't foresee the stir his account of life as a gay teen would cause: dozens of occasionally sharply worded online comments and a debate over how his school handled a sensitive, high-profile topic.

Administrators at Benilde-St. Margaret's, a Catholic school in St. Louis Park, removed Simonson's piece and a staff editorial dealing with homosexuality from the student newspaper website Friday. They said online comments the writings triggered were creating an unsafe environment for gay students.

After initial cries of censorship, student journalists said Monday that the school's reaction was well-intentioned. Still, they decried the decision to halt the

online debate. They said they felt officials had caved in to calls from online commentators to remove the pieces, which some found offensive.

"I feel that by complying with those requests, our administration is implying solidarity with them, which is more damaging than allowing the debate to continue," said senior Bernardo Vigil, one of the editors at the student newspaper, the Knight Errant.

In its Thursday print edition, the paper published a story about a DVD the Minnesota Catholic Conference distributed in September, which called for a constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage in the state. Along with the article ran a staff editorial critical of the DVD and Simonson's piece, in which he shared that the pressures of growing up as a gay youth had driven him to ponder suicide.

"I wanted to stand up and speak out

and count," said Sean, who came out on his Facebook page earlier this school year.

The Knight Errant enjoys great editorial independence, Vigil said. A faculty adviser oversees the newspaper, but the administration does not preview coverage.

The newspaper team expected a lively debate over the editorial but not the nearly 100 comments on Simonson's personal piece. Many of the comments were supportive, but some were sharply critical of the essay, which they felt did not belong in a Catholic school newspaper. Simonson wasn't fazed: "All of these arguments were ones I've had to face and overcome to accept my sexuality."

But administrators apparently thought the comments went too far.

"As a Catholic school, our responsibility is to respect and uphold the dignity of the vulnerable, including students who are attracted to the same sex," school president Bob Tift said in a statement, which went on to say, "The online comments regarding the editorial and opinion piece in question were creating a disrespectful environment as well as confusion about the teachings of the Catholic Church."

The school, the statement said, had to balance its goal of promoting student dialogue and its responsibility to uphold those teachings. In a brief statement on

the student newspaper site, Benilde-St. Margaret Principal Sue Skinner said the discussion's "level of intensity has created an unsafe environment for students."

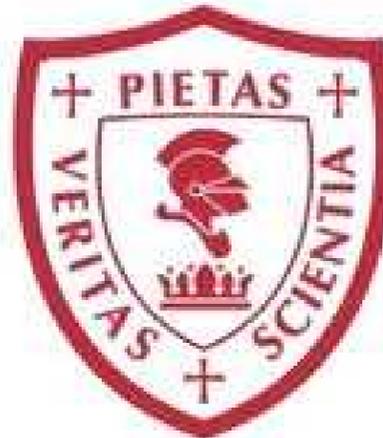
Several recent suicides of college and high school students who were apparently bullied because of their sexual orientation have given the subject a high profile nationwide. According to Jane

Kirtley, director of the University of Minnesota's Silha Center for the Study of Media Ethics and Law, that high profile has made schools especially eager to keep debate polite. Kirtley said she understands administrators' reluctance to provide a forum that includes negative comments about gay students.

But "I think you're abrogating one of your responsibilities as an educator, which is not to ban controversial topics but to encourage civil discussion about them," she said. "This is a time for students to explore those difficult issues, and educators should not discourage that."

Student journalists said that though it was cut short online, a robust debate continued at school Monday. More than a dozen students wore rainbow-colored clothing to school in support of Simonson, and religion classes hosted discussions about the Knight Errant's coverage. The newspaper staff met with administrators, and the meeting reassured Vigil of the school's sincerity.

"Those were all steps in the right direction," he said. ✦



The Benilde-St. Margaret's student newspaper website

# Illinois Gov. Quinn to 'follow conscience' on civil unions

By Dave McKinney  
Chicago Sun-Times  
December 2, 2010

SPRINGFIELD -- The Illinois Senate Wednesday passed landmark civil unions legislation that is now headed to Gov. Quinn, who has pledged to sign it despite new church criticism he would not be a good Roman Catholic in doing so.

"Today was a great day for the people of Illinois, for the family of Illinois," Quinn said after the Senate's 32-24 vote for legislation that would make Illinois the sixth state to recognize civil unions between gay and lesbian couples.

The Senate's vote followed House approval Tuesday and came despite criticisms over the measure's potential cost to taxpayers, the likelihood it would lead to legalization of gay marriages and concern that it had trumped fixing the state's budget ills among legislative priorities.

Shortly after the Senate's move, the governor, who is Roman Catholic, got an earful from the head of Springfield's Catholic archdiocese, Bishop Thomas John Paprocki, who questioned Quinn's adherence to church teachings.

"If the governor wishes to pursue a secular agenda for political purposes, that is his prerogative for which he is accountable to the voters. But if he wishes to speak as a Catholic, then he is accountable to Catholic authority, and the Catholic Church does not support civil unions or other measures that are contrary to the natural moral law," Paprocki said.

