

BANDINGS

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Bishop Sullivan: Catholics are reaching out to the LGBT community

By Bishop Joseph Sullivan
The Buffalo News
Buffalo, New York
June 2, 2011

One need only flip through some of today's cable news channels to witness how some of our society's most sensitive public policy matters are overly simplified in black-and-white terms, in which only the most strident voices seem to get heard. Of those many hotly debated issues, the rights of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community continue to make headlines.

What you would probably be surprised to learn is that Catholics are among those who increasingly are reaching out pastorally to the LGBT community. A recent study released by the Public Religion Research Institute found that a majority of Catholics believe that a majority of Catholics believe that gay discrimination against gay and lesbian people should be outlawed. By almost 2 to 1, Catholics believe that gay and lesbian couples should be allowed to adopt



Bishop Joseph Sullivan

children.

The views of Catholics about the LGBT community have been evolving for years. Catholic teachings compel us to work toward the elimination of unjust structures and to treat people with dignity, regardless of their state in life or their beliefs. My own understanding of this community has also evolved over the course of four decades of ministry.

Given that Catholics represent approximately one-quarter of the U. S. population, the changing attitudes of Catholics toward greater degrees of LGBT equality most likely will be a significant influence in the public square. Across the country there are increasing numbers of parishes that welcome LGBT parishioners and their families to active participation in the church. Catholic colleges and universities are in dialogue with their LGBT students, and Catholic retreat houses provide retreats specifically for LGBT Catholics.

Catholics and other religious people who support LGBT rights do so because of their experience of engagement with members of the LGBT community. They are not rebels in their churches, but people who have taken spiritual messages of inclusiveness and welcoming to heart. They are taking the church's teaching on social justice and applying it to pastoral practice in engaging the LGBT community.

We see these teachings play out as

Catholics across the country engage in prayerful and meaningful dialogues about understanding and embracing the LGBT community. This dialogue is happening amongst faithful families, in student groups on the campuses of Catholic universities, and within church congregations. This dialogue is admittedly difficult, at times, but important.

More than a decade ago, the U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a graceful message, "Always Our Children," which reminded us, "For St. Paul love is the greatest of spiritual gifts. St. John considers love to be the most certain sign of God's presence." For most Catholics, there can be no statement that better summarizes an attitude of welcoming of our LGBT brothers and sisters than those of Jesus, "love one another as I have loved you." ✦

Bishop Joseph Sullivan is the retired auxiliary bishop of Brooklyn.

(See related story on page 3)

Boston priest says all are welcome in his church Supports gays, lesbians after Gay Pride Day Mass was canceled

By Laura J. Nelson
The Boston Globe
June 13, 2011

Sunday Mass at St. Cecilia's Church in the Back Bay brought the first standing ovation any parishioner could remember.

During the first Mass since the Archdiocese of Boston canceled one planned for next weekend in support of St. Cecilia's gay and lesbian churchgoers, the Rev. John J. Unni preached a fiery message of unconditional love and what he called "acceptance of all."

"You are welcome here, gay or straight, rich or poor, young or old, black or white," Unni said as he paced up and down the center aisle. "Here, you all can say, 'I can worship the God who made me as I am.'"

Unni finished his homilies at the 9:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. Masses to thunderous applause.

After last Sunday's bulletin advertised a June 19 evening Mass, themed "All Are Welcome" to celebrate Boston's Gay Pride Month, the archdiocese canceled the service, saying it gave the "unintended impression" that St. Cecilia's supported Gay Pride.

"This parish is a great example of people who are civil and exhibiting a real fellowship," said Terrence C. Donilon, a spokesman for the archdiocese, in a phone interview yesterday. "But that doesn't mean we can be put in a position where we look like we're endorsing Gay Pride activities."

Unni, who has been at St. Cecilia's for seven years, said the Mass has been postponed indefinitely. He said he will discuss the goals of the "All Are Welcome" Mass with the parish and address fears about the service or recent backlash.

St. Cecilia's congregation has a large gay and lesbian population, many



Rev. John Unni delivered his homily yesterday while pacing the center aisle.

of whom arrived after the South End's predominantly gay Jesuit Urban Center closed in 2007, parishioners said. Almost 200 members of St. Cecilia's are now

active in its Rainbow Ministry, which hosts events for members and supporters of the LGBT community.

(Continued on page 6)

Diocese stops adoption, foster services in wake of anti-bias law

By Chuck Colbert
The Windy City Times
Chicago
May 29, 2011

The Rockford diocese announced that it would halt state-funded adoption and foster-care services at Catholic Charities rather than comply with state anti-discrimination laws.

With state funding of \$7.5 million, Rockford Catholic Charities handles about 350 adoption and foster-family cases in 11 counties in northern Illinois.

Officials said that the agency would terminate 58 employees.

The announcement came on May 26 at a press conference—one day after the Illinois Senate tabled an amendment that would have carved out an exemption to the Illinois Religious Freedom Protections and Civil Unions Act.

The new law, which takes effect June 1, extends all equivocal spousal benefits available at the state level to registered same-sex partners.

For months, the Catholic Conference of Illinois—the church's lobbying arm—sought an explicit exemption for religiously affiliated child-welfare agencies from providing adoption services to same-sex couples in civil unions.

Two previous amendment attempts failed.

Church officials say that their faith, or church teaching, does not allow them to place children in homes with same-sex couples and that they are in effect being "forced" out of the adoption business.

"It's an issue of conscience," said Robert Gilligan, executive director of the Catholic Conference of Illinois, according to the Associated Press.

"The law of our land has always guaranteed its people freedom of religion," said Penny Wiegert, the Rockford diocese director of communications, according to a press-conference transcript.

"Denying this exemption to faith-based agencies leads one to believe that our lawmakers prefer laws that guarantee

freedom from religion," she explained. "We simply cannot compromise the spirit that motivates us to deliver quality, professional services to families by letting our state define our religious teachings."

The decision by Rockford diocese officials was not unexpected. Gilligan suggested as much earlier this month.

"There's a real possibility that we will be forced out of foster care and adoption," he told reporters at a Statehouse news conference May 4, according to the Associated Press.

However, the Chicago archdiocese had already halted its foster-care services in 2007. As the Associated Press reported, "Catholic Charities told the Chicago Tribune the decision came after a \$12 million lawsuit payment caused the agency's insurer to drop its coverage." A 2001 lawsuit, settled in 2006, alleged that foster parents licensed through Catholic Charities had abused three children.

Meanwhile, officials from the

Belleville, Joliet, Peoria and Springfield dioceses have not yet indicated what they will do—although last week Gilligan said, "No diocese is going to willingly put a child in a same-sex household," according to the Associated Press.

His remark drew strong reactions from gay-rights activists and gay Catholics.

"Attempts to brand same-sex couples as unfit parents solely because they are gay sends a harmful message to LGBT youth. It signals that there is something inherently wrong in being gay or lesbian and in a same-sex committed relationship," said James L. Bennett, Midwest regional director for Lambda Legal, a national advocacy organization.

