

BANDINGS

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At New Ways Ministry Symposium

Bishop Geoffrey Robinson urges change in 'church teaching concerning all sexual relationships'

By Jerry Filteau
The National Catholic Reporter
March 16, 2012

BALTIMORE -- At the Seventh National Symposium on Catholicism and Homosexuality, retired Australian Bishop Geoffrey Robinson called Friday for "a new study of everything to do with sexuality" -- a kind of study that he predicted "would have a profound influence on church teaching concerning all sexual relationships, both heterosexual and homosexual."

"If [church] teaching on homosexual acts is ever to change, the basic teaching governing all sexual acts must change," he said.

Robinson, a priest since 1960 and auxiliary bishop of Sydney from 1984 until his retirement for health reasons in 2004, told the Baltimore symposium, sponsored by New Ways Ministry, that "because sex is so vital a way of expressing love, sex is always serious."

That view, espoused by the church, stands in contrast to the general perception of modern society, which "appears to be saying more and more that sex is not in itself serious," he said.

For the church to deal with sex seriously, however, does not in itself mean that the church must continue to accept uncritically its traditional understandings of sexual morality, he said.

Robinson was a featured speaker at the March 15-17 symposium, which drew about 400 gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning Catholics and church personnel ministering to them. The gathering's first day was devoted to a spiritual retreat guided by the bishop.

At the symposium's lunch Friday, Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley addressed the group on a pending state law, which he had signed just days earlier, legalizing same-sex marriage in the state.

Opponents of the new law have launched a campaign for a popular refer-

endum in November to revoke it, but several recent polls have indicated that a slight but growing majority of the state's voting population favors legalization of same-sex marriages.

In his talk later that afternoon -- available along with other writings on his website: www.bishopgeoffrobinson.org (Click "Christian Basis for Teaching on Sex") -- Robinson did not address the growing U.S. question of whether faithful same-sex unions should be blessed with the title and all legal rights of "marriage." But he argued that the church's moral appraisal of such unions would change dramatically if it were to re-evaluate its traditional approach to all human sexual activity.

He said while the church's emphasis on the profound significance of sex is correct, its natural law approach to sexual morality and its interpretation of ancient scriptural passages on homosexual and other sexual activity are in need of correction.

Robinson -- whose activities before he became a bishop included teaching canon law and heading the Canon Law Society of Australia and New Zealand -- said his own full realization of how serious sex was came when the Australian bishops called on him to head an investigation into the causes of clerical sexual abuse of minors in his country and how

to resolve those problems.

"Paradoxically, it was the effects of the sexual abuse of minors more than anything else that convinced me that sex is serious," he said.

He began his talk with three basic premises:

"There is no possibility whatsoever of a change in the teaching of the Catholic church on the subject of homosexual acts unless and until there is first a change in its teaching on heterosexual acts.

"There is a serious need for a change in the church's teaching on heterosexual acts.

"If and when this change occurs, it will inevitably have its effect on teaching on homosexual acts."

"If the starting point [as in current church teaching] is that every single sexual act must be both unitive and procreative, there is no possibility of approval of homosexual acts," Robinson said.

He proceeded, however, to question that natural law argument, especially as laid out by recent popes, and to suggest that a more nuanced reading of divine commandments in scripture and of Jesus' teaching would lead to a different set of moral norms -- starting with a change in church teaching that every sexual act or thought that falls outside a loving conjugal act open to procreation is a mortal sin because it is a direct offense against God

himself in his divine plan for human sexuality.

"For centuries the church has taught that every sexual sin is a mortal sin. The teaching may not be proclaimed as loudly today as much as before, but it was proclaimed by many popes, it has never been retracted and it has affected countless people," Robinson said.

"The teaching fostered a belief in an incredibly angry God," he added, "for this God would condemn a person to an eternity in hell for a single unrepented moment of deliberate pleasure arising from sexual desire. I simply do not believe in such a God. Indeed, I positively reject such a God."

Robinson has been a source of controversy in the church since at least 2002, when he called for Pope John Paul II to commission a church-wide study of clerical sexual abuse of minors in the church.

His 2007 book, *Confronting Power and Sex in the Catholic Church: Reclaiming the Spirit of Jesus*, drew ire from his fellow bishops in Australia, who objected to his 2008 lecture tour in the United States to speak on some of the issues addressed in his book.

His full text at the New Ways Ministry symposium, as well as other writings and references to controversies Robinson has engaged in in his efforts to change the way the church's approach to issues of sexual morality -- far too detailed to be covered in a single news article -- can be found on his website: www.bishopgeoffrobinson.org (Click "Christian Basis for Teaching on Sex").

+



Bishop Geoffrey Robinson

**More
Symposium
coverage on
pages 8, 9, 10.**

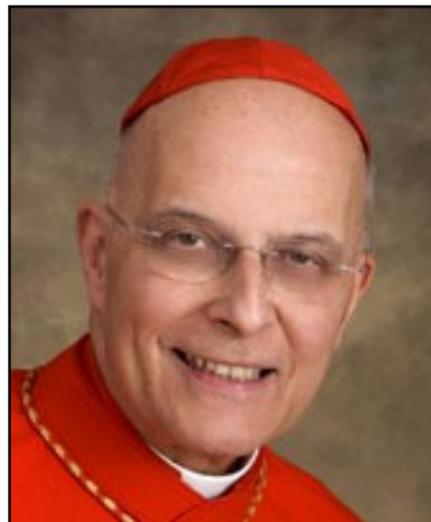
Cdl. George apologizes for comparing gay rights movement to KKK

By Manya A. Brachear
Chicago Tribune
January 7, 2012

Chicago's Cardinal Francis George apologized Friday for remarks aired on Christmas Day comparing the gay pride parade to the Ku Klux Klan.

"I am truly sorry for the hurt my remarks have caused," George said in an interview with the *Tribune*. "Particularly because we all have friends or family members who are gay and lesbian. This has evidently wounded a good number of people. I have family members myself who are gay and lesbian, so it's part of our lives. So I'm sorry for the hurt."

George's initial comments came in response to questions about whether the new route assigned to next summer's gay pride parade would interrupt morning services at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in the Lakeview neighborhood. That dispute was resolved before Christmas, when parade organizers agreed to



Cardinal Francis George

change the start time of the event.

When I was talking, I was speaking out of fear that I have for the church's liberty and I was reaching for an analogy

which was very inappropriate, for which I'm sorry," George said. "I didn't realize the impact of what I was saying. ... Sometimes fear is a bad motivation."

In his comments, broadcast on Fox Chicago television on Christmas, George addressed what he perceives to be religious discrimination in the name of gay rights. While discussing the pride parade, he cited the anti-Catholicism of the KKK in the early 1940s.

You know, you don't want the gay liberation movement to morph into something like the Ku Klux Klan, demonstrating in the streets against Catholicism," George told the Fox Chicago reporters. "So I think if that's what's happening, and I don't know that it is, but I would respect the local pastor's, you know, position on that."

George said he didn't expect the public uproar over the comments.

Chris Pett, president of Dignity Chicago, an independent ministry for gay, lesbian and transgender Catholics, wel-

comed the cardinal's apology.

"This is not about power. This is not about control. This is about a church and its ministry and its shepherd," he said. "We believe in reconciliation. It's not a time to continue to draw battle lines and go back to prior history. It's time to say we're grateful for that gift for someone realizing that he or she misspoke in a way that caused some harm and seek forgiveness."

George said although church teaching does not judge same-sex relationships as morally acceptable, it does encourage the faithful to "respect everyone."

"The question is, 'Does respect mean that we have to change our teaching?' That's an ongoing discussion, of course. ... I still go back to the fact that these are people we know and love and are part of our families. That's the most important point right now." +

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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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Maryland Catholic priest placed on leave for 'intimidating behavior'

By **Michelle Boorstein**
The Washington Post
March 11, 2012

A Gaithersburg Catholic priest who triggered national debate late last month when he denied Communion to a lesbian at her mother's funeral Mass has been placed on administrative leave from ministry in the Washington archdiocese.

Specific details about why the Rev. Marcel Guarnizo was barred from ministry — a severe penalty — were not immediately available. The Post learned of the action from a letter dated March 9 that is written to other archdiocesan priests.

The letter from Bishop Barry Knestout, a top administrator in the archdiocese, which covers Washington and the Maryland suburbs, says the punishment was for "engaging in intimidating behavior toward parish staff and others that is incompatible with proper priestly ministry."

The archdiocese on Sunday confirmed Guarnizo's removal, and noted that Knestout's letter was read at all Masses this weekend at St. John Neumann. The pastor there, the Rev. Thomas LaHood, added some additional comments, including noting -- and repeating -- that the removal was not related to the Communion standoff, but "pertains to actions over the past week or two." He did not elaborate.

In announcing the penalty on Sunday, LaHood spoke at some length about the disagreements that have unfolded in the parish because of the funeral Mass scene.

"As we know there's been disagreement within the parish over how and to whom Communion is distributed. From my perspective this disagreement and related emotions flow from love. Love for Christ, really and truly present in the Eucharist. However, how we live out this love is important. The Scriptures tell us that we are known above all by how we love," he said before reading the letter. After, he said "I realize this letter is hard to hear. Please keep mind that this is a first personnel issue, dealing with issues of ministry in the church. Father Guarnizo will have every opportunity to present his position."

An archdiocesan spokeswoman Sunday would not clarify if LaHood's comments meant that Guarnizo would not be penalized for his handling of Barbara Johnson at the funeral.

While it was not clear what transpired within the parish in the past week or so that triggered the penalty, several bloggers have defended Guarnizo and claimed, citing anonymous witnesses, that Johnson's version of the story is inaccurate.

Johnson, 51, a D.C. artist, has said that as she approached Guarnizo in the Communion line that day, he covered the bread and told her that he could not give her the sacrament "because you live with a woman, and in the eyes of the church, that is a sin."



Rev. Marcel Guarnizo



Barbara Johnson

Guarnizo has refused to comment on what happened at the Mass.

Johnson declined to comment Sunday beyond this statement:

"The Johnson family continues to pray for the Archdiocese of Washington, Father Guarnizo, and all Catholics during this time of upheaval. While we understand this letter does not pertain to the events that occurred at our mother's funeral, we are hopeful that Bishop Knestout's decision will ensure that no others will have to undergo the traumatic experiences brought upon our family. We urge all Catholics to put aside political points of view, and pray that our Church will remain in Christ's love."

The interaction between Johnson and Guarnizo, who grew up in Northern Virginia and has spent much of his ministry in Russia and Eastern Europe, triggered intense debate and feelings among Catholics on the Web. Some

said being in a same-sex relationship makes someone automatically ineligible for Communion, a moment that Catholicism teaches creates the actual presence of Jesus Christ and is not for people outside of a "state of grace." Others said the process of determining a person's "state of grace" is a far more complex and personal, something between a Catholic and God.