Told of the bishop's statement, Quinn shrugged.

"I follow my conscience. I think everyone should do that. I think that's the most important thing to do in life. . ."

most important thing to do in life, and my conscience is not kicking me in the shins today," the governor told reporters.

The legislation does not alter state law recognizing marriage as being between a man and woman. But it would grant gays and lesbians new rights to make health care decisions involving their sick partners, decide how to dispose of their deceased partners' remains and have new standing in how their estates are divvied up, among other things.

An air of history being made enveloped the Senate, which fell silent as a succession of speakers debated the bill in a discussion that, at times, turned emotional.

"I follow my conscience. I think everyone should do that. I think that's the most important thing to do in life. . ."  
— Gov. Pat Quinn

"I have a gay daughter," said state Sen. David Koehler (D-Peoria), the bill's chief Senate sponsor, whose child, Maggie, watched the deliberations from the Senate gallery with her partner.

"I've seen this issue through the eyes of a father who has a gay child. What it means is I have one daughter amongst my three who doesn't have the same



Gov. Pat Quinn (center) and two directors in the Governor's office -- legislative director Lindsay Anderson (left) and legislative operations director Deb Shipley -- applaud the passage of legislation in the state Senate legalizing civil unions Wednesday.

rights as the other two, and I don't understand that," Koehler said.

Mayoral politics also flared as a result of Wednesday's vote.

State Sen. James Meeks (D-Chicago) -- a mayoral candidate, the pastor of Salem Baptist Church and past critic of gay rights -- voted against the legislation, calling it a "sea change" for the state.

"I believe a bill this big and with this much magnitude probably should have been placed on a ballot for a referendum. I believe in the sanctity of marriage between a man and a woman. That was the impetus for my vote," Meeks said.

Asked if he thought his vote would damage his standing among gay and lesbian voters and others who favor civil

unions, Meeks said, "I don't know. But I believe in the sanctity of marriage. Perhaps it will help among everybody who believes in the sanctity of marriage."

Other city mayoral candidates, including Rahm Emanuel, Carol Moseley Braun, Gery Chico and Danny Davis, made calls to lobby lawmakers to support the legislation.

Opposition did not break entirely along party lines, with Downstaters from both parties casting "no" votes. The only Republican to vote for the bill was Sen. Dan Rutherford (R-Chenoa), the incoming state treasurer. State Sen. Ira Silverstein (D-Chicago) was the only senator to vote "present." ✦

# A letter to LGBT Catholics: It gets better

By **Kate Childs-Graham**  
Ncronline.org  
October 7, 2010

At the end my admissions interview for the Catholic University of America (CUA), I asked, "Is this school welcoming for gay and lesbian people?" The interviewer responded simply, "Yes."

When I walked onto CUA's campus for the first time as a student, I thought I was walking on to a safe and welcoming campus. Unfortunately, I was wrong.

In my years at CUA, I was called a fag in class. I was constantly reminded about the rules against "homosexual activity" on campus. I was encouraged to live a chaste life by campus ministers. I was asked to resign from leading a women's prayer group. I was ostracized from campus ministry activities. I was laughed at when I tried to start a support group for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students on campus. The list goes on.

And I struggled. I went to daily Mass as an act of repentance, denying myself the Holy Eucharist for months on end. I went to confession week after week, confessing one and only sin -- being who

God made me. I questioned my faith. I questioned my God. I wondered if this life was worth living. I hit rock bottom.

And it got better. I left CUA with diploma in my hand and scars on my heart only to find a world full of acceptance and love. I realized that the people who mattered most were the people who love and support me for who I am. I reconciled my sexuality with my faith with the help of a few incredible friends. I met my partner, and our friends and family stood around us as we exchanged vows just two years ago. I found my place in this church and this world.

It's gotten better at CUA as well, as a group of students have started an "unofficial" gay-straight alliance on campus called CUAllies. They are working to make the campus a safe and welcoming place. I couldn't be prouder.

In the recent months, we have seen too many young people take their lives as a result of bullying. The world has spoken out. I hope that the Catholic church will do the same.

To the church hierarchy and other leaders of the church:

Please do not let yourselves or our church be labeled as a source of bullying.

Help create and promote welcoming and inclusive schools, churches and homes that are free from judgment and bullying. Young people are looking to you for moral guidance and support. Please do not let them down. Don't be a reason they feel unsafe, unloved and unwelcomed. Be the reason they know they are children of God and therefore are loved and worthy of respect.

To commenters and bloggers:

Please know that the impact of bullying doesn't stop at the schoolhouse or church door. The impact of bullying is also felt from words of hate and judgment seen online. I challenge you to find creative ways to critique and debate ideas without attacking the character, dignity or values of any person. I know that together we can make the internet a safe place for any person to express their thoughts or stories without being subject to personal ridicule or attack.