"Such a policy is not in the best interest of children and is contrary to the policy of every leading professional child welfare organization in this country," he added.

Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois, said, "Gilligan's state-

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

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

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

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Words Matter! Speak For Marriage Equality

By Theresa Padovano

Corpus Reports
May/June 2011

When Carole Rogers and I heard the story of the young student, Tyler Clementi, who committed suicide after being "outed" by his roommate, we felt it was past time to speak up against the bigotry and misinformation put out by the Catholic hierarchy and other fundamentalist "Christian" denominations. Calling gays and lesbians "disordered" gives some people permission to use bullying tactics or even violence against the LGBT community with impunity.

VOTF/New Jersey, an affiliate of National Voice of the Faithful, put together a program including Frank DeBernardo, Executive Director of New Ways Ministry, and a panel of three committed couples (one lesbian couple and two gay couples) to speak about their love and commitment to each other and their families.

Mr. DeBernardo's exceptional talk outlined the bishops' teaching about equality for lesbian and gay people, what the theologians say, and what lay Catholics say about marriage equality. The bishops say that all people should be treated equally, no matter what their sexual orientation. On the other hand, they are still calling homosexuals "disordered" and sending the laity's money by the thousands of dollars to other states to fight legislation that would permit same-sex marriage. What they do speaks so loudly, and we can't hear what they are saying in their documents.

Frank pointed out the fact that there are three voices in our Church. The bishops' voices are only one of these. A majority of theologians and lay people are moving in the direction of justice for the LGBT community.

Next on the program were the life stories of real people.

The first couple, Paul Cecala and Dan Nazaroo, spoke of being made to feel unwelcome in their Catholic parish after it became known that they were gay, although they

had given 35 years of service in every form of ministry that was open to them. They are now happy members of one of the local Episcopal churches where all are welcome. What a loss to the Catholic community!

Another couple, Marge and Alice Leonard, spoke of being made to feel unwelcome in one parish but finding love and acceptance in another. "Our being lesbians is not an issue there. We are just Marge and Alice," said Marge. These two women have been involved in raising 25 children! Two of these children they have adopted and all the others were foster children. They had us all amazed by their generosity and good humor.

The third couple, David DeGeralimo and Dan Allen, one of whom was raised in a Catholic home, do not belong to any organized religion. He had tied Church rejection to God's rejection and rejected both. The third couple is raising a one-year old boy, Dominic. He was born via surrogate gestation. A more beautiful, loving family one could not hope to find. They have a second child due in August.

They have committed untold time, financial resources, and love into this new found joy they have together in raising their little family. David is writing their experience into a book, which started out as a journal meant only for his family. The book would add greatly to their witness to the beauty of their experience. Knowing the inner thoughts of these men would make readers think twice about calling them "disordered." If they are disordered, we need more people like that!

Voice of the Faithful is giving other Catholics a fuller picture of Catholic teaching—one that includes the "sensus fidelium"—or the practical wisdom of the People of God on this issue.

It was a very positive and joyful experience, although there was a small crowd. Some say people still can't deal with the issue. We are still processing that question.

We highly recommend the pamphlet put out by New Ways Ministry, *Marriage Equality: A Positive Catholic Approach*. †

Steven Colbert (Practicing Catholic) Asks What Would Jesus Do About Gay Marriage

By Katie Halper

www.takepart.com
May 13, 2011

Comedy Central's Steven Colbert took on homophobia and intolerance during an interview with Tony Perkins the founder of the Family Research Council and a vocal opponent of gay civil unions and gay marriage. Colbert challenged Tony Perkins' use of religion to attack homosexuality by asking Perkins where in the bible Jesus talked about gay people. When Perkins mentioned a reference in the gospel according to Paul, Colbert responded that Paul also encourages adult circumcision. He also asked Perkins if he kept Kosher (as mandated by the Old Testament). Colbert was, of course, doing this under the guise of satire. Steven Col-



Stephen Colbert

bert's character was asking Perkins these difficult questions because he wanted to know how to win arguments on gay marriage. But the real Steven Colbert was asking these difficult questions to challenge Perkins: if you claim to ground yourself in a literal and narrow reading of the bible, then by all means do so, but be consistent. Just make sure you tack on adult circumcision and keeping kosher to your platform.

But Colbert is not merely a satirist taking on homophobia. He is a practicing Catholic and Sunday school teacher! He's not an atheist or agnostic (not that there's anything wrong with that), but he's critiquing from the inside, within a Christian framework. This makes him that much more effective, and that much more persuasive. And it makes me that

much more in love with Steven Colbert. †

Catholics in America Support Gay Marriage

By GLAAD

(Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation)
OpposingViews.com
May 8, 2011

Recently, U.S. Rep. Jim Langevin (D-RI), who previously supported civil unions, voiced his support for marriage equality. In an op-ed published in the *Providence Journal*, Rep. Langevin stated that it took the commitment ceremony of a long time staff member to convince him that all loving unions, regardless of the gender or sexuality of the people involved, deserve to be treated equally under the law. Rep. Langevin, a devout Catholic, has previously been supportive of LGBT rights, but his new position on marriage equality is a turning point – one which reflects the views of many lay members of the Catholic Church in the United States.

Over half of the United States population now supports marriage equality; among lay Catholics that number jumps to nearly three quarters when talking about any type of relationship recognition or civil marriage. The percentage of lay Catholics who support marriage equality is higher than among any other Christian denomination in the

United States. And yet, in every state in which the legislature or court system has moved towards marriage equality, the local Catholic Dioceses have vigorously objected. In the past week, Bishop Thomas J. Tobin of the Diocese of Providence, RI, has written multiple editorials claiming that allowing all loving couples the chance to marry would somehow be "dangerous." Now that marriage equality is no longer the current focus in Rhode Island, the diocese is targeting civil unions.

Other recent conflicts between lay Catholics and local dioceses have occurred in Minnesota, Maryland, and Iowa. In Minnesota, lay Catholics who support LGBT equality created ReturnTheDVD.org after their diocese sent out hundreds of thousands of anti-marriage equality DVDs called "Preserving Marriage in Minnesota." The founders of ReturnTheDVD.org stated in a letter accompanying 3000 returned and disabled DVDs that "the message in the DVD conflicts with core Christian values of love, compassion, tolerance, and respect" and asked the Archbishop to "[i]magine the positive effect the money spent on these DVDs could have had on homelessness and poverty in our communities, especially in this economy."

Catholic leaders are urging their followers to "make

(Continued on page 6)

Coalition: Report discredits accusation that gay priests are to blame

CHICAGO, IL, May 19, 2011—Equally Blessed coalition leader Jim FitzGerald of Call To Action released this statement about the John Jay College Final Report, “The Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States.”

“The John Jay College Final Report issued yesterday does faithful Catholics good service by discrediting the ungrounded, homophobic accusations of the Catholic League’s Bill Donohue and others that the church’s clergy sex abuse scandal was caused by gay priests. Now that research commissioned by the bishops themselves has shown Donohue’s rhetoric to be based in prejudice rather than in fact, we call on the US Conference of Catholic Bishops to speak out on the side of truth when Donohue and his allies perpetrate homophobic slurs in the name of Catholicism.