In the days after the funeral Mass, the archdiocese issued an apology to Johnson

and sent a letter stating that Guarnizo's refusal of Communion to her was against the policy of Archbishop Donald Wuerl, who has said it is not the right time or place for a spiritual standoff. But in a public statement published by the Post, the archdiocese seemed to imply that both sides were at fault:

"We believe that to receive Communion, a person should be in the state of grace, which means that they are not conscious of having committed a sin serious enough that it ruptures their relationship with God. As with any relationship, it is not just a one-sided judgment that determines what hurts the relationship with God. This determination is based on what the Church teaches objectively from sacred Scripture and tradition of Christian experience. If a person is conscious of having committed a grave sin, he or she may not receive Communion until they have received absolution in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. A person who is conscious of grave sin but has no opportunity to go to Confession may receive Communion for a serious reason, but first that person must pray to Christ expressing their sorrow, also known as a perfect act of contrition, and have the intention of going to Confession as soon as possible."

According to Johnson, this weekend's homily from St. John Neumann's pastor, the Rev. Thomas LaHood, repeated that the suspension was unrelated to her case. Some local Catholic bloggers have reacted angrily, though, calling for a boycott of donations to the archdiocese. ✦

Gay-marriage ban protest draws 100 at Cathedral

By **Andy Greder**
Pioneer Press
Saint Paul, Minnesota
March 11, 2012

SAINT PAUL, Minnesota—Here's a new Lenten routine: More than 100 people are gathering on Sundays outside Archbishop John Nienstedt's residence in St. Paul to oppose the constitutional amendment to define marriage as between a man and a woman.

On Sunday across from the Cathedral of St. Paul, about 100 people held signs and rainbow flags and marched on the sidewalk. On the first Sunday of Lent, about 80 attended, and about 120 came out March 4, said organizer Michael Bayly of the Catholics for Marriage Equality MN, which supports gay marriage.

Bayly said organizers hope attendance will increase

through Palm Sunday.

"It's an attempt by Catholic people to stand up and say no to the priority the archbishop has set in spending last fiscal year, 2011, \$650,000 of the diocese's money to promote passage in November of the marriage amendment," said former priest Ed Flahavan of St. Paul. "It comes at a time when social agencies, including Catholic Charities, are hurting for adequate resources to feed the hungry and give shelter to the homeless."

Some passers-by kept their heads down as they went into Mass; others driving on Summit Avenue honked car horns in support. One man rolled down his van window to shout, "Read the Bible!"

Meanwhile, inside the cathedral, the priest's homily did not mention the issue or the protest. The homily included this passage: "Jesus wants to purify us...so we are worthy vessels before the Lord." ✦

Maryland Becomes Eighth State to Enact Marriage Equality

O'Malley Is Fifth Catholic Governor to Sign Bill Into Law

By Francis DeBernardo

Bondings 2.0

NewWaysMinistryBlog.wordpress.com

March 2, 2012

On March 1st, 2012, Maryland became the eighth state (plus the District of Columbia) to enact marriage equality legislation for lesbian and gay couples. Governor Martin O'Malley became the fifth Catholic governor to sign a marriage equality bill, joining Washington State's Christine Gregoire, New York's Andrew Cuomo, Maine's John Baldacci, and New Hampshire's John Lynch.

Among the religious and civic leaders attending the signing ceremony was New Ways Ministry's Co-Founder, Sister Jeannine Gramick.

"I was so proud that our Catholic governor relied on our faith's tradition of equality and justice for all people, including lesbian and gay people," Sister Jeannine said. "It was an honor to participate in this moment, and I'm glad I was there to show the strong support that Catholics have for marriage equality for lesbian and gay couples."

O'Malley prefaced his signing of the bill with a statement which reiterated with Catholic social teaching:

"For a free and diverse people, for a people of many faiths, for a people committed to the principle of religious freedom, the way forward is always found through greater respect for the equal rights of all, for the human dignity of all."

"Religious freedom was the very reason for our state's founding, and at

the heart of religious freedom is the freedom of individual conscience.

"If there is a thread that unites all of our work here together, it is the thread of human dignity, the dignity of work, the dignity of a job, the dignity of every child's home, the dignity of every individual."

On behalf of Catholics, New Ways Ministry thanked Governor O'Malley and the Maryland legislature in an appearing in today's print edition of *The Baltimore Sun*:

Equally Blessed, the coalition of Catholic groups that support equality for LGBT people in the church and wider society, released this statement today on the signing of marriage equality legislation in the state of Maryland:

"We are deeply gratified that Governor Martin O'Malley has joined fellow Catholic governors Andrew Cuomo of New York and Christine Gregoire of Washington in signing marriage equality legislation into law."

"These governors represent the sentiments of Catholics in this country far better than the church's hierarchy, which has spent millions of dollars in an increasingly futile campaign to prolong the era in which secular governments actively discriminate against same-gender couples and their families."

"We applaud Governor O'Malley and the state legislators who recognized that every human being, regardless of sexual orientation, is created in God's image, and must be treated with dignity and respect by their neighbors and their



At the signing ceremony: Sister Jeannine Gramick poses with Catholic couple Dave Kolesar and Patrick Wojahn. (Photo by Dan Furmanský)



At the signing ceremony: Governor Martin O'Malley (center) is flanked by Senate President Mike Miller (left) and House Speaker Michael Busch (right). Lieutenant Governor Anthony Brown is behind O'Malley. Sister Jeannine Gramick's face and veil are partially visible just behind Brown. Both O'Malley and Brown are Catholic, and Busch was raised Catholic.

government, and we pray that some day such an understanding will take root among the bishops of our church.

"As a coalition we were honored to work of behalf of marriage equality in Maryland by placing an op-ed in *The Washington Post* making the Catholic case for same-gender marriage. In addition, three coalition members, Sister Jeannine Gramick and Francis DeBernardo of New Ways Ministry, and Allen Rose of DignityUSA testified before the House of Delegates."

"We are particularly thankful to Governor O'Malley, who distributed copies of Mr. DeBernardo's booklet, *Marriage Equality: A Positive Catholic Approach*, and who will be attending New Ways Ministry's Seventh

National Symposium on Catholicism and Homosexuality, March 15-17 in Baltimore.

"It is fitting that Sister Jeannine, one of the most effective advocates for LGBT people in the church, will be participating in today's signing ceremony." †

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A copy of the advertisement that New Ways Ministry placed in *The Baltimore Sun* on March 2, 2012, the day after Governor O'Malley signed the marriage equality bill into law.

A Catholic case for same-sex marriage

By Jeannine Gramick and Francis DeBernardo

The Washington Post

February 14, 2012

This month in Maryland and the state of Washington, an extraordinary dynamic is playing itself out: Two Catholic governors are prodding legislators to pass bills legalizing same-gender marriage. Like Govs. Andrew Cuomo in New York and Pat Quinn in Illinois — whose states recently legalized same-sex civil unions — Govs. Martin O'Malley and Christine Gregoire are acting against the strongly expressed opposition of their church's bishops.

As Catholics who are involved in lesbian and gay ministry and outreach, we are aware that many people, some of them Catholics, believe that Catholics cannot faithfully disobey the public policies of the church's hierarchy. But this is not the case.

The Catholic Church is not a democracy, but neither is it a dictatorship. Ideally, our bishops should strive to proclaim the *sensus fidelium*, the faith as it is understood by the whole church. At the moment, however, the bishops and the majority of the church are at odds. A survey published in September by the Public Religion Research Institute found that 52 percent of Catholics support mar-

riage equality and 69 percent support civil unions.

Those numbers shouldn't surprise people who are familiar with the Catholic theological tradition. For example, Catholic thinking dictates that we should use the evidence we find in the natural world to help us reach our conclusions. Many Catholics have reflected on the scientific evidence that homosexuality is a natural variant in human sexuality, and understand that lesbian and gay love is as natural as heterosexual love.

In forming our consciences, Catholics also consult scripture and our theological tradition. Here, again, there is little firm reason to oppose marriage equality. The Bible presents us with a marital landscape that includes polygamy, concubinage, temple prostitution and Levirate marriages (in which a man is bound to marry his brother's widow.) Jesus disputed the Mosaic law on divorce, saying that what God has joined man must not separate, but this dictum was modified in the letters of St. Paul.

When we see the manifold changes that marriage has undergone throughout history, many Catholics wonder why our bishops believe that heterosexual marriage in its current 21st century state is a matter of divine revelation.

Those who delve into the theology of marriage will encounter the writings

of St. Augustine of Hippo, who articulated what Christians have come to call "the goods of marriage." These are enumerated in contemporary terms as partnership, permanence, fidelity and fruitfulness. Same-sex couples demonstrate all of these attributes just as opposite-sex couples do, unless one defines "fruitfulness" narrowly as the ability to procreate. But many heterosexual couples cannot or choose not to procreate, and the church marries them anyway.

The deeper one looks into the church's core teachings, the more one realizes that the bishops are not representing the breadth of the Catholic tradition in their campaign against marriage equality. Nowhere is that more true than in the area of Catholic social justice teaching.

Catholic social teaching requires that all people be treated with dignity, regardless of their state in life or their beliefs. It upholds the importance of access to health-care benefits, the protection of children, dignity in end of life choices, and, most importantly, the promotion of stable family units. Marriage equality legislation would be an obvious boon to same-sex couples and their children in each of these areas, yet the bishops are spending millions of dollars opposing it.

In our work within the church, we have met countless people who do not

necessarily challenge the church's teaching on the nature of sacramental marriage, but support civil marriage for same-sex couples with a clear conscience.

Some are concerned that the children of gay and lesbian couples will suffer if their parents' relationships are not legally recognized. Others have a gay or lesbian colleague, friend or family member whom they want to protect. And still others realize that their own lives would be very different if the bishops had the power to make church law into state law — say by banning artificial contraception or making it impossible to remarry after a divorce.

The opposition to marriage equality by the church's hierarchy is well known, but in the quiet of their own consciences, millions of Catholics are arriving at different conclusions rooted deeply in the teachings of our faith. We support marriage equality, and we won't forget the Catholic legislators and governors who have worked on behalf of justice for lesbian and gay couples. †

Sister Jeannine Gramick is co-founder of New Ways Ministry in Mount Rainier, Md. Francis DeBernardo is executive director of New Ways Ministry, which is a member of the Equally Blessed coalition.

The Laramie Project

Amid complaints, N.J. Catholic high school pulls plug on play

By Erin Duffy
NJ.com
March 23, 2012

LAWRENCE, NJ— Bowing to pressure from parents and the school community, Notre Dame High School has canceled its spring production of “The Laramie Project,” a play based on the violent 1998 murder of gay college student Matthew Shepard.

The decision to shut down the production has proved to be just as controversial as the play’s edgy and dramatic portrayal of a Wyoming town gripped in the aftermath of a hate crime.

On one side, school administrators say parents worried that the choice for the play was inappropriate for high schoolers, too loaded in its tale of the murder of a young gay man beaten and left tied to a fence to die.

But cast members and students at the Catholic high school said they’ve been unfairly robbed of their ability to put on a thought-provoking and powerful play, one whose message of tolerance resonates powerfully in the wake of the Tyler Clementi cyberbullying verdict and other anti-harassment efforts.

“I wanted to do a show that had meaning and purpose to it and when I found out we were doing ‘The Laramie Project’ I got really excited because this show teaches the values I’ve been taught my last 12 years of Catholic education,” cast member and Notre Dame senior Tessa Holtenrichs said. “When I was told we couldn’t do it, I felt like it was really hypocritical.”