To Catholic youth:

It does get better. I once thought that in order to live my life as an openly gay person, I would have to give up my faith. Now I know that I can be both proudly gay and devoutly Catholic. For every person in the church who says that being

gay is wrong or LGBT rights aren't rights at all, know that there are many more Catholics who will love and support you for who you are. I found my Catholic home with organizations like Call To Action and Dignity USA who provide a safe and welcoming place for gay Catholics -- for any Catholics -- to express our faith. I know that you will find your place in and out of the church.

To all Catholics:

Yes, it does get better for LGBT Catholic youth, but please know that we have the power to make it great. The teachings of the church hierarchy on homosexuality do not reflect the values and beliefs of the vast majority of Catholics. Standing together, we can create a church that is truly welcoming of all people. We can create a safe space for Catholic youth to explore their faith and their sexuality. We can create lasting change in a world and a church that so badly needs it. We can make life great.

*If you are a young person who needs help, please contact the Trevor Project. For LGBT Catholics and allies who are looking for a safe space in our church, please check out Call to Action and Dignity USA. †*

## On sexual orientation, it's time for the church to join the bandwagon

By **Mike Sweitzer-Beckman**  
Ncronline.org  
October 14, 2010

This past month, I read with a heavy heart about the multiple reports of gay teenagers who took their own lives as a result of bullying. Their names include Cody Barker, Billy Lucas, Seth Walsh, Tyler Clementi, and Asher Brown. These kids are from New Jersey, Texas, Indiana, and California. They were in high school and college.

Somehow, as a society we are failing.

Some people say that bullying happens to everyone. I would say that there is a difference between getting picked on because you got some new glasses or braces and being bullied because of a marker of your human identity.

Many people are beginning to speak out on this issue and the need for more comprehensive education in our schools, from Phoenix Suns point guard Steve Nash to Arizona Cardinals safety Kerry Rhodes, and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan to CNN host Larry King.

Who is missing from this list? I have not heard any prominent Catholic Church clergy speak out on this catastrophe.

It is time for church leaders to stop waiting for the bandwagon to pull on past and to take a stand to lead the charge.

Who really wants to be known for affirming a woman's right to vote after 1919, or for promoting the Civil Rights Act after 1964? Do we want our church to pull another Galileo and get it right some 500 years later?

The church has a mission to be prophetic, to listen to the social and natural science experts around us and it is time to start living out that vision that Jesus taught us.

Instead, it seems that the Church is going backwards. Last month a group of students and even some clergy at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University in Minnesota attended the weekly Mass wearing rainbow-colored bands to stand in solidarity with those in the gay and lesbian community who are being bullied across the country.

They did not raise a ruckus. They did not shout out during the homily.

Regardless, they were refused the Eucharist by Archbishop John Nienstedt of the Minneapolis/St. Paul archdiocese.

The Minneapolis *StarTribune* reported that Dennis McGrath, the spokesman for the archdiocese, said people

wearing a rainbow sash are not allowed to receive the Eucharist because they are making a political statement.

However, in denying these Catholic faithful the Eucharist, the church is ironically making a political statement. It is a case where a church leader took a stance and it doesn't seem to agree with Jesus' teachings on justice and love for neighbor.

There is plenty of scriptural basis for treating our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters with dignity and respect.

Jesus commands us to live in right relationship with one another in John 15:12-13, 17:

"This is my commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends ... This I command you, that you love one another."

Thanks to this recent op-ed in the *Washington Post*, we learn about the spiritual side of 'coming out' from Francis DeBernardo, Marianne Duddy-Burke, Casey Lopata, and Nicole Sotelo.

They crack open another story from the Gospel of John when Lazarus is called out of the tomb by Jesus and begins to live a new life. This is a metaphor for gay and lesbian people who have just

clarified their sexual orientation to the world. Rather than hiding in a closet, a gay or lesbian person is given new life.

Building on Kate Childs Graham's column from last week (see above), the church has a mandate to start providing "a positive and prudent sexual education."

There are many rich resources and materials out there. It's not like the church would have to start from scratch in order to promote an educational atmosphere that affirms one's dignity and respect.

Locally, I look to the Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools. That organization envisions educational systems in which all students thrive regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression and they train dozens of student leaders around Wisconsin to build safer, stronger communities.

The church has a choice. It can either choose to join the bandwagon that is calling for dignity and respect for our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters, or it can continue the course of standing idly by while injustices and abuses are committed. †

## Barry U. students join others around in anti-bullying protest

By **John Dorschner**  
The Miami Herald  
October 20, 2010

Decrying the bullying that led to the recent suicides of seven youths, about 100 people gathered at Barry University Wednesday for a midday prayer vigil to honor victims of oppression.

Wearing purple as part of a national grass-roots Spirit Day rally, the crowd heard Barry administrator Thomas Paul Severino pray, "Strengthen our resolve to stand up for justice."

Among those in the audience on the lawn facing the campus chapel was Enbar Cohen, 22, a Barry senior who said she experienced a devastating attack in high school when someone distributed hundreds of fliers giving her name, phone number and address, saying she was a lesbian "willing to perform sexual acts for you."

"It was really difficult," Cohen said before the rally.