“As Catholics who love our church and want it to follow Jesus’ teachings of compassion and justice more closely, we are struck by the report’s comparison of the conditions that allowed child abuse to flourish to those that foster police brutality. Both sins require a closed, authoritarian structure that is suspicious of outsiders and mistrustful of the people it is supposed to serve. While the church, at last, is laboring mightily to overcome the shame of clergy sex abuse, the conditions that allow sexual and financial abuse and other misdeeds to flourish will remain in place as long as laypeople and women and men religious have no authority to hold their clerical leaders accountable for their behavior. We call upon the bishops to address these serious structural flaws in the church.

“While we are thankful that the report finally lifts the cloud of homophobia

from this debate, it has been too long in coming and raises several significant concerns. In particular, we find little support within the document for its authors’ assertion that the social upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s were responsible for the sexual abuse of children by Catholic priests. It is equally possible that those upheavals, which gave people new courage to oppose repressive authoritarian structures, made it more possible for abused Catholics who had long been carrying heavy secrets to come forward. Neither can the countercultural revolution in the United States be blamed for the global scope of the crisis, or for the fact that it continues today in places such as the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

“Like many of our brothers and sisters who advocate for the abused, we are dumbfounded by the decision to define children ages 10-13 as pubescent. This

classification, which should alarm parents with common sense regardless of theological persuasion, has the effect of making clergy abuse scandal look less sinister because fewer ‘children’ were involved. This is an insult to many survivors of abuse and their families, and we urge our brother and sister Catholics not to allow this error to mitigate their sense of horror at what has been done.” †

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.

GOP’s Kriesel, Catholic priest tussle over gay marriage amendment

By Andy Birkey
Minnesotaindependent.com
May 11, 2011

A feud between Rep. John Kriesel and Rev. John Echert of Holy Trinity/Saint Augustine Parish in South St. Paul erupted on Catholic blogs on Tuesday. Kriesel, a Republican who opposes putting an anti-gay marriage amendment on the ballot in 2012, received a letter from Echert that said the parish was launching a campaign to ban gay marriage in the Minnesota Constitution. Kriesel’s office warned the parish about violating its tax status by lobbying.

Echert sent the following to Kriesel: “Dear Representative Kriesel: Greetings from Father John Echert, Pastor of the Parishes of Holy Trinity and St. Augustine in South St. Paul. I am writing to you specifically in regards to the proposed Marriage Amendment under consideration here in Minnesota in light of an email exchange which you recently had with my Associate Pastor, Father Robert Grabner.

“Within your response you wrote, ‘Unfortunately I do not support the Mar-

riage Amendment and will not be voting for it.’ I am very saddened to learn this, especially since I had encouraged one of our parishioners, one of your campaign advocates, to have you come to our parish Fall Festival last October so that parishioners could meet you in the days leading up to the elections. Also, as a military Chaplain here in the Minnesota Air National Guard I have been using you as a heroic example of resiliency in our monthly Yellow Ribbon Program for recently returned deployers.

“I ask you to please reconsider your position on this critical matter. While we can legitimately debate issues related to finances and politics, those that are grounded upon basic moral principles and family values are rooted in the laws of God. I am commencing this week with a parish campaign to promote support for a Marriage Amendment in Minnesota; I



Rep. John Kriesel



Rev. John Echert

hope that you will be among those elected officials upon whom we can count for your efforts at the leadership level to protect traditional marriage in our state.

Sincerely,
Fr. John Echert”

An aide to Kriesel sent back this response:

“Mr. Echert, I would like to respectfully remind you that the Internal Revenue Service frowns upon churches and religious organizations devoting time to influencing legislation. Your admission of the commencement of a politically involved ‘campaign’ will probably violate several state and federal tax provisions.”

Echert called the response “rude,” “threatening” and “outright insulting.”

“Folks, God help us if the day has come when the Church cannot speak out on moral issues,” Echert wrote in the parish’s bulletin (PDF). “If the staffer or

Representative Kriesel has a mind to sic the IRS on me or our parishes here in South St. Paul, they better plan to take on the Archdiocese of St. Paul, the Minnesota Catholic Conference, the bishops of Minnesota and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, for that matter, for our united opposition to abortion and support for the protection of traditional marriage.”

Kriesel’s office later clarified his remarks: “Since the initial exchange, Father Echert and I have been in contact and have cleared things up. The original email was misinterpreted and we have since come to an understanding. It was never meant to be any manner of threat and no manner of disrespect was intended whatsoever.”

According to the Pew Forum, churches are subject to the same lobbying restrictions as nonprofit groups. They cannot devote a substantial portion of their yearly spending on lobbying for or against legislation or ballot initiatives and the IRS generally views substantial as more than 20 percent but that also depends on a church’s total expenditures. †

Gays and the Church: Two Stories from Today

By James Martin, SJ
americamagazine.org/blog
June 3, 2011

You won’t be surprised to discover that we get all kinds of crazy letters here. And I don’t mean simply letters that seem odd or strange, or even letters that I don’t fully understand—I mean crazy. As a Jesuit friend told me last night, “No nut like a religious nut.” One fellow sends me (regularly) a packet of folded-up colored paper with instructions on how this can be used to communicate with angels. Another correspondent mails pages and pages of tiny, mostly illegible, scrawl covering every inch of several pages, with Gospel passages underlined three times. So one learns to discount the nuttier letters. And one learns to accept more easily criticism from “non-nutty” people as well, even when it’s delivered with sarcasm and invective. Finally, one learns to accept criticism from intelligent writers who write intelligently and help you see where you are being imprecise, inconsiderate, inaccurate or just plain wrong. Overall, when it comes to criticism, one’s skin gets thicker over time.

On the other hand, some letters tend to stick out. This morning I was opening up yesterday’s mail and noticed an envelope without a return address (never a good sign). Inside was a copy of an Of

Many Things column I had written about the beatification of John Paul II. In the article I mentioned that Blessed John Paul had, at one point in his papacy, removed Pedro Arrupe, S.J., the superior general of the Jesuits, from his post in 1981, a move that dismayed many Jesuits. The letter-writer had highlighted those few sentences in bright yellow. Next to it was a Post-it that read, in full: “But Jimmy, so many Jesuits were screaming fags that something had to be done, you know, to clean the filth out of the clergy.”

Not the pleasantest thing to read in the morning. And who knows whether this person is a subscriber or not. (He, or she, seems a bit cowardly though: the lack of a return address demonstrated a lack of resolve.) Odds are, though, if he’s reading the print version of the magazine, he’s probably Catholic, and even if he’s not a subscriber is likely reading it in a parish or a library. (We don’t sell on newsstands.) And he knew enough to quote Pope Benedict XVI on the “filth” in the church-- referring to pedophiles not gays, but no matter.

Homophobia is still out there, no matter how much we would wish to think of ourselves as an enlightened culture, and exists in our church. Thus, the need for June as “LGBT month,” as just proclaimed by President Obama.