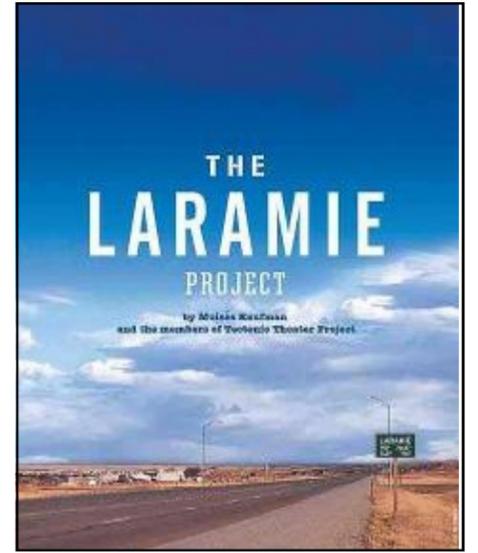
While students described Notre Dame as a high school with an unusually tolerant and friendly atmosphere, “We felt it was breaking barriers being at a

Catholic high school,” senior cast member Macklin Fitzpatrick said.

School president Barry Breen and principal Mary Ivins said in a statement the choice for the spring play was originally seen as a “powerful and appropriate vehicle” to address issues of respect and tolerance. But as calls questioning the play’s content rolled in, officials worried that the controversy would become distracting, and the decision was made Tuesday to cancel the show.

“The expression of these concerns opened our eyes to the realization that different eyes will see radically different messages than the ones we intended,” they said.

“This has led the administration to conclude that we might inadvertently be placing our school at the center of an undesired and potentially damaging controversy by moving forward with the



production.”

Cast members — 32 students in grades 9 through 12 — were informed Wednesday the show would be shut down, just days after rehearsals started. Some admitted they cried at the news.

“If students can handle something like this, why can’t the parents?” junior Kim Woodcock asked.

The new pick for the spring play has yet to be announced. In their statement, Breen and Ivins said, “We are proud of our students, and with the help of God and as a duty of our faith, we will continue to find less controversial ways to help them address hatred and intolerance.”

A Facebook group started by Notre Dame alumnus and Rowan University freshman Dan Blazejewski opposing the cancellation had more than 800 students, cast members, parents and alumni weighing in on the furor as of last night.

“I think the people had the assumption that the play was going to do something it never would have done, to encourage students to become homosexuals instead of not killing homosexuals,” Diane Steinberg, a parent of a Notre Dame student and an alum, said during an interview.

She said the school missed the chance to turn any controversy into a teachable moment.

“Allow the play to go forward, and also allow a nonartistic forum to discuss the Catholic Church and GLBT (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender) people,” Steinberg wrote to Breen and Ivins. “Can the presentation of the play be accompanied by a speaker or speakers that present Catholic teaching on human sexuality?”

Hundreds of high schools, colleges and community theaters have put on Moisés Kaufman’s play, which became a 2002 HBO film, with varying degrees of controversy.

In 2009, members of the extremist Westboro Baptist Church picketed a production at an Indianapolis high school. Other shows, including several at Catholic high schools, have drawn little in the way of fire. “The Laramie Project” played for two nights at Robbinsville High School in 2008.

Cast members and school officials said the play had been edited slightly to remove some language and one particularly intense scene. Few uttered surprise at the complaints the play drew at Notre Dame, but said the Catholic Church, which opposes gay marriage, has maintained gays are still deserving of love and understanding.

“My director, Ms. (Diane) Wargo, said something pretty powerful,” Holtenrichs said. “She said Jesus didn’t die on the cross for us to have so many rules about who to love and how to love. I thought that was great.”

The Diocese of Trenton didn’t return calls seeking comment on the play’s cancellation. †

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

Davenport: St. Ambrose University

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: St. John Fisher College

St. Bonaventure: St. Bonaventure University

Sparkill: St. Thomas Aquinas College

Syracuse: LeMoyn 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

University of Notre Dame gay rights allies renew effort

Calls for adding sexual orientation to nondiscrimination policy, recognizing gay-straight alliance

By Margaret Fosmoe
The South Bend Tribune
March 8, 2012

SOUTH BEND -- As debate about same-sex marriage and related issues grows on the national level, some University of Notre Dame students and employees have renewed a long-standing push to provide legal protection for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals on campus.

They are asking that Notre Dame add sexual orientation to the university's non-discrimination policy and recognize a gay-straight alliance club for the campus.

Rather than placards and protest marches, some students and faculty last week released a video titled "It Needs to Get Better." It's received more than 18,000 views so far on YouTube, and other professors, students and alumni are now posting their own videos with same message.

Gay marriage or same-sex domestic partnerships are now legal in at least 15 states, and the U.S. military ended its "don't ask, don't tell" policy in 2011, allowing homosexuals to serve openly in the nation's armed services. It's time for Notre Dame to better serve its GLBT students and employees, advocates say.

They're calling this new effort the 4 to 5 Movement. The name is based on an estimate that about four of every five college-educated young adult Americans today back the notion of equal rights for all, regardless of sexual orientation.

"It's clear to us that there is a majority on campus that is supportive of these changes," said Alex Coccia, a sophomore and co-president of the Progressive Student Alliance. The student activists' group is leading the movement.

The Student Senate recently passed resolutions in favor of both changes, and the Faculty Senate on Tuesday adopted resolutions supporting the measures.

Current campus policies permit GLBT students and faculty at Notre Dame, but provide no legal protection for them, sophomore Dani Gies said. She grew up in a Catholic household that was accepting of people who aren't heterosexual, and considers condemning atti-

tudes wrong. She said she knows four non-heterosexual students who left Notre Dame because of the unwelcoming atmosphere.

"This is definitely a civil rights issue. There needs to be a solution," freshman Nathan Lamp said. He got involved because he has LGBT friends.

It's not uncommon to hear derogatory comments on campus about gays and lesbians, particularly from male students, Lamp said. Such comments rarely are heard from women students, he said.

He said a tenured professor last semester made a joke stereotyping members of the gay community and some students laughed. "It was very inappropriate and very offensive," Lamp said. Although racial and ethics jokes are rare, in some campus circles derogatory gay jokes seem to be acceptable, he said.

It's crucial that the university address this issue and overcome it, he said. "Notre Dame is a great school and it's supposed to be open to all people," he said. Graduates can't go off to help heal and enlighten the world until they first deal with injustices on campus, he said.

"I can't in good conscience be working at a place and teaching gender studies and not step up and get involved when there is an issue on campus," said Pam Wojcik, a professor of film, TV and theater and director of Notre Dame's gender studies program. She appeared in the video.

Students aren't required to be Catholic or heterosexual to attend Notre Dame, and it's part of the university's mission as a Catholic institution to promote social justice for all, she said.

Wojcik said she knows gay and lesbian faculty members who feel they must stay in the closet, particularly if they don't have tenure. "There's a culture of fear," she said. As long as sexual orientation isn't in the non-discrimination policy, many employees feel they can be discriminated against with no recourse, she said.

Wojcik said her main concern is students, some of whom feel unwelcome on campus because of the lack of protection.

Notre Dame declined a *Tribune* request for an interview with the Rev. John



Alex Coccia

I. Jenkins, university president, or the Rev. Thomas Doyle, vice president for student affairs, about the issue.

Efforts to add sexual orientation to Notre Dame's non-discrimination clause date back to the mid-1990s. The university in 1997 adopted a "statement of inclusion" describing the university's regard for all people, with specific reference to lesbians and gays.

Notre Dame's Board of Fellows, the highest tier of the board of trustees, in 1998 decided not to extend the policy. The fellows concluded that the existing document -- called the Spirit of Inclusion -- recognizes that each person on campus deserved dignity. The Fellows are charged with maintaining the university's Catholic character.

The inclusion policy isn't legally binding and doesn't hold the university accountable, Coccia said. "It really diminishes acceptance. It says, 'We won't legally protect you.'"

Notre Dame's employment policy adheres to federal law, stating that the university is an equal opportunity employer and doesn't discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, disability or veteran status.

Groups of students regularly file requests to create a recognized gay-straight alliance on campus, but each request is turned down, according to advocates.

The university offers a Core Coun-

cil, a body that advises on the needs of GLBT students, and offers discussion sessions and educational programs, including information about Catholic teachings on issues of sexuality.

Neighboring Saint Mary's College added sexual orientation to its non-discrimination policy in 2003 and approved a campus gay-straight alliance group in 2005. Holy Cross College does not include sexual orientation in its non-discrimination policy and doesn't have a gay-straight alliance.

Peter Holland, a Notre Dame associate dean and chair of the Shakespeare studies program, appeared in the recent video. "It is about time things changed," he said.

The university on Monday held a campus town hall meeting to address recent campus incidents of racial harassment: two black student organizations found fried chicken parts placed in their mailboxes in the student center.

Just as the university isn't hesitant to address issues of racial injustice, it also should address issues of discrimination based on sexual orientation, Holland said. "It is absolutely clear that type of harassment is not limited to race," Holland said. Without protection, some employees live in a state of constant anxiety that they may be dismissed or denied tenure because of their orientation, he said.

"I think it's important that the policies of the university really match the practices," English professor John Sitter said. Whenever members of a group are discriminated against, it affects every other group, he said.

"It's fundamentally a matter of fairness," Sitter said. Adopting an inclusive policy isn't the same as advocating on behalf of individuals one disagrees with, he said. "You need to be able to make a distinction between acceptance and endorsement," he said.

Sitter said he knows some faculty who have left because of the lack of protection against discrimination. What no one knows, he said, is how many quality professors and prospective students never come to Notre Dame because they feel they won't be welcome on campus. †

CUAllies Seeks Official University Recognition

The Tower
Catholic University of America
Washington, DC
March 7, 2012

CUAllies, the current Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) and Allies group on campus, submitted a proposal last week to the Office of Campus Activities (OCA) to be recognized as an official student organization.

As an unofficial student group, CUAllies is currently not seen as legitimate and is unable to set up a table during club fairs, to advertise itself, and to rent rooms on campus for its events.

"Some students don't feel comfortable, some students do, but CUA needs a support mechanism and we don't have it," says Ryan Fecteau, who leads the CUAllies.

From 1988 to 2002, the Organization for Gay and Lesbian Student Rights was recognized by Catholic University as an advocacy group. When political opinions led to increased tension between the administration and the group, however, the organization was disbanded.

CUAllies, formed in 2009, promises that the organization is not affiliated with any political or religious opinion, but desires to create a safe haven on campus



Ryan Fecteau

for students.

Members of the student body support CUAllies in its efforts to become official. When Fecteau posted on the group's Facebook page about the proposal, the status received over 40 likes within minutes.

In addition, a resolution sponsored by senior Robert Shine was brought before the Student Association General Assembly (SAGA) in support of making

CUAllies an official student organization. When SAGA voted on the resolution on February 22, CUAllies won the assembly's support 20 to 3.

Opposing votes were due to conflict of politics and concerns why the organization was previously denied official recognition.

"SAGA voted to support the creation of the student organization CUAllies as they create and foster a safe, welcoming, and affirming environment for all students on campus," said Leslie Martin, SAGA speaker.

CUAllies has formed a coalition with the University of Notre Dame earlier in the year to promote gay-straight alliances. The goal for these two united campuses is simple: "Let's make it official," according to a CUAllies press release.