"I was out to my family and they weren't happy. They didn't even want me to touch the refrigerator. And then to go to school and have that kind of harassment, it was like the last straw."

Cohen said she had briefly suicidal thoughts about the incident, which happened at Dr. Michael M. Krop High School in North Miami-Dade, but got over them quickly. Others didn't.

At the vigil, Severino read the names of the seven who "suffered violence, hatred and oppression," including Tyler Clementi, the Rutgers student who jumped off a bridge after a roommate secretly taped him having sex.

The Barry vigil was one of several events in Wilton Manors and elsewhere in South Florida Wednesday for "Spirit Day -- It Gets Better" -- a viral event that spread quickly through news on youtube.com and Facebook.

In Miami Beach, about 200 people turned out for a candlelight vigil that ran from Drexel Avenue to Alton Road and back on Wednesday night. Alex Febres, 18, youth treasurer of Pridelines Youth Services and a Miami Dade College student, organized the event.

Through Bible readings and short speeches, Barry students and officials talked about the need to publicly decry bullying whenever then saw it. "Do whatever you can to help end all discrimination," students were urged in a printed program. "Let's not forget entire segments of our community." Severino, the associate vice president for institutional advancement, quoted Harvey Milk, a celebrated gay San Francisco politician, "Give them hope."

On Facebook, Spirit Day is dedicated to LGBT (lesbian gay bisexual transgender) youth who "have committed suicide in recent weeks/months due to homophobic abuse." At the prayer vigil

at Barry, a Roman Catholic institution, the focus was more general, covering bullying of all sorts, including against the disabled. Gays were not mentioned directly; the acronym LGBT was used once.

Later, Mary Ross Agosta, spokeswoman for the archdiocese, said the church does not tolerate any form of violence or hatred, against gays or anyone else. "We don't ask anybody's orientation" when they enter a church. But she acknowledged that the church's formal position is that sex is prohibited outside of marriage and Catholic doctrine firmly states that marriage is between a man and a woman.

At the Barry rally, students were not focused on doctrine. Senior Providencia Gousse said she knew that most of the thousands of students had not attended the rally. "This is just the beginning -- spreading the awareness to prevent suicide." †

# 'Angels in America' welcomes dialogue on campus

By Heidi Alvarado  
*The Collegian*

St. Mary's College, Moraga, California  
October 5, 2010

A low hum echoes throughout the chapel at Saint Mary's, as churchgoers settle in for prayer. Meanwhile, students bustle around the stage at LeFevre Theatre, preparing for their upcoming performance.

This year the Catholic campus of Saint Mary's College is putting on the production *Angels in America*, a script revolving around issues in the gay community.

"College is the place to express one's individuality and beliefs," said Saint Mary's alumnus Elizabeth Godinez, "along with being a place where 'taboo' subjects can be talked about in an open fashion."

Other Catholic colleges in America are also having the subject of homosexuality brought up on campus. St. Edward's

University in Austin, Texas has banned the gay support group Equality Texas from the volunteer fair, and Seton Hall University in New Jersey had a committee discussion about whether a course in same-sex marriage should be allowed in the curriculum. The course was allowed, regardless of active protestors.

But one of Saint Mary's own priests, Father John Morris OP, feels an academic setting is the place for a play of this nature. "A University should be a place for open dialogue and discussion."

Tony Kushner premiered the play in 1991 and won the Pulitzer Prize in 1993 for *Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes*. The plot deals with many concerns the gay community has to face such as religion, reputations, relationships, AIDS and closeted sexual orientation.

The Facebook group "Angels in America at SMC" updates its members about the production and welcomes comments from students who are eager to be a part of the show.

However, not all members of the community are excited about the upcoming production. Father Morris mentioned there are people who think it is inappropriate and could bring up problems with the donors and alumni. He sees the issue on both sides of the Catholic faith: "The teachings are liberal but the Church is conservative," al-



A scene from *Angels in America*

though he notes, "Any college should never be hesitant to teach due to possible negative responses."

Two years ago, alumni and donors withdrew their support after Bill Ayers came to speak at the College. Students wonder if the same reaction can be expected.

Homosexuality is not a subject that we can avoid in today's society," Godinez said. "I think it is great that a Catho-

lic institution is allowing this type of production to go on."

The cast for the play has been selected and rehearsals are in session. The play is broken into two parts, both of which will debut at Saint Mary's starting November 11. The Facebook group anticipates that the production will be huge: "History is about to crack wide open." †

## Lesbian loses job after wedding announcement

By Louise McFetridge  
*news.PinkPaper.com*

November 12, 2010

A woman lost her job at a Catholic university after she posted a wedding announcement for herself and her partner in the local paper, it is claimed.

Laine Tadlock, director of education programs at Benedictine University in Springfield, Illinois, lost her job after placing a wedding notice in the Springfield *Journal-Register* to celebrate her marriage to partner Kae Helstrom.

The Chicago *Sun Times* reported that bosses at Benedictine knew that 60-year-old Tadlock was a lesbian and only removed her from her post after she placed the wedding announcement, which included her position at Benedictine.