On the other side of the coin, however, is a surprising op-ed in a Buffalo

newspaper by Bishop Joseph Sullivan, retired auxiliary bishop of Brooklyn. Someone sent me the link to his article just a few hours after I had read the anonymous letter this morning. In his piece, entitled “Catholics are Reaching out to the LGBT Community,” the bishop writes, in part:

Catholics and other religious people who support LGBT rights do so because of their experience of engagement with members of the LGBT community. They are not rebels in their churches, but people who have taken spiritual messages of inclusiveness and welcoming to heart. They are taking the church’s teaching on social justice and applying it to pastoral practice in engaging the LGBT community.

We see these teachings play out as Catholics across the country engage in prayerful and meaningful dialogues about understanding and embracing the LGBT community. This dialogue is happening amongst faithful families, in student groups on the campuses of Catholic universities, and within church congregations. This dialogue is admittedly difficult, at times, but important.

More than a decade ago, the U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a graceful message, “Always Our Children,” which reminded us, “For St. Paul love is the greatest of spiritual gifts. St. John considers love to be the most certain sign of God’s presence.” For most

Catholics, there can be no statement that better summarizes an attitude of welcoming of our LGBT brothers and sisters than those of Jesus, “love one another as I have loved you.”

In fact, it’s a surprise to hear a bishop use the term “LGBT,” which stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender. Many Catholic leaders still use “homosexual,” a word that the gay community has moved away from. (And shouldn’t a group of people be free to call themselves what they want?)

In any event, it’s the classic “on the one hand, on the other hand.” On the one hand, despite warnings against discrimination against gays in the Catechism, which calls for gays and lesbians to be treated with “respect, sensitivity and compassion,” there is still homophobia in the church. (The letter I received is only one of many examples that could be adduced.) On the other, there are many Catholics like Bishop Sullivan, who are trying to apply Gospel values to care pastorally for a group of marginalized people. It’s a big church, as one friend likes to say.

And I hope that as our big church moves ahead, it will sound more like Bishop Sullivan and less like my anonymous friend. †

(See related story on page 1)

Sexual Diversity and the Church: Time for a Serious Conversation?

By Paul Lakeland

www.huffingtonpost.com
May 10, 2011

From my position at Fairfield University I have been keeping a close watch on the U.S. Catholic Church for exactly 30 years. In this time I have seen attitudes change among friends, colleagues and students in many ways. One of them is the cultural acceptability of sexual diversity in the Church. Here in the second decade of the 21st century, we seem to be at a turning point. The time has clearly come for a serious conversation. Every year fewer people, especially among the young, are willing to argue for heterosexual normativity, and that speaks loudly for a future without discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Strikingly, of all American Christian groups, Catholics are the most supportive of same-sex marriage and/or civil unions: a whopping 74 percent expressed support

in a recent poll from the Public Research Institute. This is despite the strong opposition of their own bishops.

One important step toward a more open conversation will be taken this coming fall, when, under the collective heading of "More Than a Monologue: Sexual Diversity and the Catholic Church," two Jesuit universities and two interdenominational divinity schools will host a series of four day-long conferences open to the public. Fordham University and Fairfield University, Union Theological Seminary and Yale University Divinity School will each create distinct opportunities for all who wish to attend to speak and to listen to the many and varied voices that Catholic have on this issue.



Paul Lakeland

What do you do in the Catholic Church when the bishops and the Catholic population as a whole seem to be so far apart on something that everyone thinks is important? On the part of the bishops, simply speaking louder against equality is no solution. Any good teacher knows that a failure to communicate cannot simply be blamed on the students. Sometimes it is plainly the fault of the teacher, whether poor content or poor presentation. Good bishops, like good teachers, know to examine their

methods and maybe even their content when reception of what they have to say is on the wane. And Catholics as a whole need to know why they believe what they say they believe and what are the positions and opinions of their fellow religionists who come to very different conclusions. Perhaps, everyone needs to take

a deep breath.

The issue of Church opposition to same-sex marriage or civil union is not the heart of the problem. It is simply a symbol of marginalization. The truth of the matter is that Catholic gays and lesbians, transgendered and bisexual Catholics, live in a Church which they perceive is not welcoming them as the people God made them to be, created surely "in the image and likeness of God." In civil law the struggles against discrimination and the movement for marriage equality may well primarily be issues of civil and human rights. In the Church they are that and much more. To be made in the image and likeness of God, as the Christian tradition sees it, is to be made -- body and

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.



Alabama

Mobile: Spring Hill College

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
Joliet: University of St. Francis
River Forest: Dominican University in Illinois
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
Chicopee: Elms 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

Manchester: St. Anselm College
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
Brooklyn and Patchogue: St. Joseph College
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: LeMoyné 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

What do you do in the Catholic Church when the bishops and the Catholic population as a whole seem to be so far apart on something that everyone thinks is important?

soul -- to reflect the Trinity, that is to be made for love and relationality. When the Church requires life-long celibacy of all people who are not heterosexual (the demand it makes of homosexuals who wish to participate fully in Church life), it imposes a sanction which is, in effect, the imposition of a life of less love and human relationship than is available to heterosexual Christians. A call to be less loving, body and soul, is a call to be less in the image and likeness of God.

Bishops have responsibilities to defend law and doctrine, and sometimes that makes it hard for them to hear the voice of the Spirit moving through the body of the baptized. Catholic laypeople, as they exercise their ministry in the secular world, are primarily motivated by their ordinary human experience, living and working alongside their lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender friends and family. Catholic or not, these people have the same human needs and concerns as their heterosexual counterparts, they are often role models of Christian life and love, and they look to the Church for acceptance as the people they are.

The objective of the public conference series, "More Than a Monologue," is to raise awareness and generate vigorous debate on sexual diversity issues within the community of faith and beyond to the broader civic and political worlds that the Catholic Church and the Catholic people inhabit. The doors of the conferences will be open to all, whatever their points of view, in the confident expectation that true dialogue and honest conversation is the way forward. The conference organizers are motivated by a deep love of their Catholic tradition. "More Than a Monologue" is an act of faith and hope that there is a sure and full place in the Church for people of diverse sexual orientation and experience. †

Paul Lakeland, one of the "More Than a Monologue" conference organizers, is the Aloysius P. Kelley S.J. Professor of Catholic Studies and Director of the Center for Catholic Studies at Fairfield University.

Redefining Catholic charity

By Nicole Sotelo
Ncronline.org
June 2, 2011

If a community lost \$7.5 million in state contracts, 58 employees lost their jobs, and 350 children were displaced, one would hope that a charitable organization would offer support. Unfortunately, it is Catholic Charities in Rockford, IL, that has created this dire situation.

Last week, Catholic Charities in Rockford, IL announced they would stop state-funded adoption and foster care services to avoid potentially placing children in homes of same-gender couples. The move came a week in advance of Illinois' new civil union legislation that provides state recognition of same-gender couples.