Unlike CUA, Notre Dame has never had a recognized LGBTQ organization on its campus. Notre Dame's proposal for their student government was met with a similar result: a 20-1 vote in favor of a gay-straight alliance to be supported.

Across the country, Catholic schools such as Fairfield University in Connecticut, Fordham University in New York, and DePaul University in Illinois have similar organizations on campus to support the sexuality and gender identifica-

tion of their students.

These results are an "incredible victory" for both campuses, said Fecteau. The CUA and Notre Dame coalition plans to continue its work in order to strengthen the gay-straight alliances on both campuses.

While waiting to hear the results about their future from OCA, members of CUAllies continue their efforts on campus and across the nation. The group has issued a press release in order to spread the message of its efforts.

In addition, CUAllies will host a social mixer, called "The History of Allies," on March 22 at 8 pm, location to be announced. The event is a way for the student body to be familiarized with the history of LGBTQ groups on campus, to be introduced to CUAllies members, and to spread the message of a support system on campus.

Fecteau will also present a speech entitled "Dorms, Lectures, and All-Nighters" at the 7th Annual National Symposium on Catholicism and Homosexuality in Baltimore, MD. This talk will discuss the ties between homosexuality and faith, and how both can exist on a Catholic campus.

"CUAllies can be the bridge between faith and sexuality," said Fecteau. "They can intersect." †

Respect, Compassion and Sensitivity

By James Martin, SJ
americamagazine.org/blog
 January 12, 2012

The Catholic Church's stance on homosexual activity is well known. There probably isn't an intelligent Catholic in this country, perhaps even in the Western world, who isn't aware of the church's clear teaching. The *Catechism* teaches that homosexual activity is "intrinsically disordered," that is, always and everywhere wrong. It also teaches that the inclination itself is an "objective disorder."

More recently, the Vatican and many local church leaders have communicated the church's strong opposition to same-sex marriage, as that issue has increasingly come to the fore in many countries. Archbishop (soon Cardinal) Timothy Dolan of New York, who serves as the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, has spoken out against same-sex marriage, calling it an "ominous threat" to society. The archbishop of Minneapolis-St. Paul, John Nienstedt, recently wrote to his priests about the "gravity of this struggle, and said he expected them to support his efforts opposing same-sex marriage or remain silent. (Last year Archbishop Nienstedt sent out 400,000 DVDs explaining the church's position to Catholics in his archdiocese.) And Charles J. Chaput, the newly installed archbishop of Philadelphia, called it "the issue of our time."

As I said, the church's stance on homosexual activity and its opposition to same-sex marriage are well known. The excerpt from the *Catechism* that underlies these teachings may now be one of the most well known of all church teachings. Line 2357 reads: "Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, tradition has always declared that 'homosexual activity is intrinsically disordered'." (The quote within the quote comes from a document from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.)

I'm not writing to contradict these teachings in any way, nor to contradict any of these church leaders. (Some of the men above are friends as well.) Rather, I'd like to turn our attention to *another* part of the church's official teaching, something equally as valid. It is contained in the very next line, and is an important aspect of our tradition that is often overlooked. Line 2358 of the *Catechism* reads: "The number of men and women who have deep-seated homosexual tendencies is not negligible. This inclination, which is objectively disordered, constitutes for most of them a trial. They must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided." (The original 1994 version included the line "They do not choose their homosexual condition.")

That line says much that is important, even though it is less well known than the previous line. First, it says that gays and lesbians are not a negligible part of the population, Catholic or otherwise. They are not a minuscule minority that can be overlooked or that should be ignored; as such, they are a valid concern for the church and its ministers. To use the language of the Second Vatican Council, their "joys and hopes, and their griefs and anxieties," matter.

Second, while some gays and lesbians may not appreciate having their situation described as a "trial," the *Catechism* reminds Catholics that being a homosexual in many modern cultures is still fraught with difficulty. It can be a painful struggle for a gay person to accept himself or herself as someone loved

by God. As most of us know, bullying, beatings and, in rare cases, murder, is often part of being a gay or lesbian teen. As a result, the rate of suicides among gay teens is significantly higher than it is for straight teens in our country. In other parts of the world the situation is more dire: in some countries homosexual activity can bring imprisonment or execution.

Finally, the *Catechism* says that every sign of unjust discrimination

be told, "Show some respect." You would scarcely say that you respected a person if you showed no real concern for what they said, or, likewise, for their personal experiences. So, to show real respect Catholics need to listen carefully to the experiences of gays and lesbians. Indeed, I think one reason for the fraught nature of the church's relations with gays and lesbians is an absence of listening. (On both sides.)

Also, out of respect for the church,



must be avoided when it comes to gays and lesbians. That's *every* sign. (And remember a "sign" in Catholic theology is a broad term.)

But buried within #2358 are three words that warrant further attention, particularly in these times, when tensions flare, controversies arise and people feel pitted against one another. Gays and lesbians, says the Catholic church's official teaching, are to be treated with "respect, compassion and sensitivity." What might that mean?

Respect

My old *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary* defines "respect" as a verb that means "to consider someone worthy of high regard." The definition of the noun form includes words like "honor," "deference" and "esteem." The word derives from the Latin *respectus*, meaning to look back, or to "regard." Respect is a way of *looking at* someone, and looking at them with "high regard." The *Catechism* says that Catholics should look at gays and lesbians in this way—with *respect*. But what does that mean?

Certainly this means not denigrating them in any way, not making sweeping generalizations about them, not treating them as second-class citizens. But that's the minimum. Showing someone honor, deference and esteem means going far beyond that; it means treating them with a special care. Respect is more than just acceptance.

One of the hallmarks of respecting a person, for example, is listening to him or her. If a child interrupts an adult, or fails to listen to a teacher, the child may

gays and lesbians may themselves be moved to share their experiences and thoughts. This should sound familiar to American Catholics in particular. In the first line of the Declaration of Independence, the writers state that they are setting forth their grievances "out of decent respect to the opinions of mankind." The signers respected the rest of humankind enough to explain why they were taking a momentous step. Respect impelled them to speak out. This is something of what I mean when it comes to gays and lesbians. No, I'm not comparing them to the Founding Fathers. But in a similar way they *respect* the church by sharing their joys and hopes, their griefs and anxieties, and especially, the way that God is at work in their lives.

What would it mean for the church to listen to the experiences of gays and lesbians? First, it would mean willingly and honestly listening to what it is like to grow up as a homosexual child and adolescent. It would mean paying attention to the voices of young people who feel persecuted or who are bullied. It would mean taking seriously the heightened threat of suicides among gay and lesbian youth, which is, after all, a "life issue." It would also mean listening to what it is like to be an adult gay or lesbian, particularly within the church. That would mean another, more difficult, kind of listening: trying to understand the widespread feeling among many gay and lesbian Catholics that their own church doesn't "respect" them. Then it would mean asking the difficult question: "Why is this?"

The Holy Spirit works not only from the top-down, but also from the bottom-up. It "blows where it will," as Jesus says in the Gospel of John. Each of us, as St. Paul says, is a Temple of the Holy Spirit, wherein God dwells. Respect means not only loving each person as a child of God, with a unique vocation, called in baptism to the Body of Christ. It also means accepting the way that the Spirit might be at work in that person. As the Second Vatican Council says, "The holy People of God share also in Christ's prophetic office." The Spirit blows where it will; it's up to us to listen to it. Or not.

The prophetic office is often exercised in a powerful way by people on the margins, by the "unexpected" ones. Think of people in the Old Testament, like Samuel, the young boy who surprisingly hears God's call, or David, the last person imaginable thought worthy to be a leader. The prophet who speaks from the margins may give voice to experiences that are not well known, or in some cases understood, but are nonetheless important. This is not to say that every gay Catholic is a prophet. But can the church listen to the experiences of gays and lesbians to discern where God might be at work in new ways? Because the question "How much does the church listen?" is the same as "How much does the church respect?"

Compassion

When Jesus sees someone who is struggling, the Gospels often say that he is moved with pity. But the original Greek word used is far more vivid: *splagchnizomai*. It means that his bowels were moved with compassion. In other words, Jesus feels that emotion "in his guts." Catholics are called to treat gays and lesbians with that same kind of visceral compassion. When we see them suffering, we are called to be moved in the same profound and transformative way.

What about our use of the term? The English word "compassion" comes from a Latin root meaning to "suffer with" or "experience with." What would that mean in this case?

To suffer with gays means to be with them, and to stand with them, in solidarity. It means to be, and to be seen to be, on their side, battling "every sign of unjust discrimination." It means sticking up for them when others mock or belittle them. It means reaching out in ways that might move us beyond our comfort zones. It might mean finding ourselves mocked as a result. It means aligning ourselves with them. That's what Jesus did, after all. Even more than that, it means showing the kind of love that Jesus shows for those on the margins—a special kind of love.

Jesus made a special effort to reach out to those on the margins. He could easily have ministered solely to those who were thought to be "acceptable," like observant Jews and the wealthy and the well. Over and over, though, Jesus moves beyond those groups, and takes his ministry to those who have been shunned by polite society—the "unclean," the lepers, the poor, the sick, the tax collectors, prostitutes, "sinners." It is an intentional ministry on the margins.

For Jesus there is no "other." He works to bring all—through healing, welcome and forgiveness of sins—into the community. And often he does this *before* the sin is forgiven. For example, the Gospel of Luke tells the story of Zacchaeus the tax collector (a hated role among the Jews in Roman-occupied Palestine). Passing through the town of Jericho, Jesus sees the short man climbing a sycamore tree and calls up,

(Continued on page 7)

Remembering Fr. Howard Hall, Pioneer of Catholic LGBT Ministry

By Francis DeBernardo

Bondings 2.0

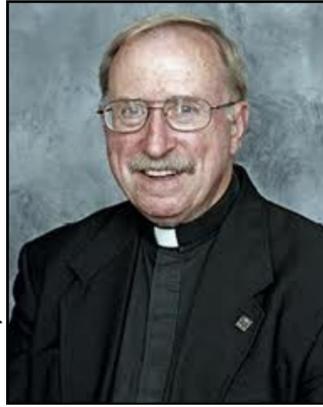
NewWaysMinistryBlog.wordpress.com
February 7, 2012

Father Howard Hall, one of the pioneers of LGBT ministry in the Catholic church, has passed away from pancreatic cancer. Fr. Hall was instrumental in developing diocesan ministry to LGBT people in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and he was involved in the work of so many of the national Catholic organizations that work for justice and equality for LGBT people: Catholic Association for Lesbian and Gay Ministry, New Ways Ministry, Fortunate Families, and Dignity.

I had the pleasure of meeting Howard on several occasions over the years, and he was always a gentle and joy-filled presence. My greatest memory of him

comes from the summer of 2000 when I spent two weeks doing New Ways Ministry workshops in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. Howard was instrumental in helping us set up and promote the workshop I conducted in his hometown of Baton Rouge. It is a testimony to the great groundwork that he did there that this workshop was one of the best attended that I have conducted in 18 years of this ministry.