The university stated that keeping her in the role "would not be consistent with the university's mission as a Catholic institution," and that "aspects of her lifestyle are incompatible with fundamental Catholic beliefs."

Benedictine, advertises that they are equal opportunities employers, offered Tadlock early retirement under the proviso that she would waive to filing a lawsuit against the university.

After refusing this offer she was then propositioned with a newly created role as director of accreditation, assessment and institutional effectiveness. Under the reasoning that she had turned down this role also, the university understood this as an effective resignation.

The bishop of Springfield, John Paprocki, said the school "is to be commended for its fidelity to the truth in upholding the faith and morals as taught by the Catholic Church."

"The bishops were concerned about my influence over parochial school teachers," Tadlock said. "Helping students is my passion..."

Tadlock, who has held her post since 2007 and previously worked at public elementary schools, is now exploring her options for legal recourse with the backing of her former students. †

## 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

# Knights, Minnesota archbishop endanger church neutrality

By Nicole Sotelo  
Ncronline.org  
September 30, 2010

For the last 128 years, millions of Catholic men have faithfully served the church through the Knights of Columbus' mission to help those in need. But do today's 1.8 million members and their supporters know that their Supreme Knight, Carl Anderson, is endangering their legacy by contributing their hard-earned charitable dollars not to the needy, but to political battles?

In October 2008, the Knights of Columbus and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) announced that they had formed a partnership. The Knights would fund the bishops' anti-marriage equality campaigns and Carl Anderson himself would sit as a consultant to the bishops' ad hoc committee on the same topic.

Since then, the Knights of Columbus have contributed millions of dollars to restrict the freedom to marry in state-based political battles ranging from California to Maine.

Let me be clear that this was engagement in political battles -- not efforts to simply promote among Catholics the Vatican's teaching on same-gender marriage, a teaching the majority of U.S. Catholics reject as unjust discrimination.

Since the Knights and the bishops made their alliance, the Knights have funneled money through the "National Organization for Marriage" (NOM), a political organization that seeks to deny same-gender couples the civil freedom to marry. Last year alone the Knights contributed \$1.4 million of its charitable contributions, not to the needy, but to NOM, as listed in the 2009 Supreme Knight's Annual Report.

Then, last week, the Knights ventured into political propaganda even further.

Archbishop John Nienstedt of the St. Paul and Minneapolis archdiocese filmed a DVD video message that was sent to more than 400,000 Catholic households in Minnesota. Nienstedt exhorts Catholics to take political action in order to prevent civil marriage equality.

While the archbishop is careful not to mention the name of the gubernatorial candidate for whom he wishes Catholics would vote, there are a number of indicators that make it appear that this DVD was not merely a faith-based educational video sent to the faithful but rather a politically-influenced campaign tool supported by NOM and the Knights of Columbus:

On Sept. 19, Catholic News Agency reported that the archdiocese "brought in Maggie Gallagher, head of the National Organization for Marriage, to discuss strategies for opposing the redefinition of marriage." Later, the article explained why: "The issue is relevant to the governor's race in Minnesota. Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party candidate Mark Dayton supports same-sex 'marriage,' while Republican candidate Tom Emmer does not."

On Sept. 22, NOM's public relations firm issued a press release announcing it had launched a television ad supporting Republican gubernatorial candidate Tom Emmer. Their release reads: "Thirty-one other states have exercised their constitutional right to vote on marriage.... Mark Dayton and Tom Horner [the Independence Party candidate for governor] do not want the people of Minnesota to have any say." The release has remarkably similar wording to the DVD mailed to Catholic households the same week. In the video Nienstedt says: "Thirty-one states have

passed marriage amendments and it is time for Minnesotans to have their say." While Nienstedt takes care to not mention the political candidates, his sentence closely resembles that of the press release for NOM's candidate.

The next line from the archbishop in the DVD is: "A question as important as the future of this great social institution should not be decided by a ruling elite, but by the people of Minnesota themselves.... Let the people speak!"

A television ad supporting Emmer that NOM aired the same week, titled 'Most Important Civil Right,' includes this line: "Shouldn't something this important be decided by Minnesota voters, not politicians?.... Let the people vote!"

As Nienstedt speaks the lines that mirror those provided by NOM in other settings, sitting over the archbishop's shoulder in the camera's frame is a strategically-placed Knights of Columbus hat (see photos in this column).

While the archbishop does not explicitly call on Catholics to vote for Republican candidate Tom Emmer, he does not have to do so. Any Catholic Minnesotan who watches the archbishop's DVD and the candidate's television ad -- both issued in the same week -- receives a one-two punch and knows exactly who the archbishop is championing.

The archbishop may not have explicitly crossed over the IRS tax-exempt line, but -- with NOM's help -- he is walking the tightrope. By associating so closely with a political organization, he runs the risk of endangering the charitable status of the archdiocese and -- with that -- the hard-earned money with which the Catholic faithful of the diocese have entrusted him.