They are the fourth Catholic Charities affiliate to discontinue its services in response to church pressure and civil legislation over same-gender unions. Catholic Charities in Boston, San Francisco, and Washington, DC have each altered their care over the last five years. This newest closure in Rockford affects 350 children and 58 employees whose jobs will be eliminated.

Catholicism holds a distinguished legacy of charity. We pride ourselves on the venerable charitable organizations that have been built by generations of hard working and generous Catholics: the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Knights of Columbus, Catholic Relief Services and Catholic Charities to name a few.

Charity is such an esteemed value that Pope Benedict XVI dedicated his first social encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate*, to the topic. However, it was also under Pope Benedict XVI's watch, while he was head of the Congregation for the

Doctrine of Faith, that a 2003 document was issued claiming that legal recognition of same-gender couples "would be the redefinition of marriage" and discouraged placing adopted children in these families.

Penny Wiegert, the Rockford, Ill. diocesan director of communications, echoed similar sentiments when she spoke last week at the press conference that announced the discontinuance of adoption services: "We simply cannot compromise the spirit that motivates us to deliver quality, professional services to families by letting our state define our religious teachings."

But the state is not redefining religious teaching. The state only affects civil legislation. Catholic Charities is the one that has chosen to react and, in doing so, is redefining the very notion of Catholic charity: from serving those in need, to serving those who pass a litmus test.

Where should we place the limit on our charity? If we turn away same-gender couples, do we also turn away couples using birth control?

Most Catholics would not place boundaries on care. They recognize that same-gender couples provide loving, stable homes for vulnerable children and youth. A Public Religion Research Institute poll in September 2010 showed that 60 percent of U.S. Catholics support allowing gay and lesbian couples to adopt children, seven points higher than the general public.

In cutting off its state-funded adoption and foster care services, Catholics Charities risks redefining charity and becoming known not for service but for self-service; putting polity in front of people. †

over some other issue, the Church of England will face a keen dilemma.

It was clear from the debate over the ordination of women that many Anglicans do not think their Church can let itself fall too far behind changing social norms. It may even persuade itself that what was demanded from it was in fact Christian: in this case, that Christian teaching is after all compatible with gay marriage. But this is Erastianism by another name – adjusting church doctrine in response to changes in secular opinion is in principle no different from making church doctrine subservient to secular rulers. If that is the price of establishment, it is too high.

Public opinion cannot be relied on as a source of moral authority. The consensus at any time may favour the restoration of capital punishment; not so long ago it wanted homosexuals locked up; nineteenth-century public opinion did not think women should have the vote; eighteenth-century public opinion supported slavery. There were Christian voices involved in the reform of all those positions, but they were voices of protest grounded in Scripture, tradition and natural law, not of conformity to prevailing social norms.

The time may have come to accept that there will have to be at least two understandings of marriage side by side, and that each should go its own way. As in Europe, it is perfectly viable to have church marriage validated by religious authorities and secular marriage validated by state authorities, and for a couple that wishes to, to undergo both forms. Then there would no longer be any suggestion that the secular form of marriage is part of the Christian legacy. There are grounds, indeed, for doubting whether it has been so for some time. †

Catholic support

Letter to the Editor
The Chicago Tribune
May 31, 2011

It's time to break the Catholic stereotypes.

A recent landmark study showed that 71 percent of Catholics in the United States support civil marriage for same-gender couples.

On June 1, Illinois will ring in civil unions for same-gender couples and opposite-gender couples because of legislation signed into law earlier this year by Gov. Pat Quinn, himself a Catholic.

Our organizations, Call To Action and Dignity, are part of Equally Blessed, a coalition of faithful Catholics who support full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people both in the church and in civil society.

Despite common misconceptions, Catholics are actually more supportive of fair treatment for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people than the general public.

On a range of issues — from laws that would protect gay and lesbian people against discrimination in the workplace to open military service — Catholics consistently poll at least four points higher than the general population.

While some Catholics still oppose fair treatment under law, the majority of Catholics follow the faith's long tradition of social justice teachings that call us to recognize the dignity of each human as God created him or her, and to treat everyone equally and compassionately.

Jesus calls us to do no less.

So this June, we celebrate the civil unions of our friends, family members and fellow parishioners. We celebrate our faith that calls us to treat one another as we would wish to be treated.

When people are asked if they support marriage equality for all, Catholics here in Illinois and across the country are saying "I do!" †

— **Bob Heineman**, coordinator, Call To Action, Chicago
— **Chris Pett**, president, Dignity, Chicago

Diocese stops adoption, foster services in wake of anti-bias law

(Continued from page 1)

ment at last revealed what so many also suspected to be the case. That his organization cared more about enforcing its dogma than about the welfare of children in its care."

Jennifer Chrisler, executive director of the Family Equality Council, offered her perspective. "Our country is facing a child welfare crisis with 424,000 children in foster care waiting for loving, stable homes," she said. "Placement agencies have an obligation to consider the best interests of these children and welcome any qualified parent who is committed to providing a home for a child in foster care."

The Family Equality Council is a national advocacy organization for LGBT parents and children.

Marianne Duddy-Burke, executive director of Dignity/USA, even offered to introduce Gilligan to her family.

"I invite Mr. Gilligan, or any other Catholic Charities or diocesan official, to come and talk with my kids and see how they feel about having two moms," she said.

"Come for dinner, and listen to our daughters pray for people who don't have enough to eat or homes to live in, or sit with us as we read books chosen to reinforce their self-esteem. Listen to my partner sing the girls to sleep with songs she wrote just for them. Then tell us that lesbian and gay people can't be good foster or adoptive parents," Duddy-Burke added.

Altogether, the Rockford diocese's decision to end its foster-care and adoption services also hit close to home for Chicago lesbian and theater professional Heather Schmucker. "I've always been very proud to say I was adopted through Catholic Charities [in Pennsylvania, 34 years ago]," she said, adding, "I'm incredibly grateful for so many of the core values I learned growing up Catholic—compassion, fairness, generosity, service, a commitment to social justice, and a responsibility to those most vulnerable in our society."

As Schmucker explained, "What

saddens me most about the Diocese of Rockford's decision is that it simply stands in opposition to those very basic values that are truly at the heart of Catholic teaching."

Sure enough, Rockford diocesan and Illinois Catholic Conference officials may well be taking their cues from Rome. A 2003 Vatican document called gay adoptions "gravely immoral."

The document, "Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons," stated, "Allowing children to be adopted by persons living in such unions would actually mean doing violence to these children, in the sense that their condition of dependency would be used to place them in an environment that is not conducive to their full development."

However, a Catholic majority seems to disagree with the Vatican point of view. Recent polling found that 60 percent of American Catholics nationwide say same-sex couples should not be limited in their ability to adopt or foster children, according to the Public Religion Research Institute.

The Rockford diocese's decision to drop foster care and adoption services is not unusual.

Nationwide, Catholic Charities in the Boston (2006), San Francisco (2006), and Washington, D.C., (2010) archdioceses ended their programs rather than comply with state and city non-discrimination laws.

In Boston and San Francisco, for example, despite the Vatican's decrying of gay adoptions as "gravely immoral," Catholic Charities agencies openly acknowledged that through their programs, gay men and lesbians had adopted a small number of hard-to-place foster children.