Like many people, I will remember Howard for his great kindness and generosity. While I was planning that trip to the Gulf Coast, Howard realized that it would be a grueling schedule for



Father Howard Hall

me, as I spent each day traveling and doing a program for almost two weeks straight. To alleviate the stress, Howard offered me use of his small cabin in the countryside not far from Baton Rouge for two days of solitude and silence. It was a modest, cozy place, and I'll never forget the peace that I experienced there or the generosity of the priest who provided it. Howard's accomplishments in LGBT ministry are many. He helped establish a Dignity chapter in Baton Rouge in 1973, one of the first chapters outside of California. He served on the board of CALGM in the early years of its formation when it was known as the National Association of Catholic Diocesan

Lesbian/Gay Ministries (NACDLGM). In 2005, when the Vatican advised against accepting gay candidates to seminaries, Howard wrote to the directors of clergy formation and education in every U.S. diocese, urging them to practice caution in applying this hurtful directive.

A long list of his involvements and accomplishments can be read on his profile on the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Religious Archives Network website: www.lgbtran.org/Profile.aspx?ID=313.

Howard will be greatly missed by all who have worked in LGBT ministry in the Catholic church. We are comforted knowing that we now have a new saint in heaven to whom we can pray for justice and equality in our church. †

US Bishops, Religious Liberty and Gay Americans' Tax Dollars

by John Mattras

CathNewsUsa.com

November 21, 2011

The new buzz-phrase making the rounds of US Catholic Bishops Conference in Baltimore last week was "Religious Liberty." It is not hard to imagine some behind-the-scenes PR wizard delivering the bad news to the bishops — outright opposition to marriage equality is a losing proposition. But characterize yourselves as the victims, rather than the perpetrators, of discrimination and maybe you have a shot at stalling what you cannot stop outright.

The vast Catholic social service network encompasses schools from grammar schools to top-ranking universities, private hospital networks, health and family services and numerous anti-poverty initiatives, among other well-

intentioned initiatives. The bishops would have us believe it is an infringement on church's "religious liberty" to freely discriminate while providing these services with taxpayer dollars. Whether denying spousal benefits to spouses of gay employees or refusing to place children in need of homes with gay couples, the bishops argue "religious liberty" entitles them to use taxpayer dollars for the benefit only of those taxpayers of whose lives the church approves.

Given the bishops' simultaneous opposition to health-care overhaul on the grounds that the church should not be compelled to expend resources on health plans that pay for birth control and abortion, it is ironic that they would so callously overlook the plight of gay Americans whose tax dollars they would accept while denying those same individuals the full benefit of their services.

It is time for the bishops to own up to the obvious reality that denying services to a class of individuals is, in fact, discrimination. Their new website to promote the exclusion from marriage of same-gender couples goes to great lengths to underscore the church's adherence to what it believes are the teachings of Jesus Christ in regards to marriage. The site emphasizes that fidelity to this conviction, and not discrimination against gays, is its purpose for denying spousal benefits to spouses of gay employees and adoption services to gays and gay couples.

At best, this attempted rationalization does nothing more than make a case for what they view as justified discrimination. In reality, there are no valid reasons for the government to bend to church teaching when the church is operating as an agent of the state (ie, engag-

ing in activities partly or wholly funded by taxpayer dollars). If the church wants to discriminate in providing services to the public, it should do so with its own money (admittedly including government revenues that would otherwise be collected on the money donated to the church), and not with the tax dollars of those it wishes to discriminate against or those who find their rationale for discrimination odious.

Maybe it is time for the US Bishops to offer a grand bargain. The church will forego taxpayer funds to provide services it is unwilling to make available to all citizens in exchange for a mechanism to ensure that church dollars will not be used to provide abortions and contraceptives. In other words, do unto others what you would have others do unto you. †

Respect, Compassion and Sensitivity

(Continued from page 6)

"Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today." This was a public sign of acceptance, and it must have seemed shocking to those for whom Zacchaeus was supposed to be hated. After he climbs down from his branch, Zacchaeus offers to pay back anyone that he has cheated four times over and give his money to the poor. But Jesus offers to go to his house before Zacchaeus does any of that.

Jesus is not afraid to stand with those on the margins. He always calls people to conversion, but most of all he "suffers with," and "experiences with." This is one of the meanings of compassion.

There are many examples of such compassion in the Catholic church. Gay and lesbian ministry is more widespread than most observers (and most Catholics) may think. On the local level, in parishes, gays and lesbians are ministered to in quiet and private ways by pastors and pastoral associates. More publicly, the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, to take one of many examples, runs a successful and long-lasting (founded in 1986) ministry to gays and lesbians, a sign of their respect for these men and women. "The Ministry with Lesbian and Gay Catholics (MLGC) recognizes that all persons with a homosexual orientation are capable of living a full Catholic life in union with all the members of the Church," says its website, quoting the former archbishop, Roger Cardinal Mahony. "MLGC has as its primary goal 'to foster a spirit of community and fellowship among gay Catholics so that they can offer and receive mutual support in living their lives of faith with the Church.'"

Sensitivity

What would it mean to treat gays and lesbians with "sensitivity" in the church? The word connotes that you are dealing with something that is itself "sensitive." And that's true. This is not to say that gays and lesbians are not strong people; rather, their experiences growing up often leaves them hurt and scarred. (Yes, other groups are also hurt and scarred but we're talking about one group that often feels that the church has not been "sensitive" to them.) Can Catholics treat gays and lesbians with the same sensitivity that they would treat another victim or wounded soul?

What do you do with someone who has been hurt? You treat them with great attention and a special care. This would mean going out of our way to be loving and listening.

Another thing for Catholics to remember: Words matter. Words can hurt. Words can also heal. Not long ago, Francis Cardinal George, the archbishop of Chicago, compared certain gays and lesbians activists to the KKK—out of fear that a gay pride parade could possibly turn anti-Catholic. The cardinal's original fear was that a scheduled pride parade would interfere with people entering a Sunday Mass along the parade route. The remark stung many in the gay community. In response, the organizers changed

the time of the parade. Initially the cardinal issued a statement that repeated the analogy of the KKK, which caused further hurt. Later on, though, he issued an outright apology. "I am truly sorry for the hurt my remarks have caused," he said. "Particularly because we all have friends or family members who are gay and lesbian. This has evidently wounded a good number of people. I have family members myself who are gay and lesbian, so it's part of our lives. So I'm sorry for the hurt." His apology, to me, seemed an example of sensitivity.

For Jesus there is no "other." He works to bring all —through healing, welcome and forgiveness of sins— into the community.

Another area of sensitivity is the way that the church's overall teaching on gays and lesbians (not just about activity but about individuals as well) is presented. Or not presented. Some Catholic leaders lead off with the "thou shalt not" and never get to the "thou shalt."

If all gays and lesbians hear about is the church's opposition to same-sex marriage (to the exclusion of anything else about gays and lesbians), then it's perhaps not surprising that many would report feeling rejected. Some of this may be the result of the media coverage focusing on one issue—but not all. What a difference it would make if Catholic leaders could speak as often about the great contributions of gays and lesbians in the church, for example. Or about treating gays with "respect, compassion and sensitiv-

ity." Or if they raised their collective voices against gay suicide.

This way of proceeding has always struck me as surprising. It would be as if the first thing that a priest said to a group of married Catholic couples at a retreat was not "Welcome," but "No extramarital sex!" Or if a group of Catholic business leaders was greeted at a luncheon by a bishop who said, "No unfair wages!" Or if a group of Catholic physicians was told at the beginning of a conference, "No abortions!" Gay people sometimes feel as if the "thou shalt not" are the entirety of the church's teaching on who they are. Because sometimes that's all they hear.

An old scholastic dictum is helpful here. St. Thomas Aquinas wrote in the *Summa Theologiae*, "*Quidquid recipitur secundum modum recipientis recipitur.*" Loosely translated: That which is received is received according to the mode of the receiver. So when trying to communicate something, one needs to be sensitive not only to how it is communicated, but how it is received.

Part of sensitivity, in other words, is knowing how your message is coming across. And presenting the whole message, not just part of it.

As I said, none of what I say contradicts Catholic teaching. Quite the contrary. Treating gays and lesbians with "respect, compassion and sensitivity" is Catholic teaching. It may sound odd to hear these things discussed, which are all perfectly in line with church teaching, because Catholics don't hear it all that much. And that is a great loss to gay and lesbian Catholics, to all Catholics for that matter; indeed, to all people of good will. †

Catholic conference confronts marriage

By Chuck Colbert

The Windy City Times, Chicago
March 21, 2012

BALTIMORE—A Catholic case for same-sex marriage took center stage over the weekend during a national conference when a church theologian advocated marriage equality from a faith-based perspective and a bishop called for a "new study of everything to do with sexuality," which he suggested, "would have a profound influence of church teaching concerning sexual relationships, both heterosexual and homosexual."

Martin O'Malley, the governor of Maryland, addressed the gathering at New Ways Ministry's Seventh National Symposium on Catholicism and Homosexuality. A niece of President John F. Kennedy, Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, also spoke, providing additional star power.

Barbara Johnson, the lesbian recently denied communion at her mother's funeral, addressed the closing session, rounding out the event headliners.

New Ways Ministry—based in Mt. Rainier, Md.—is a gay-positive advocacy organization of justice, healing and reconciliation for LGBT Catholics and the church.

If [church] teaching on homosexual acts is ever going to change, the basic teaching governing all sexual acts must change," retired Auxiliary Bishop Geoffrey Robinson told the gathering of nearly 400 Catholics at the Seventh National Symposium on Catholicism and Homosexuality.

"For centuries the church has taught that every sexual sin is mortal sin," said Robinson, an auxiliary bishop of Sydney, Australia.

"The teaching may not be proclaimed as loudly as today as much as before, but it was proclaimed by many popes, it has never been retracted, and it has affected countless people," Robinson said.

"There is a serious need for a change in the church's teaching on heterosexual acts," he said, adding, "If and when this change occurs, it will inevitable have its effect on teaching on homosexual acts."

"The teaching fostered a belief in an incredibly angry God," explained Robinson, "for this God would condemn a person to eternity in hell for a single unrepentant moment of deliberate pleasure arising from sexual desire. I simply do not believe in such a God. Indeed, I positively reject such a God."

Robinson is the author of the 2007 book, *Confronting Power in the Catholic Church: Reclaiming the Spirit of Jesus*, which addressed the clerical sex-abuse crisis and was controversial among his fellow bishops in Australia who faulted him for a 2008 lecture tour in the United States to speak about the issues his book addressed.

A high point of the March 15-17 conference came when O'Malley, who weeks earlier signed a same-sex marriage bill into law, briefly addressed the faithful—but without ever saying the words "gay" or "lesbian."

"I am not here as a Catholic, I'm here as the governor of all Maryland," he said. "Each of us in the public arena brings with us our own perspectives, our own traditions, our own faith traditions, and our own perspectives. We hope and what we should expect of all our leaders is when they look at the Constitution is to protect equality among all people."

O'Malley received a sustained, standing ovation at symposium, held at the Renaissance Inner Harbor Hotel.

"At the end of the day, all of us want the same thing for our kids—we want our children to grow up in caring, committed, and loving homes, protected equally under the law," said O'Malley, who went on to say success in the state legislature, rested on a "belief in the dignity of every individual."