Similarly, Carl Anderson who leads the Knights of Columbus is risking something perhaps even more hallow: the legacy of the Knights of Columbus. Knights work year-round to raise money for the needy and promote service in the church. "Charity" is the first of their four core principles. I imagine the majority of Knights never imagined that their Supreme Knight would take the money meant for charity and contribute millions of dollars not to the poor, but to political battles.

Pope John Paul II referred to the Knights of Columbus as "the strong right arm of the Catholic Church." I can only hope that the Knights do not let Carl Anderson change their mission from knights who serve the church to knights who serve the political right. ✚



## Homophobia in the Church: What Catholics Are Doing About It, and What Still Needs to Be Done

By Michele Somerville  
Huffingtonpost.com  
October 10, 2010

I attended a Roman Catholic baptism about two weeks ago. A crowd of young parents and others of all ages stood in semi-circle around the font. The atmosphere was reverent yet festive. Toddlers squirmed. The church was exquisite. Blades of late-morning light slid down through colored glass. The priest exuded hope and delight as he kicked off the rites. As the two parents approached the font to offer their child to the church, I began to tear up. My 11-year-old daughter, not unaccustomed to my poet's penchant for being capsized by moments so tender, saw my waterworks start up, rolled her eyes as adolescents do, smiled, and handed me a tissue. As I often do when my emotions get the best of me in the presence of my children, I get all pedagogical on them. I whispered sidebars to my girl: "That's the litany of the saints, it's beautiful when sung in Latin... And that the part about Satan and the empty promises -- it's technically an exorcism!"

I didn't have to explain that it was no ordinary baptism we were witnessing. She knew it was extraordinary, because I had taught her. The two parents at the font were bravely (or so I believe) demonstrating their desire not to throw the baby out with the baptismal water.

They were two gay dads asking a church governed by bullies to bless their child.

My daughter later asked how it was that gay people could have their children baptized in Catholic churches but not be

married in them. Good question. I broke it down for her. I told her a far greater percentage of Catholics support gay marriage than support the Vatican. I characterized the failure of my church to offer gay Catholics marriage in the church as just that -- "a failure." And a sin.

There are many layers to the sin of homophobia that the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church commits. Most people within and outside the church know, for example, that the Vatican preaches homophobia and does not consecrate same-sex marriages.

But many Catholics do not know that hundreds of thousands of their charitable dollars to groups like Knights of Columbus are currently being used to bankroll the fight against legislation that would make civil gay marriage legal.

Most Catholics know that the church is in a unique position when it comes to the question of gay marriage for several reasons, not the least of which is that by many estimates, more than 50 percent of Catholic priests are gay. Many Catholics know that many of the bishops who set the homophobic agenda are themselves closeted gay men grappling with the psychological fallout of growing up gay in a hostile homophobic world and church. Rumbling so ironically beneath the surface of the Catholic homophobia question is that even the most conservative Roman Catholic often has an expansive view of gay priests. Catholics of all stripes agree that many of our finest priests are gay.

Another unique feature of Roman Catholic homophobia has to do with the way we look at the Bible. Catholics don't construe the Bible literally, so Catholic

objections to homosexual marriage tend not to fix upon the biblical notion that being gay is an "abomination." Indeed some of the most holy among us enjoy the biblical abominations without the slightest fear of being accused of sinfulness: we eat shrimp and pork at every opportunity, and we give little thought to shaving our beards or to wearing linen with wool.

**Catholics are leaving  
in droves,  
but dissenters,  
many of whom  
are gay,  
are also staying  
in droves.**

No, the Vatican's homophobia derives from political and economic concerns, as well as from the larger erotic dysfunction that pervades the church. Patriarchal heterosexual marriage keeps the coffers filled. Two gay men or two lesbians may have a few children but they won't be easily coerced by doctrine to welcome a child a year. People who actually plan the size of their families aren't likely to make the kind of large lockstep Catholic clans the Holy See envisions for its City of God.

The Pope is smart enough to make small accommodations in order to keep gay people in the pews. Gay people are currently welcome to receive the sacraments and serve in ministry, but reminders from Vatican City never let it be forgotten that only gay people who abstain entirely from sex are truly fit for the sacraments. While the prohibition against all sexual activity outside sacramental marriage extends to straight, gay, bisexual and transgendered people, it can hardly be said to apply equally to all when for a gay Catholic there is no sacramental marriage option.

Catholics are leaving in droves, but dissenters, many of whom are gay, are also staying in droves. On the matter of gay Catholics, the Holy See wishes to have its cake and eat it, too. Thus, the Pope blesses with one hand and pummels with the other.

But the dissenters have a City of God in mind, too.