"Children, especially those with special needs, have had very successful adoptions by caring and competent individuals and couples who also happened to be gay," said Charles Martel, a Boston-based licensed clinical social worker now in private practice. †

Marriage à la mode

Editorial
The Tablet
London, England
February 19, 2011

Throughout the West, the issue of gay marriage has been used as the spearhead of a secularising agenda, propelled by those who want to rid modern civilisation of all traces of its Christian roots. Paradoxically, within the gay community itself the most vociferous supporters of gay marriage have been gay Christians, who want to be given an equal place in the life of Christian institutions rather than to overthrow them. Both these views are reflected in church reactions to government proposals in response to gay pressure, for instance for allowing a religious element in civil partnership ceremonies – at present forbidden by law – and even allowing a partnership or marriage ceremony in a church or synagogue. The Quakers, some liberal synagogues and the Unitarian Church would welcome that permission.

There is apparently no question at this time of the Roman Catholic Church, for instance, being forced to conduct gay weddings against its principles, though it could just conceivably find itself eventually facing damages claims from aggrieved Catholic gay couples. Nevertheless, all would be touched by a change in the basic law of marriage to make it include same-sex partners. None more so than the Church of England. On account of its established status as a national Church, it has a strong stake in keeping the law of marriage in as close proximity to Christian teaching as possible. But this can work both ways. If the law conforms to public opinion as channelled through Parliament rather than to traditional Christian teaching, over gay marriage or

St. Cecelia's Mass marking gay pride is back on schedule

By Laura J. Nelson and L. Finch
The Boston Globe
June 20, 2011

A Mass at St. Cecilia's Church intended to celebrate gay pride month that sparked controversy and was canceled by the Archdiocese of Boston has been rescheduled for next month, church officials said yesterday.

"See you all on July 10!" said Rainbow Ministry president John Kelly, throwing his hands into the air at an alternative service held outside the church last night. An audience of nearly 250 people, from children in baseball uniforms to elderly couples in their Sunday best, applauded.

The Rainbow Ministry of St. Cecilia's Church will host the Mass at 11 a.m. on that date.

Earlier this month, the church had announced in its bulletin that it planned to hold a Mass yesterday themed "All Are Welcome," to support Boston Pride Month. But following a flurry of criticism from bloggers and conservative Catholics, the archdiocese canceled the Mass.

Instead, the Rainbow Ministry sponsored last night's open-air prayer service, also themed "All Are Welcome."

Members of the congregation led readings, hymns, and prayers from a podium set up on the sidewalk across the street from the church on Belvidere Street near the Berklee College of Music. As the evening sun flooded the block with warm light, some parishioners listened to the service gathered in a semicircle around the speakers, while others filled the shaded church steps.

One young woman could be seen listening from the third floor of a red-brick building next door, her head stuck out the window looking down on the scene. Police blocked off part of the street for the service.

"Remind us that what unites us is greater than what divides us," parish council member Susan Donnelly said during the opening prayer.

"Amen!" someone in the crowd murmured.

St. Cecilia's congregation has a large gay and lesbian population, many of

whom arrived after the South End's predominantly gay Jesuit Urban Center closed in 2007, parishioners said. Almost 200 members of St. Cecilia's are active in its Rainbow Ministry, which hosts events for members and supporters of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community.

Later in the half-hour service, in lieu of a homily, Richard Iandoli, vice chairman of the parish council, defended St. Cecilia's acceptance of its gay congregation members, sometimes choking back tears as he looked across the makeshift lectern.

"To single out a group for pastoral care is neither unusual nor unorthodox," Iandoli said, citing special ser-

vices planned for inmates, invalids, and college students. "We do not want to homogenize or hide our differences."

Iandoli also defended gay and lesbian churchgoers against the controversy that the canceled Mass has sparked.

"We are not immature or sinful because we are gay or lesbian or transgender," Iandoli said. "We are children of God, just like everyone else."

Peter Meade of the Boston Redevelopment Authority, who is a member of the parish, led the group through a New Testament reading from the book of Matthew in which Jesus tells the weary to give their troubles to him.

"When this church says 'All are

welcome,' they mean it," Meade said. "They accept all comers, from all walks of life."

A line from the reading, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light," was the theme of much of Iandoli's message, as he reminded the congregation to support each other until the controversy passed.

Iandoli said members of the congregation's parish council and the Rainbow Ministry hope to meet with Cardinal Sean O'Malley or other archdiocese officials about the controversy.

"This has been a very hurtful few weeks, but there is a beautiful opportunity that has come out of it," Iandoli said.

The Rev. Rick Walsh, associate director of the Paulist Center nearby, said he attended the service to show his solidarity for a congregation that was struggling with a hot-button issue. "They are our neighbors," Walsh said. "We have a sizable gay and lesbian population, too, and I want to show my support."

The Rev. John Unni did not attend the prayer service.

Mayor Thomas M. Menino's office had scheduled an appearance by the mayor at the service but he did not come. Christopher Loh, a spokesman for Menino, said the mayor probably had a scheduling conflict, but plans to attend the July 10 Mass.

The archdiocese's actions — despite the rescheduled Mass — should serve as a wake-up call for Catholics to "come out of the closet" in support of fellow gay parishioners, said Shawn Fiedler, 22, of Allston.

"It saddens me that the church follows bloggers and not the Holy Spirit," Fiedler said, a silver cross hanging around his neck.

"We're not going to move forward that way."

Before the congregation recited the final prayer together, as the soft evening light began to fade, Iandoli emphasized again the theme "All are welcome."

"You are welcome here, and you will have a voice," Iandoli said. "You will have dignity here. You will have a home."

✦

'All Are Welcome'

The Mass that wasn't

Editorial

The Boston Globe
June 14, 2011

The Catholic Church's teachings on homosexuality are more nuanced than many Americans realize. Similar to sex outside of a marriage between a man and a woman, gay sex is deemed sinful. But homosexuals, as individuals, remain "called to holiness" and "precious in God's eye," in the words of Cardinal Sean O'Malley. Those nuances often get lost in the fury of the culture wars. So while heterosexuals who aren't strictly observing the church's teachings — whether on divorce, remarriage, or sex outside marriage — don't feel ostracized, gays often do.

That's why it seemed like an eminently generous gesture when St. Cecilia Parish in the Back Bay planned a service for June 19 that would commemorate Gay Pride Month. The church's announcement speaks eloquently to its benign intent: "The theme of the liturgy, 'All Are Welcome,' honors Christ's message of hope and salvation to all people. We will also celebrate the diverse community that finds its home at St. Cecilia." The service seemed likely to stress aspects of church teaching that would resonate for a parish with a number of gay members.