In advocating equal marriage rights, O'Malley has framed the issue as a balancing of protections for religious liberties and provisions for equal rights. He is not alone among other Catholic governors, including New York's Andrew Cuomo and Washington's Christine Gregoire, both of whom have recently signed same-sex marriage into law.

However Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn (also Catholic), while favoring civil unions, which he signed into law, falls short in his support of full marriage equality.

New Ways Ministry advocated equal-marriage rights in Maryland, with representatives of the group testifying on their behalf in Annapolis, the state capital, during legislative hearings.

The new law in Maryland does not take effect until 2013 and is almost certain to face a referendum drive, a roll-back fight.

For now, Maryland is among eight states and the District of Columbia that have legalized marriage for gay couples.

Meanwhile, Patricia Beattie Jung, a professor of Christian ethics at the St. Paul School of Theology, Kansas City, Mo., presented a theological argument for same-sex marriage, which relied on the Catholic tradition and church teaching.

While a Catholic argument for same-sex sacramental marriage has yet to be fully developed, Beattie Jung makes a strong case for embracing at least same-sex civil marriage.

"Sexuality is ambiguous," she said. "It can be dangerous and a grace. So we channel it in marriage. Monogamy entails promises to be steadfast and sexually exclusive."

I'm pretty conservative," explained Jung, who said her main reason for promoting sexual fidelity is its service to

"love" and to "life."

"Great sex is wholehearted," she said. "This is what makes it graceful and us vulnerable and vicious. These promises give us the time and focus to learn how to love."

"Can fidelity serve same-sex lovers the same way?" asked Jung, who taught for 13 years at Loyola University Chicago from 1995 to 2008. She was tenured there in 1998.

"Yes!" Jung said.

"Fidelity in service to life," she said, means "marriage is good for the life of spouses, children, and elders bonded together as kin by marriage."



Patricia Beattie Jung

For these reasons, "The state promotes marriage by linking to it a broad array of economic and legal benefits and rights that cannot be accessed any other way," said Jung, who also said that same-sex marriage does not harm children or opposite-sex marriage. Nor will it unduly violate religious liberty.

Jung's talk generated a variety of responses during a question and answer session following her presentation.

One gay man, Arthur Fitzmaurice, 31, of Los Angeles, Calif., who attends St. Monica parish, asked her about same-sex divorce, wondering if same-sex and opposite sex couples break up for the same or different reasons.

Another gay man asked about emotional fidelity or steadfastness in same-sex marriages, but not necessarily sexual exclusivity.

"I asked the question because there is an acceptance, at least among my young gay male community, mostly secular, of open relationships that are emotionally committed but sexually open," with "a variety of rules about threesomes or whatever," said Kenneth Dowling, a member of Dignity Washington, D.C.

"And that's pretty well accepted," he said afterwards in a short interview.

"I think it comes from an attitude that fidelity is for straight people, for women, for lesbians," said Dowling, 22, who recently graduated from the Univer-

sity of California at San Diego.

"I am caught in the middle and don't know what is actually right, and I am still figuring this out," he said. "While I appreciate Catholic moral teaching, I also know it has been wrong, especially on the gay issue."

"Open relationships, with lots of rules. It's playing with fire," Dowling said. "I just wanted her to know that some people, including Catholics, do not rule out sexual openness and emotional fidelity and are exploring it."

In her reply, Jung said sexual exclusivity is "not just an issue in the gay community."

"I truly believe because of human finitude and limits, we really don't have the time and energy to give people what they deserve," she explained.

"I understand the appeal and attraction to other people and know that would energize my life," Jung said, adding, "I don't think I can be fair to my spouse in terms of loving."

It's an "important question," she said. "Why would anyone promise to be exclusive? Steadfast maybe, but exclusive—that's a question for gay and straight alike."

The New Ways Ministry symposium drew attendees from 35 states, including a dozen from Illinois and Chicago, the District of Columbia, Canada, England and Scotland, said Francis DeBernardo, the organization's executive director.

About 10 percent, he added, were under the age of 30.

In addition to plenary speakers, the event included workshops dealing with lesbian nuns, gay priests, Catholic marriages through gender change, LGBTQs among Latinos and African Americans, and coalition-building among gay-affirming advocacy organizations.

Chicagoans Karen Allen and her partner, Mary Jo Hoag, attended the gathering, this their second one.

"What brings me here is the chance to be rooted in my faith and with the people of God and to be sent forth to create loving communities," said Allen, who leads a gay and lesbian family-and-friends ministry at St. Nicholas parish in Evanston.

Allen said the parish group grew out of the idea she and others got 10 years ago at the Louisville, Ky., New Ways symposium.

In proposing the idea, she explained, "We were welcomed to do so by our pastor at the time, who said, 'Where have you been?'"

The ministry is about education and prayer and not so much advocacy, Allen said, but "more about how can we as gay and lesbian Catholics live fully integrated, authentic lives in our tradition."

"Many have walked away [from the church] but returned in mid-life," she explained, while readily acknowledging, "struggling mightily" with "clericalism and the hierarchy."

"The church is our church," said Hoag, explaining why she stays. "Many of us are cradle Catholics who grew up with the rituals, sacraments, and the teachings and feel comfortable. We are gifts to the church and shouldn't go away, as we provide those gifts of love and understanding and outreach."

New Ways Ministry, Allen added, provides us "a shot in the arm" to keep up our work in ministry. †



Close to 400 Symposium participants listen to a plenary session speaker.

Lesbian denied communion addresses Catholic symposium

By: **Chuck Colbert**
The Rainbow Times
 Northampton, Massachusetts
 March 20, 2012

BALTIMORE — A Catholic symposium dealing with gay and lesbian relationships in the Church concluded on an affective note here when the woman who was denied communion at her mother's funeral spoke poignantly about the experience.

"It's my mother's love and compassion, and willingness to stand up for what is right that you see standing before you today," Barbara Johnson told conference attendees.

"And not 'Barbara Johnson, lesbian denied communion' or 'Barbara Johnson, Buddhist Catholic,'" she added.

During the funeral Mass on Saturday, Feb. 25, in Gaithersburg, Md., Rev. Marcel Guarnizo refused the Eucharist to Johnson, telling her, "I cannot give you communion because you live with a woman, and in the eyes of the church that is a sin."

The communion incident caused a media stir and dismayed Catholics nationwide and around the world.

In the several weeks since, detractors have attempted to discredit Johnson, a 51-year-old artist, labeling her an activist, Buddhist, communist, and even atheist.

But Johnson would have none of it on St. Patrick's Day.

A lifelong Catholic and former

Catholic school teacher, Johnson lives in Washington, D.C., with her partner of many years.

"What I want to share with you today is the story of a daughter, a lesbian daughter, who felt her mother's love and acceptance deeply," Johnson told several hundred people during the closing session of New Ways Ministry's Seventh National Symposium on Catholicism and Homosexuality (March 15 - 17).

"I remember when I first came out, and my mom was not happy," said Johnson. "Each year at the Gay Pride parade, I would stand and applaud those P-FLAG moms and dads for their courage and their compassion. And I would pray that one day mom and dad would walk beside me in that contingent."

"As I got older, I stopped needing parades," Johnson continued. "And what I got was even better. I got a life where my mother and father adored my life partner. I got a life where my parents walked me down the aisle at our (not so legal) wedding. I got a life where, on our last happy time together, I thanked my mom for accepting and embracing me and for loving my partner so much. Her



At the Symposium: Barbara Johnson (right) and her partner, Ruth.

response was to pat Ruth on the leg as she looked her in the eye with the most beautiful smile and said, 'I wouldn't have it any other way — right?'"

As Johnson spoke, any number of symposium attendees fought back tears.

"You see Midge and Dick Johnson's youngest daughter who is deeply heartbroken her parents are no longer

here on this earth with her and her family," said Johnson.

"You see this daughter who wound up in a whirlwind of media spectacle," she continued. "You see this daughter who was placed in a state of grace by none other than her beloved mother."

"For there is no more amazing state of grace than the one I was honored to receive as my mother allowed me to witness her passing from this life and into the dancing arms of my dad."

Afterwards, Johnson said several priests approached her, apologizing on behalf of the church for the painful incident and the priest's pastoral insensitivity.

For his part, Father Guarnizo insists, "I did the only thing a faithful Catholic priest could do," in refusing communion to Johnson, he said, according to a written statement that he issued on March 14 and was first published by Catholic News Service.

On March 9, the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C. removed Guarnizo from ministry and placed him on administrative leave pending an investigation of allegations of "intimidating behavior." †

To read an excerpted transcript of Barbara Johnson's Symposium remarks, visit:

www.newwaysministryblog.wordpress.com/2012/03/20/barbara-johnson-all-that-matters-is-love/

To read the Symposium blessing offered to Barbara Johnson and her family, visit:

www.newwaysministryblog.wordpress.com/2012/03/18/barbara-johnsons-symposium-appearance-is-highlight-of-the-closing-day/

At New Ways Ministry Symposium

O'Malley confident Maryland voters will uphold marriage

By: **Steve Charing**
The Washington Blade
 March 19, 2012

BALTIMORE — Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley received a warm reception as he addressed an audience of nearly 400 Catholics who attended the New Ways Ministry's Seventh National Symposium of Catholicism and Homosexuality at Baltimore's Renaissance Inner Harbor Hotel on March 16. New Ways Ministry, based in Mount Rainier, Md., is a national Catholic organization that focuses on LGBT issues.

O'Malley, a practicing Catholic, opened his brief remarks by stating, "I did not come here as a Catholic. I came here as the governor of all of Maryland."

Acknowledging that Maryland is comprised of citizens who represent a variety of backgrounds including different ethnicities, perspectives, traditions and faith traditions, O'Malley said, "we should expect and demand from all our leaders ... to protect rights equally among all people."

O'Malley discussed Baltimore's important place in history especially during the War of 1812 and its connection to the Star-Spangled Banner. "The flag had been stitched together by black and white hands here in Baltimore. And the thread that stitched those stars and stripes together was the thread of human dignity."

He added that we all want the same things for our kids: we want them to live in a loving, caring, committed and stable home protected equally under the law. "For a people of many different faiths, for a people committed to the principle of religious freedom, the way forward is always to be found through greater respect for the equal rights of all; for the human dignity of all."

He added, "The very reason for Maryland's founding was for religious freedom. And at the heart of religious freedom is respect for the freedom of indi-



At the Seventh National Symposium: Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley (center) is flanked by New Ways Ministry's Francis DeBernardo and Sister Jeannine Gramick.

vidual conscience."

The governor indicated the passage of the marriage equality bill in the General Assembly was "based on the fundamental beliefs, the fundamental principles we share, foremost among them is our belief in the dignity of every individual."

O'Malley acknowledged the referendum battle ahead. "In Maryland, we were able to find a way to protect individual civil marriage rights and religious freedom. And while it is likely to be challenged on the ballot, I believe that ultimately the voters...will come down on the side of human dignity."

Appropriately, O'Malley concluded his address on a religious note.

"The mystery of human existence; the mystery of our own relationships with one another; the mystery of our own individual relationships with the

creator of creation ... these are deep, deep mysteries. Every person must search for the truth that is at the center of that mystery. This search requires individual freedom. And it also requires religious freedom."