The Ad Hoc Committee of the U.S. Conference of Bishops, in its "Defense of Marriage," defines traditional Roman Catholic marriage as "a covenant between one man and one woman directed to the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of children." Although the traditional view is that marriage is first and foremost procreative, there's more to it. There's the good of the spouses. Were non-procreative marital sex viewed by the Magisterium as sinful, menopausal wives and sterile spouses would be called upon to abstain from sex even within marriage. But the bishops do not teach that all marital sex need be procreative. Allowances are made for sex

(Continued on page 12)



## 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 Billiart, 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, St. Frances Cabrini

### 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  
*Westland:* Ss. Simon and Jude

### 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, St. Pius X

### Nebraska

*Omaha:* Holy Family, Sacred Heart

### Nevada

*Las Vegas:* Christ the King, Guardian Angel Cathedral

### New Hampshire

*Merrimack:* St. John Neumann  
*Pelham:* St. Patrick

### New Jersey

*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  
*Wantagh:* 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

### 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

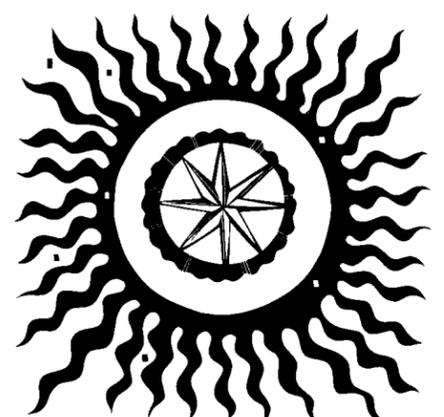
### Canada

*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 Minis-**



# Catholic Voters Don't Want to Ban Gay Marriage

By Michael A. Jones  
*Gayrights.change.org*  
 October 13, 2010

The divide between the Catholic Church as an institution and Catholics in the pews has perhaps never been larger, at least in regards to the issue of same-sex marriage. While the institutional Church spends a significant amount of resources trying to ban gay marriage and supporting organizations that are decidedly anti-gay, Catholics themselves have little to no interest in standing in the way of marriage equality.

Exhibit A goes to the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, which presented at the National Press Club today to discuss the role of religion and religious voters in the upcoming November elections. Among the topics touched on by folks from the Pew Forum was same-sex marriage, with a particular nod to Catholic voters. Among major political or so-

cial issues on the minds of Catholic voters, concerns over gay people getting married ran dead last.

That's right, despite the fact that the Church has invested heavily as an institution in denying gay people the right to get married -- especially in states like Maine, California, Minnesota, Rhode Island, New York, and New Jersey -- Catholic voters care more about ... well, pretty much everything, than they do about preventing same-sex marriage.

Create your own analogy here about how misplaced and messed up the priorities of the institutional Catholic Church are right now. It would be like giving millions of dollars to fund the creation of 8-tracks or VCRs. In other words, a lot of money wasted.

In Pew's report about Catholics and same-sex marriage, they found that close to 50 percent of all Catholics support the right of same-sex couples to get married. And on the issue of opening up military

service to gays and lesbians, they found that support for repealing "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" was high among Catholics, with 68 percent favoring a repeal of the law, to only 23 percent who wanted to deny gays and lesbians the opportunity to serve.

Numbers like these are pleasing on a



range of levels, in part because they show that pro-equality Catholics actually make up a majority (or darn near majority) of the Church. These numbers also, hopefully, provide cover for religious leaders to challenge the conventional wisdom that to be Catholic is to be anti-gay.

Here's hoping they also serve as an impetus for Catholics in the pews to challenge the institutional Church, much like they have been doing in places like Minnesota, to stop spending resources so poorly. Economic troubles? Stopping war? Unemployment? Healthcare? Those are issues that merit significant resources from the Church. But spending millions to fund groups like the National Organization for Marriage, or to produce hundreds of thousands of anti-gay DVDs to mail to Catholic families?

Nobody wants that. Least of all Catholics themselves. ✚

## Homophobia in the Church: What Still Needs to Be Done

(Continued from page 10)

they characterize as "unitive." Sex to keep the marriage strong, in other words, has a divine purpose. I like this idea; it reminds me of how *Shabbos* (marital) sex is thought by many Jews to be a *mitzvah*. While committed gay partners obviously cannot have procreative sex, they can and do certainly have the unitive kind, yet the Catholic Church hierarchy persists in depriving LGBT people of this *mitzvah* (blessing) on the grounds that marriage is essentially procreative even while teaching that marriage is not exclusively procreative.

It's no secret that Ratzinger's enmity and the bishops' disrespect for LGBT people runs deep. The bishop of the Brooklyn and Queens diocese has already been caught on the radio comparing homosexual love to bestiality. A child being educated in Catholic schools learns that only gay men and women who abstain from sex are worthy of the sacraments, but that sinful heterosexual lovemaking is transformed by a sacrament (marriage) powerful enough to render the sexual aspect of love a radiant reflection of Christ's love, from which radiance the Vatican insists gay Catholics should be excluded.

Fortunately, many gay Catholics, and so many others in the church, disregard the perverse and tyrannical efforts of the bishops to police the sex lives of Catholics and discern. But tuning out the hatred the bishops disseminate may not be enough when it comes to homophobia.

When the daughter of the two aforementioned dads undertakes preparation to receive the sacraments, it is entirely possible that she will be exposed to the diluted version of the "God hates fags" message that issues from the Vatican today. Parents like hers will surely interfere; they will come between her and the hideous so-called "Christian" message. Such vigilance can help to protect the 10 percent of children in the pews who happen to be gay, but Catholics must not leave this work to gay Catholic parents alone. Pastors, catechists and parents who fail to challenge homophobia help to make the church a dangerous place for gay children and keep the world outside the church safe for bigotry.