Still, even that expression of goodwill was too direct an endorsement of homosexuality for the Boston Archdiocese, which ordered the parish to amend its plans. O'Malley, who has sought to make the church welcoming in other ways, should have let St. Cecilia's go forward. No one would have had the misimpression that the church was endorsing gay sex, but the inclusive service would have been an important acknowledgement that gay Catholics exist. ✦

Boston Priest Says all are welcome at St. Cecelia's parish

(Continued from page 1)

Members of the Rainbow Ministry first suggested the Mass to Unni six to eight weeks ago, he said, and he told them yes, "not knowing what would happen," he said.

Instead of the Mass, the Rainbow Ministry will hold a sidewalk prayer service next Sunday at 6 p.m., with readings and reflections from laypeople, said Richard Iandoli, vice chairman of the parish council.

Rainbow Ministry member Michael Skully expressed his frustrations with the archdiocese and said he "fully expected to be standing in front of locked doors" next Sunday.

But Donilon said the archdiocese has no objection to the service, especially if it isn't held inside.

"This should not be about conflict," Donilon said. "The teachings of the Catholic Church are set in stone, but that

doesn't stop us from loving people from different walks of life."

Some churchgoers speculated after the 9:30 a.m. Mass that Unni would be less outspoken at the 11 a.m. service, which Bishop Robert F. Hennessey attended as part of Confirmation Sunday. Instead, Unni gave a similarly strong homily, then addressed Hennessey directly.

"Like the bishop said, good love always requires sacrifice," Unni said. "We are being called to do not what is easy, but what is holy."

At one point, he called the conservative bloggers who criticized the Mass "unbelievably hurtful" and said he was trying to "not just succumb to being told what to do."

"We are not this renegade, crazy, liberal church," Unni said, to smiles and nods from the pews. "We're just Christians trying to live the gospel."

Rainbow Ministry president John Kelly emphasized the importance of esprit de corps at the end of a week they said has made them question their allegiance to the Catholic Church. More than 200 gay and straight members of the congregation wore buttons that displayed a cross, a rainbow, and the phrase "All Are Welcome."

"I went straight to the table to pick one up," said James Pyke, a parishioner from the South End. "I believe firmly in the teaching 'Love your neighbor,' and it's important to support our sense of community here."

Some at yesterday's Mass, like Dave Macaulay of Salem, said they had tried many churches before they felt welcome at St. Cecilia's.

"It's already hard to be a gay man in the Catholic Church," said Macaulay, who wore his "All Are Welcome" button upside-down to protest the archdio-

cese's decision. "But now, I'm told I'm not welcome?"

Unni told the congregation he had had similar feelings of frustration and doubt since the archdiocese's announcement Friday. He left the congregation with two reminders: Bless those who curse you, and turn the other cheek. ✦

U.S. Catholics Support Gay Marriage

(Continued from page 2)

[their] voices heard" (as was written in a joint statement released in late February by three Maryland and Washington Catholic leaders) but a majority of those voices disagree with the Church's official position on marriage equality. This disconnect may speak to a deeper divide between lay Catholics and the church hierarchy. Like the group in Minnesota, many lay Catholics have chosen to express their faith through work on issues of social justice, like poverty and homelessness, rather than the injustice of denying LGBT Americans the ability to marry whomever they love.

When the media speaks about the "Catholic position" on marriage equality, writers and reporters need to reflect the fact that the church's official position is very different from the position the majority of its members hold in their hearts. If they do not, they are telling an incomplete story. ✦

H.S. bars lesbian student from bringing female date to prom

By Larry McShane
N.Y. Daily News
May 13, 2011

A Long Island Catholic high school senior barred from bringing her ex-girlfriend to the prom can come by herself, find a male date - or just stay home.

Angelina Lange, 17, of Bay Shore, was turned down by St. Anthony's High School administrators when she asked about a same-sex couple attending the annual event.

Brother Gary Cregan, principal of the Roman Catholic school, said the decision was nothing personal - just a reflection of the school's religious tenets.

"Our Catholic faith specifies that marriage involve a man and a woman and our policies on dating must reflect that," Cregan told MSNBC.com. "We mean no malice or disrespect."

Lange, a good student who transferred into St. Anthony's as a junior, isn't challenging the school's decision - not that she would have much leverage.

As a private institution, St. Anthony's can enforce its own restrictions on school events. But local gay rights activist James Fallarino told MSNBC.com that the decision was wrong-headed.

"The message is that the school doesn't really care about its students and that's not a good message," said Fallarino, of the Long Island Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Services Network. ✦



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
Carlsbad: 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. Agatha, 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
Ross: St. Anselm
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
Stanford: Catholic Community at Stanford University
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

Delaware

North Wilmington: Holy Child
Wilmington: St. Joseph

District of Columbia

Holy Trinity, St. Aloysius, St. Matthew Cathedral

Florida

Cocoa Beach: Our Savior
Daytona Beach: Our Lady of Lourdes
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
Johnston City: St. Paul
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

Coralville: St. Thomas More

Kentucky

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

Louisiana

New Orleans: St. Augustine

Maine

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

Maryland

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

Massachusetts

Boston: Paulist Center, St. Anthony Shrine, St. Cecilia
East Longmeadow: St. Michael
Newton: St. Ignatius
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

Lawrenceville: St. Ann
Long Beach Island: St. Francis of Assisi
Maplewood: St. Joseph
Trenton Falls: St. Anselm

New Mexico

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

New York

Albany: St. Vincent DePaul
Baldwinsville: St. Augustine
Bellmore: St. Barnabas the Apostle
Bellport: Mary Immaculate
Brooklyn: St. Andrew the Apostle, St. Boniface, St. Athanasius, St. Augustine, Immaculate Heart of Mary
Deer Park: Ss. Cyril and Methodius
East Islip: St. Mary
Elmira: St. Mary
Fairport: Church of the Assumption
Henrietta: Good Shepherd
Manhattan: Holy Name of Jesus, St. Francis Xavier, St. Paul the Apostle, Church of the Ascension, St. Francis of Assisi
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
Wading River: St. John the Baptist
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 Koionia 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, St. Mary's
Wickford: St. Bernard

Tennessee

Memphis: Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception

Texas

Colleyville: Good Shepherd
Dallas: Holy Trinity
El Paso: All Saints
Houston: St. Anne
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,
Menomonee Falls: Good Shepherd
Milwaukee: Good Shepherd, Prince of Peace, Trinity-Guadalupe

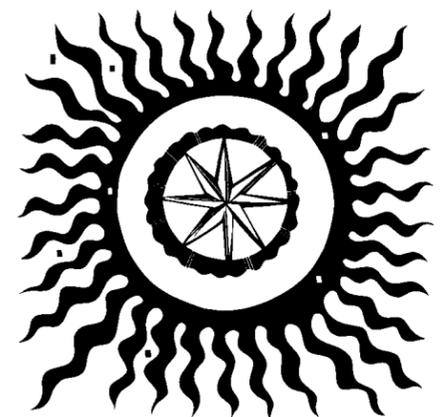
Canada

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

England

London: Our Lady of the Assumption & St. Gregory

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



International News

MALTA

Gay Christians call on Pope to reconsider same-sex relationships

Malta today.com
June 11, 2011

The organisation for gay Christians Drachma has joined the European Forum of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual Christian groups in a letter to Pope Benedict calling on him to condemn acts of violence against gay people and call for the lifting the penalisation of homosexual acts worldwide.