The symposium was titled, "From Water to Wine: Lesbian/Gay Catholics & Relationships" and was held March 15 - 17. It received the endorsement of 45 national Catholic organizations. Many of the nearly 400 attendees were priests and nuns and all of them active leaders in their church communities.

Other speakers included former Lt. Gov. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, retired Bishop Geoffrey Robinson from Australia and Barbara Johnson, the lesbian denied communion at her mother's funeral in Gaithersburg.

"As Catholics, we are proud of Gov. O'Malley's ardent support of marriage

equality," said Francis DeBernardo, executive director of New Ways Ministry. "His support is in the best tradition of Catholicism's legacy of social justice for all. We are happy to have this opportunity to thank him for his work and to show how faithful Catholics support full equality for LGBT people."

The organization came under fire by Cardinal Edmund F. O'Brien who said, "In no manner is the position proposed by New Ways Ministry in conformity with Catholic teaching."

In response, DeBernardo told the *Blade*, "Thousands of Catholic people and hundreds of Catholic institutions from across the country continue to support our programs and attend our events. They recognize that what we are doing is authentically Catholic." †

NCR endorses Bishop Robinson's call for a new sexual ethic

Editorial

The National Catholic Reporter
March 27, 2012

Unlike sex centered on "me," our new Christian sexuality, centered on the other, would respond to the deepest longings of the human wholeheartedly second the invitation by Australian Bishop Geoffrey Robinson for a thorough and honest reexamination of the church's teaching on sexuality. Robinson's invitation, coming in a paper delivered in Baltimore at a conference sponsored by New Ways Ministry, is a gentle but elegant plea that offers hope for Catholics who want to stop the church's headlong plunge into irrelevancy as a moral voice in our culture.

Robinson says that a careful study of the long arc of church teaching on sexuality comes to this foundational statement: "The church is saying that love is the very deepest longing of the human heart, and sex is a most important expression of love, so people should do all in their power to ensure that sex retains its ability to express love as deeply as possible."

From this foundation, Robinson sug-

gests three areas to reexamine Catholic teaching.

Rather than seeing sexual sin as an offense against God because it is a violation of the divine and natural order established by God, look at sexual morality in terms of the good or harm done to persons and the relationships between them. Robinson says he thinks God is "not easily offended." He continues, "All the evidence tells us that God cares greatly about human beings and takes a very serious view of any harm done to them, through sexual desire or any other cause."

Rather than trying to discern good or bad in objective acts -- was this act unitive and open to procreation? -- look at how the intentions and circumstances surrounding what a person does or doesn't do lead toward or away from loving deeply. "Sexual acts are pleasing to God when they help to build persons and relationships, displeasing to God when they harm persons and relationships," he writes.

Rather than narrowly focused attention on a few explicit Bible verses devoted to sexual morality, use the best of scripture scholarship to understand the

Bible as the unfolding story of a journey, the spiritual journey of the people of God. No single verse or collection of verses can be seen as the final word of God on a subject, Robinson writes.

Robinson is not the first to articulate the need for a responsible reexamination of sexual ethics, one that takes seriously the radical call to selfless love, but the addition of a bishop's voice adds new dimension to the conversation. By rebuilding Christian morality in the area of sexuality in the way Robinson suggests, we will achieve a teaching that can better challenge the message about sexuality trumpeted by the dominant culture in television, music and advertising, a sexuality that idolizes self-gratification and that puts "me" before "you." By placing the needs of the other first, our sexual ethic would reject sexual violence -- physical and psychological, the idolatry of self-gratification, the objectification of people, and the trivializing of sex when it is separated from love. n heart, promote commitment between people, cherish the long process of relationship-building and foster community.

In the end, Robinson is making a profoundly traditional suggestion about

sexuality, because what he proposes is rooted in genuine personal responsibility. He writes: "Many would object that what I have proposed would not give a clear and simple rule to people. But God never promised us that everything in the moral life would be clear and simple. Morality is not just about doing right things; it is also about struggling to know what is the right thing to do. ... It is about taking a genuine personal responsibility for everything I do."

It is important to note that Robinson issued his challenge at the Seventh National Symposium on Catholicism and Homosexuality, sponsored by New Ways Ministry, an organization for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning Catholics and church personnel ministering to them. As Robinson so clearly points out, this new way of looking at heterosexual acts "will inevitably have its effect on teaching on homosexual acts." That is a change long overdue.

Robinson's take on sexuality -- that it deserves deeper consideration than the narrow, rule-bound approach that has evolved in Christian circles -- takes us to the heart of the radical approach Jesus took toward human relationships. †

Bishops Say Rules on Gay Parents Limit Freedom of Religion

By Laurie Goodstein

The New York Times
December 28, 2011

Roman Catholic bishops in Illinois have shuttered most of the Catholic Charities affiliates in the state rather than comply with a new requirement that says they must consider same-sex couples as potential foster-care and adoptive parents if they want to receive state money. The charities have served for more than 40 years as a major link in the state's social service network for poor and neglected children.

The bishops have followed colleagues in Washington, D.C., and Massachusetts who had jettisoned their adoption services rather than comply with nondiscrimination laws.

For the nation's Catholic bishops, the Illinois requirement is a prime example of what they see as an escalating campaign by the government to trample on their religious freedom while expanding the rights of gay people. The idea that religious Americans are the victims of government-backed persecution is now a frequent theme not just for Catholic bishops, but also for Republican presidential candidates and conservative evangelicals.

"In the name of tolerance, we're not being tolerated," said Bishop Thomas J. Paprocki of the Diocese of Springfield, Ill., a civil and canon lawyer who helped drive the church's losing battle to retain its state contracts for foster care and adoption services.

The Illinois experience indicates that the bishops face formidable opponents who also claim to have justice and the Constitution on their side. They include not only gay rights advocates, but also many religious believers and churches that support gay equality (some Catholic legislators among them). They frame the issue as a matter of civil rights, saying that Catholic Charities was using taxpayer money to discriminate against same-sex couples.

Tim Kee, a teacher in Marion, Ill., who was turned away by Catholic Charities three years ago when he and his longtime partner, Rick Wade, tried to adopt a child, said: "We're both Catholic, we love our church, but Catholic Charities closed the door to us. To add insult to injury, my tax dollars went to provide discrimination against me."

The bishops are engaged in the religious liberty battle on several fronts.

They have asked the Obama administration to lift a new requirement that Catholic and other religiously affiliated hospitals, universities and charity groups cover contraception in their employees' health plans. A decision has been expected for weeks now.

At the same time, the bishops are protesting the recent denial of a federal contract to provide care for victims of sex trafficking, saying the decision was anti-Catholic. An official with the Department of Health and Human Services recently told a hearing on Capitol Hill that the bishops' program was rejected because it did not provide the survivors of sex trafficking, some of whom are rape victims, with referrals for abortions or contraceptives.

Critics of the church argue that no group has a constitutional right to a government contract, especially if it refuses to provide required services.

But Anthony R. Picarello Jr., general counsel and associate general secretary of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, disagreed. "It's true that the church doesn't have a First Amendment right to have a government contract," he said, "but it does have a First Amendment right not to be excluded from a contract based on its religious beliefs."

The controversy in Illinois began when the state legislature voted in November 2010 to legalize civil unions for same-sex couples, which the state's Catholic bishops lobbied against. The legislation was titled "The Illinois Religious Freedom Protection and Civil Unions Act," and Bishop Paprocki said he was given the impression that it would not affect state contracts for Catholic Charities and other religious social services.

In New York State, religious groups lobbied for specific exemption language

in the same-sex marriage bill. But bishops in Illinois did not negotiate, Bishop Paprocki said.

"It would have been seen as, 'We're going to compromise on the principle as long as we get our exception.' We didn't want it to be seen as buying our support," he said.

Catholic Charities is one of the nation's most extensive social service networks, serving more than 10 million poor adults and children of many faiths across the country. It is made up of local affiliates

that answer to local bishops and dioceses, but much of its revenue comes from the government. Catholic Charities affiliates received a total of nearly \$2.9 billion a year from the government in 2010, about 62 percent of its annual revenue of \$4.67 billion. Only 3 percent came from churches in the diocese (the rest came from in-kind contributions, investments, program fees and community donations).

In Illinois, Catholic Charities in five of the six state dioceses had grown dependent on foster care contracts, receiving 60 percent to 92 percent of their revenues from the state, according to affidavits by the charities' directors. (Catholic Charities in the Archdiocese of Chicago pulled out of foster care services in 2007 because of problems with its insurance provider.)

When the contracts came up for renewal in June, the state attorney general, along with the legal staff in the governor's office and the Department of Children and Family Services, decided that the religious providers on state contracts would no longer be able to reject same-sex couples, said Kendall Marlowe, a spokesman for the department.

The Catholic providers offered to refer same-sex couples to other agencies (as they had been doing for unmarried couples), but that was not acceptable to the state, Mr. Marlowe said. "Separate but equal was not a sufficient solution on other civil rights issues in the past ei-

ther," he said.

Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Rockford decided at that point to get out of the foster care business. But the bishops in Springfield, Peoria, Joliet and Belleville decided to fight, filing a lawsuit against the state.

Taking a completely different tack was the agency affiliated with the conservative Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, which, like the Catholic Church, does not sanction same-sex relationships. Gene Svebakken, president and chief executive of the agency, Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois, visited all seven pastoral conferences in his state and explained that the best option was to compromise and continue caring for the children.

"We've been around 140 years, and if we didn't follow the law we'd go out of business," Mr. Svebakken said. "We believe it's God-pleasing to serve these kids, and we know we do a good job."

In August, Judge John Schmidt, a circuit judge in Sangamon County, ruled against Catholic Charities, saying, "No citizen has a recognized legal right to a contract with the government." He did not address the religious liberty claims, ruling only that the state did not violate the church's property rights.

Three of the dioceses filed an appeal, but in November filed a motion to dismiss their lawsuit. The Dioceses of Peoria and Belleville are spinning off their state-financed social services, with the caseworkers, top executives and foster children all moving to new nonprofits that will no longer be affiliated with either diocese.

Gary Huelsmann, executive director of Catholic Social Services of Southern Illinois, in the Belleville Diocese, said the decision was excruciating for everyone.

"We have 600 children abused and neglected in an area where there are hardly any providers," he said. "Us going out of business would have been detrimental to these children, and that's a sin, too."