I worked for more than a decade teaching writing in New York high schools and colleges, during which time I came to notice that the autobiographical writing of many of my gay male students frequently contained talk of suicide. So common were these accounts of suicide attempts and fantasies that I came to expect them, as cultural norms, almost, in coming-out/coming-of-age narratives. I was as confounded as I was alarmed by

the preponderance of variations on the following plot: kid comes out to his parents, kid gets beaten by his parents, kid runs away, kid is victimized by street predators, kid tries to make it all go away with an accidental overdose. The preoccupation with suicide seemed to go beyond depression. These young men had learned self-hatred early. The musings on suicide seemed not so much about the desire to end one's own misery as about seeking to murder oneself. Sexual identity is not an incidental or add-on; it infuses one's whole self.

**What is a church good for if it requires its people to divorce themselves from who they are?  
 What is a church good for if it's not a sanctuary for all who would come out of the closet?**

Which is why the "love the sinner, hate the sin" principle does not apply. Being gay is not a sin.

My brother Scott came out of the closet about a decade ago at the age of 42 and died three years later. I still can't get my head around the idea that he didn't come out to me sooner. We were very close; we both knew that I would have celebrated his coming out. When he finally did come out, we talked about why he had waited so long. "I couldn't come out to myself," he said.

What is a church good for if it requires its people to divorce themselves from who they are?

What is a church good for if it's not a sanctuary for all who would come out of the closet?

I have vivid memories of our father's disapproval of Scott in childhood. When I look at my own children, I find it almost unbearable to imagine them suffering such a lack of acceptance at home. As the parent of a child with a developmental disability, I have seen close-up how damaging the failure to educate children about prejudice can be. No child should ever learn from a trusted adult that it is somehow unholy to be gay. That truly *is* an abomination.

My children were about eight and four when their Uncle Scott brought his partner, to whom he referred as "Uncle Frank." I told him to "slow down on the

Uncle Frank thing." (I'd have said the same thing about an "Aunt Franny.") But once I met Scott's beloved, I wanted him to be "Uncle Frank." I wanted my children to witness my brother's freedom to claim his right to love in a committed, authentic, whole and holy way. I jumped at the chance to present "Uncle Frank" to my children and saw the opportunity to do so as a blessing, for there may be no lesson more important than teaching children to eschew bigotry in all its guises.

Very recently, around the time of what would have been my brother's 51st birthday, I received a press release describing Equally Blessed, a new group formed by four Catholic organizations: DignityUSA, Fortunate Families, New Ways Ministry and Call to Action. Equally Blessed is "a coalition of faithful Catholics who support full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people both in the church and in civil society." Three of the Catholic organizations that comprise Equally Blessed have been in existence for more than 30 years. Call to Action has 25,000 members. Support for gay marriage in the Roman Catholic Church is strong and on the increase. Like Equally Blessed, Catholics for Equality, a group newly formed to "draw on the rich Catholic tradition of social justice teaching" to advocate for "equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) of any religious group on the United States" currently denounces the use (or misuse, rather) of Catholic resources to prevent civil gay marriage reform. It is important for active Catholics to support groups like Equally Blessed and Catholics for Equality because secular homophobia

originates in and takes its license from worship communities.

Many priests like Georgetown sociology professor and author Joseph Palacios, who co-founded Catholics for Equality, speak out courageously against injustice as it pertains to gay people within and outside of the Roman Catholic Church, but Ratzinger and his legions are doing all they can to silence such men. It may be safer for a priest to sodomize a child than to challenge the Vatican's position on gay marriage.

How odd it is that as bishops begin to close down parishes for reasons of economic hardship, Catholic funding can be found to support efforts to defeat *civil* marriage legislation outside the church. (The Holy See doesn't recognize the civil marriages of Catholics!) The readiness to use Catholic donations to stop civil legislation indicates an increasing willingness on the part of church leaders to export Roman Catholic homophobia into the secular world. Too many leaders (of various sects) lend their seals of approval to those who would couch homophobic messages in doctrine or scripture, and use their spiritual and psychological leverage -- and cash donations -- to cheat LGBT people out of their legal and moral rights.

Until the homophobes in Vatican City grow up decide it is time to "reject Satan... and all his empty promises," all Catholics -- but especially catechists, pastors and parents of children receiving religious instruction -- need to step in as godparents to our leaders, summon the Holy Spirit, and work for peace by waging war on homophobia -- which people do die of. ✚

You can stay in touch with the latest news and opinions concerning the Catholic Church and the LGBT community by visiting New Ways Ministry's website

[www.newwaysministry.org](http://www.newwaysministry.org)

You can also find information on the website about programs, events, and resources which may be helpful to you and your faith community.

Please consider becoming New Ways Ministry's friend on Facebook and following us on Twitter.