In the letter signed by Diane Xuereb and Dr Michael Brinkschröder, the forum says that silence from the Pope would be interpreted by abusers as "consent to their actions."

Xuereb and Brinkschröder also called on the Pope to reconsider the Church's position on same-sex and transgender relationships and support these relationships being accepted and blessed in the Church.

"We appeal to Your Holiness to cease to urge Catholics to vote against the law authorising same-sex relationships. Same-sex and transgender rela-

tionships are not dangerous for traditional family existence but in fact support and enhance marriage and family values."

In December 2008 the Holy See refused to support the United Nations declaration on sexual orientation and gender identity. This declaration included a paragraph calling upon States to ensure that sexual orientation or gender identity may under no circumstances be the basis for criminal penalties, in



Gay rights activists protest 'reparative treatment' being performed by religious groups in Malta.

particular executions, arrests or detention. The group said the Pope must provide clear information to Christians concerning the passages of the Bible that are used to justify these abhorrent actions. "As with the passages supporting slavery, the verses advocating the killing of persons engaged in same-sex sexual activity must not be interpreted literally," the forum said.

It also called on the Pope to make sure "reparative therapy" – where Catholic clergy reportedly tries to change people's sexual orientation – is no longer preached.

The forum said an official Church demand for LGBT people to live in sexual abstinence leads to suicides and severe forms of depression as they try to be obedient to the church's teachings. "As science has testified that homosexuality is a variant of sexuality, we appeal that this scientific knowledge is included in the teaching of the church."

Drachma said the Catechism of the Catholic Church says that homosexual persons should be treated with respect, compassion and sensitivity. "If this was truly the case then compassion would not be necessary. Homophobic behaviour and opinions are especially painful when perpetrated by Christians - both clergy and laity, and are not in keeping with showing respect." ✦

CANADA

Catholic High School Bans Rainbows At Pro-LGBT Event

By Amelia Thomson-DeVeaux
Care2.com
June 7, 2011

A Catholic high school in Mississauga, Canada, took a strange tack in curtailing the activities of its "unofficial" gay-straight alliance: it banned rainbows from a student-run anti-homophobia event. The students got around the ban by baking cupcakes and dyeing them different colors to form a rainbow. They then sold the cupcakes and raised more than \$200 for charity. But the school then informed them that they could not donate the money to any LGBT-related organization. Instead, they were told to donate to a Catholic homeless shelter.

The students, understandably, are outraged. And the whole episode is part of a peculiar effort for Catholic schools to navigate students' desire to support gay rights, despite the Vatican's stance on homosexuality. Students were not allowed to form gay-straight alliances, but they were permitted to form groups to combat homophobia or bullying. And they were allowed to have a booth against homophobia during the school's social justice week, but not to display a rainbow flag. This, school officials said,

would "lead to activism." The students were also not permitted to display materials about trans health, sexual orientation and gender identity, or AIDS.

"We proposed a whole bunch of resources and only about four got approved, and the ones that were approved were censored," said Leanne Iskander, the founder of the unofficial GSA. "They wouldn't let us have this one booklet because it had one or two sentences on safe sex."

"The Catholic board gave the students a carrot to try to silence them when they announced the anti-bullying clubs. But it's not enough and it's not meeting the needs of youth," explained one Canadian gay rights activist who has advised the students. "The students recognize that and they are fighting for what they want."

The students are planning to march in a Pride Parade, despite the fact that they are not allowed to mention the school's name. During the parade, they will give out buttons encouraging support for gay-straight alliances in Catholic schools.

"Marching in Pride is important to us because it will allow us to advocate for GSAs in Catholic Schools to a large

audience," explained Iskander. "Handing out buttons will be an excellent way to spread the message that GSAs are needed in Catholic schools."

The spokesman for the school's board, Bruce Campbell, had some unconvincing excuses for the board's decisions. He said that the rainbow was banned, not because the board has anything against rainbows, but because an "in-house logo" had already been designed. For a later event, he said that putting up a rainbow flag "certainly wouldn't be outside the realm that is something acceptable to ask." Although who knows what kind of event outside

his control - like the "logo" - would stand in the way when that day rolled around.

It's inspiring to see students like Iskander fighting for the right to advocate for social justice in their schools, even when they're up against an institution as powerful and complex as the Catholic Church. But, as Anna North points out on the blog "Jezebel," all of these actions are making Iskander's school look pretty desperate. After all, as she writes, "When you have to start banning rainbows to keep kids from speaking up for what they believe in, it might be time to just listen." ✦

Brazil Supreme Court Rules in Favor of Same-Sex Civil Unions

By Nathaniel Hines
Allvoices.com
May 13, 2011

The 11-seat Brazilian Supreme Court bench ruled 10-0 with one abstention that same-sex couples garnered the same legal rights as married heterosexuals. The ruling allows gay couples the same financial and social rights as those enjoyed by their counterparts in heterosexual relationships.

According to Brazilian authorities, the predominately Roman Catholic nation has an estimated 60,000 gay couples. In South America, Brazil joins Argentina and Uruguay to extend those rights to allow gay unions with the ancillary benefits of marriage.

"The freedom to pursue one's own sexuality is part of an individual's freedom of expression," said Justice Carlos Ayres Britto, the author of the ruling.

Gay activists welcomed the decision, saying it marked an "historic day" for the country.

"The degree of civilization of a country can be measured by the way people in a nation treat their homosexual community," Claudio Nascimento, head of Rio de Janeiro state's Gay, Lesbian and Transsexuals Committee said, according to O Globo news agency.

Although the ruling did not overtly recognize gay marriage, it put stable civil

partnerships of same-sex couples, the same footing as marriage. The Justices outlined a process by which same sex couples will be able to register their civil partnerships with solicitors and public bodies, giving them proper inheritance and pension rights.

Brazil's Roman Catholic Church submitted arguments against the decision to allow civil unions, saying the only union referred to within Brazil's constitution was that between a man and a woman. Newly minted president Dilma Rousseff made the issue of same-sex marriage one of her big social policy reforms.

Stable unions can be registered with a legal professional, an official office or proved by a joint bank account or proof of living at the same address.

If a same-sex couple in Brazil can prove their relationship falls into this category they are entitled to the following rights:

The National Social Security Institute will regard them no differently to a married couple in the areas of death and pension benefits.

Partners can receive insurance benefits

Partners can be declared as dependents for income tax purposes

Non-nationals partnered to Brazilians can receive residency permits. ✦



John McNeill in Rome for Europride

U.S. theologian John McNeill (seated) was in Rome, Italy, for Europride 2011, speaking at the interfaith conference entitled "Homosexual and Transsexual People and Christian Churches in Europe: Fears and Opportunities for a Full Acceptance and Inclusion." A biographical documentary film of McNeill's life, *Taking a Chance on God*, premiered during the 12-day LGBT festival. Standing next to John is his partner, Charles Chiarelli, and behind him is filmmaker Brendan Fay. ✦