The work will be carried on, but the Catholic Church's seminal, historic connection with it has been severed, noted Mr. Marlowe, the spokesman for the state's child welfare agency. "The child welfare system that Catholic Charities helped build," he said, "is now strong enough to survive their departure." †





PARISHES

Alabama

Decatur: Annunciation of the Lord
Montgomery: St. Bede

Arizona

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

California

Berkeley: Holy Spirit Parish
Burney: St. Francis of Assisi
Carlsbad: St. Patrick
Claremont: Our Lady of 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: St. Jane Frances de Chantal,
St. Patrick
Oakland: Our Lady of Lourdes
Oceanside: St. Thomas More
Orange: Holy Family Cathedral
Pasadena: Assumption of the B.V.M.
Ross: St. Anselm
Sacramento: St. Francis of Assisi
San Carlos: St. Charles
San Diego: Ascension, San Rafael,
St. Jude Shrine
San Francisco: Most Holy Redeemer,
Old St. Mary Cathedral, St. Agnes,
St. Dominic
San Jose: St. Julie Billiard,
St. Martin of Tours (Emmaus
Community)
San Luis Obispo: Old Mission of
San Luis Obispo
San Raphael: Church of San Raphael &
Mission San Raphael Arcangel
Santa Barbara: OL of Guadalupe
Santa Cruz: Holy Cross
Santa Monica: St. Monica
Simi Valley: St. Rose of Lima
Spring Valley: Santa Sophia
Stanford: Catholic Community at Stanford
University
South Pasadena: Holy Family
Valinda: St. Martha
Vernon: Holy Angels Catholic Church of
the Deaf
Walnut Creek: St. John Vianney
West Hollywood: St. Ambrose,
St. Victor
Whittier: St. Mary of the Assumption

Colorado

Arvada: Spirit of Christ
Avon: St. Edward
Colorado Springs: Our Lady of
Guadalupe, Sacred Heart
Denver: St. Dominic, Christ the King,
Mount Carmel
Fort Collins: Blessed John XXIII
Genesee: St. Frances Cabrini Shrine
Highlands Ranch: Pax Christi

Gay-friendly Catholic Parishes & Communities

Below is a list of known "gay-friendly" Catholic parishes and intentional Eucharistic communities. Thank you for helping us add to this growing list! If you are aware of a parish or community that is known as welcoming to lesbian/gay Catholics, 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. Parishes are listed first and intentional Eucharistic communities follow. For links to many of these parishes' websites, go to www.NewWaysMinistry.org/

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: Sacred Heart, Christ the King

Georgia

Atlanta: Shrine of the Immaculate
Conception

Idaho

Boise: St. Mary

Illinois

Berwyn: St. Mary of the Celle
Chicago: Immaculate Conception,
St. Clement, St. Gertrude,
St. Gregory, St. Peter, St. Sylvester,
St. Teresa of Avila, St. Thomas the
Apostle, Our Lady of 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
Provincetown: St. Peter
Sharon: Our Lady of Sorrows
Springfield: Sacred Heart

Michigan

Ann Arbor: St. Mary Student Parish
Detroit: St. Leo, Christ the King
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
Tinton Falls: St. Anselm

New Mexico

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

New York

Albany: St. Vincent DePaul
Baldwinsville: St. Augustine
Bellmore: St. Barnabas the Apostle
Bellport: Mary Immaculate
Binghamton: St. Francis of Assisi
Brooklyn: St. Andrew the Apostle,
St. Boniface, St. Athanasius,
St. Augustine, 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
Pittsford: Church of the
Transfiguration
Rochester: Blessed Sacrament,
St. Mary (Downtown), St. Monica
Syracuse: St. Lucy, All Saints
Utica: Our Lady of Mount Carmel,
Historic Old St. John's
Wading River: St. John the Baptist
Wantagh: St. Frances de Chantal
Westbury: St. Brigid

North Carolina

Charlotte: St. Peter
Durham: Immaculate Conception
Fayetteville: St. Patrick
Raleigh: St. Francis of Assisi 9.6

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
Fairlawn: St. Hilary
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: St. Andrew, St. Francis of As-
sisi, 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

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

**INTENTIONAL EUCHARISTIC
COMMUNITIES****Arizona**

Scottsdale: Franciscan Renewal
Center

California

Orange: Koinonia
Pleasanton: Catholic Community of
Pleasanton

District of Columbia

Communitas

Florida

Tampa: Franciscan Center

Maryland

Greenbelt: Greenbelt Catholic
Community

Michigan

Grand Rapids: Marywood
Kalamazoo: Lambda Catholics

Minnesota

Minneapolis: Spirit of St. Stephen's Catho-
lic Community

Oregon

Portland: Journey and Koinonia
Catholic Community

Washington

Olympia: Holy Wisdom Inclusive
Catholic Community

Wisconsin

Madison: Holy Wisdom Monastery

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When Love Conquers All, Even the Loss of Two Jobs

By John Leland
cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com
March 9, 2012

For two men in St. Louis, it seemed like a romantic way to spend their 20th anniversary: a weekend in New York, with a marriage ceremony in Central Park on Friday and a Broadway show, "Priscilla: Queen of the Desert," on Saturday.

But for one of the men, Al Fischer, 46, a teacher at a Catholic school, there were unforeseen consequences.

On Feb. 15, Mr. Fischer announced his joyful plans to colleagues at a staff meeting. His colleagues applauded, he said. He did not realize that an official from the Archdiocese of St. Louis was in attendance. The next day, Mr. Fischer was informed that he was fired.

Two weeks later, after news of his firing made headlines, he was terminated from his second, part-time job as music director for the Roman Catholic church where he and his partner, Charlie Robin, have worshiped for more than six years.

"I didn't expect any of this," said Mr. Fischer, who said that he and Mr. Robin had been open about their relationship, both at St. Ann Catholic School, where Mr. Fischer taught music, and at St. Rose Philippine Duchesne Church in Florissant, Mo. The pastors at both parishes knew the men were gay, Mr. Fischer said. "I didn't understand it would be, 'click, you're done,' but it was."

The couple went ahead with their plans. They arrived in New York on Thursday and, after getting their paperwork in order Friday morning, were married in the afternoon at Bethesda Fountain in Central Park.

For the couple, the small ceremony, a commonplace occurrence in New York since the state legalized same-sex mar-

riage last year, has uprooted their lives, and created a firestorm of controversy in which church doctrine, employment, love, law and the passions of school parents have all come into heated conflict.

The marriage had been in the works since last March 9, the couple's 19th anniversary, when Mr. Robin, who is executive director at the Edison Theater at Washington University in St. Louis, interrupted their television viewing to propose. "He got down on one knee, put the show on pause and said, 'Just to make it official, will you marry me?'" Mr. Fischer said.

I'd have to leave my job after the wedding." As part of his employment, he had signed a witness statement that he would not take a public stand against the tenets of the church, "and this was considered a public stand," he said.

When parents mounted a spirited e-mail campaign opposing his dismissal, he said, the school told him the decision was effective not after the wedding, but immediately.

The Archdiocese of St. Louis explained in a statement on Friday, "When he publicly demonstrated a life inconsistent with Catholic teaching, Al Fischer

work, he said, declining to name the school or the churches. He has kept his other two part-time jobs, as artistic director of a gay men's chorus and musical director at a Reform synagogue.

Both men say they remain committed to the Catholic Church, though they plan to look for a new church to attend. "I've been Catholic all my life," Mr. Robin said. "It's the way I know how to worship."

Mr. Fischer said that even with his firings, he received nothing but support from the pews. Even of the people who fired him, he said: "These are good people in a tough situation, having to toe a particular line. If they supported me they'd be making a statement against the tenets of the church. They signed the same witness statement that I did."

Shortly after 4 on Friday afternoon, before a crowd of about 40 friends and strangers in Central Park, the Rev. Robert Hagel led the couple in a religious ceremony that included two prayers, a passage from Scripture and a singing of the Lord's Prayer. The reading, from Paul's letter to the Romans, was about forgiveness.

"Usually we want to get back at people, we want to take shots," Mr. Hagel said. "And it's easy to do that. Al and Charlie are taking a different way." At 4:24, he called the couple to kiss. Mr. Robin, who called himself the angrier partner, cried during his vows.

For Joan Lipkin, a friend, the ceremony was bittersweet. "They'll go back to Missouri and it still won't be legal," she said.

The couple said they were looking forward to their weekend in New York — including a very rare luxury, an opportunity to sleep late on Sunday morning, with no 8 a.m. Mass.

"That's going to be awesome," Mr. Fischer said. ✦



Al Fischer, left, and Charlie Robin marry at the Bethesda Fountain in Central Park on Friday.

Missouri does not recognize marriage between partners of the same sex, so the couple considered marrying in neighboring Iowa, which does, but then decided instead on a weekend in New York. They asked a neighbor, a Presbyterian minister, to fly east with them to perform the ceremony.

They did not expect any problems, Mr. Robin said. After all, everyone knew they were gay.

But the day after the announcement, Mr. Fischer said, "I was informed that

was relieved of his duties as part-time choir director at St. Rose Philippine Duchesne Parish and as music teacher at St. Ann Parish School."

Mr. Fischer said that in more than two decades as an openly gay man, working in the theater, in churches and in schools, this was the first time he had encountered open discrimination for his sexual orientation.

He has since accepted a job offer from a secular private school for next fall and has received "solid offers" of church

partner, cried during his vows.

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Church Music Director Fired For Marrying His Partner of 23 Years

By Francis DeBernardo
NewWaysMinistryBlog.wordpress.com
February 12, 2012

In another case which illustrates that Catholics in the pews are much more accepting of LGBT issues than some Catholic leaders are, *The Charlotte Observer* reports that a North Carolina parish music director was fired from his job because he married his long-time partner in New York State.

Steav Bates-Congdon, 61, led the music ministry at St. Gabriel parish, Charlotte, one of the largest Catholic parishes in the state. He and his partner, Bill Bates-Congdon have been together for over 23 years. They were married October 15, 2011, in New York, with several St. Gabriel's parishioners present. The pastor, Rev. Frank O'Rourke, had been informed of their plans, and no repercussions were mentioned, according to Steav Bates-Congdon. The *Observer* story states:

"Bates-Congdon, who has produced music for Catholic churches for some 30 years, says he told O'Rourke about his wedding plans within days of his June proposal to Bill 'because I didn't want him blindsided.'

"He recalls O'Rourke's response: Congratulations, I'm very happy for you. But I can't give you my blessing.

" 'I wouldn't ask you to,' Bates-Congdon says he replied.

"More than six months passed before he was fired.

"Now, Bates-Congdon wonders why his boss and friend didn't warn him of any problems, 'why (he) didn't pull me aside and say, 'Dude, this is a really bad idea.'"

"Had O'Rourke raised any concerns, Bates-Congdon says, 'Bill and I would have pulled the plug and postponed it until some time when it wouldn't have mattered, like in re-

irement.

" 'This was never about activism or forcing the church to make a stand — or even Bill and me making a stand. It was for the sheer joy of celebrating the fact that we could get married that we decided we would.'"

Though parishioners have varied opinions about the firing, many support Bates-Congdon. According to the *Observer*:

"Cate Stadelman, a church member and choir singer for almost 25 years, says she has been back to St. Gabe's once since Bates-Congdon's firing — to help him pack. She says she doesn't know if she'll return.

" 'It's the injustice of it,' says Stadelman, who was on the search committee that recommended Bates-Congdon and, with her husband Tom, was a member of his wedding party.

" 'The church doesn't recognize this marriage. The state of North Carolina doesn't recognize this marriage.

What changed from Oct. 14 to Oct. 15?"

" 'And then there's the fact that this has absolutely no bearing on his ability to do a fabulous job.'"

John Gresham, a Charlotte attorney who specializes in workplace issues, noted a cruel irony in the decision:

" 'It is interesting that it was all right for him to 'live in sin,' ' he says. 'But when he got married it became a firing offense.'"

One long-time parishioner, Bill Collins, who is angry with the decision, made a comment that expresses the desire of many in the Catholic church when it comes to LGBT issues:

" 'I need a community that's compassionate beyond its rules,' he says. 'I need a leadership with compassion, not a leadership that simply talks about it, then acts otherwise.'"