

BANDINGS

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On Gay Unions, a Pragmatist Before He Was a Pope

By Simon Romero and Emily Schmall
The New York Times
March 19, 2013

BUENOS AIRES — The very idea was anathema to many of the bishops in the room.

Argentina was on the verge of approving gay marriage, and the Roman Catholic Church was desperate to stop that from happening. It would lead tens of thousands of its followers in protest on the streets of Buenos Aires and publicly condemn the proposed law, a direct threat to church teaching, as the work of the devil.

But behind the scenes, Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, who led the public charge against the measure, spoke out in a heated meeting of bishops in 2010 and advocated a highly unorthodox solution: that the church in Argentina support the idea of civil unions for gay couples.

The concession inflamed the gathering — and offers a telling insight into the leadership style he may now bring to the papacy.

Few would suggest that Cardinal Bergoglio, now Pope Francis, is anything but a stalwart who fully embraces the church's positions on core social issues. But as he faced one of the most acute tests of his tenure as head of Argentina's church, he showed another side as well, supporters and critics say: that of a deal maker willing to compromise and court opposing sides in the debate, detractors included.

The approach stands in sharp contrast to his predecessor, Benedict XVI, who spent 25 years as the church's chief doctrinal enforcer before becoming pope, known for an unbending adherence to doctrinal purity. Francis, by comparison, spent decades in the field, responsible for translating such ideals into practice in the real world, sometimes leading to a different approach.

"The melody may be the same, but the sound is completely different," Alberto Melloni, the director of the liberal Catholic John XXIII Foundation for Religious Science in Bologna, Italy, said of the two.

Faced with the near certain passage of the gay marriage bill, Cardinal Bergoglio offered the civil union compromise as the "lesser of two evils," said Sergio Rubin, his authorized biographer. "He wagered on a position of greater dialogue with society."

In the end, though, a majority of the bishops voted to overrule him, his only such loss in his six-year tenure as head of Argentina's bishops' conference. But throughout the contentious political debate, he acted as both the public face of the opposition to the law and as a bridgebuilder, sometimes reaching out to his critics.

"He listened to my views with a great deal of respect," said Marcelo Márquez, a gay rights leader and theologian who wrote a tough letter to Cardinal Bergoglio and, to his surprise, received a call from him less than an hour after it was delivered. "He told me that homosexuals need to have recognized rights and that he supported civil unions, but not same-sex marriage."

Mr. Márquez said he went on to meet twice with Cardinal Bergoglio, telling him of his plan to marry his partner and discussing theology. The man who would become pope gave him a copy of his biography, "The Jesuit."

Cardinal Bergoglio's readiness to reach out across the ideological spectrum and acknowledge civil unions for gay people could raise expectations that he would do the same as pope. But some of this strategic flexibility may have stemmed as much from Francis' position at the time as from his personal ideology.

Though Benedict publicly condemned legal recognition of unmarried heterosexual couples, much less gay couples, there was often an expectation of

some discretion in putting his positions into practice.

While the pope in Rome issued the doctrine, bishops like Cardinal Bergoglio were "on the frontier, in the field," and had to contend with the complexities of local politics, said Sandro Magister, a

Vatican expert for the newspaper *L'Espresso* in Italy.

Mr. Magister noted, for instance, that Benedict made it clear in 2005 that divorced Catholics who had remarried without an annulment should not receive



Pope Francis

communion. But Benedict did not instruct bishops how to enforce that, he said.

There was little ambiguity in Cardinal Bergoglio's vehement opposition to the gay marriage law, which was approved by the Senate in July 2010. In the months between the bishops' meeting and the Senate vote, the cardinal, in a letter, called the bill a "destructive pretension against the plan of God."

Clashing with Argentina's president, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, who supported the law, he endorsed protests involving tens of thousands of people against the bill, incurring the ire of some gay rights leaders here.

"The reality, beyond what he may have said in private meetings, was that he said some terrible things in public," said Esteban Paulón, president of the Argentine Federation of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transsexuals. "He took a role, in

public, that was determinedly combative."

But others who observed the bishops' private annual assembly in 2010 said that the cardinal was earnestly hoping for compromise on the issue.

"Bergoglio's thinking was very clearly demonstrated both with what he said and in the message of his pastoral work," said Roxana Alfieri, a social worker in the communications department of the bishops' central office here.

"He didn't want the church to take a position of condemning people but rather of respect for their rights like any vulnerable person," said Ms. Alfieri, who sat in on the bishops' 2010 meeting.

Cardinal Bergoglio was operating in one of Latin America's most socially liberal countries. Though Roman Catholicism remains the official religion of the state and 76.8 percent of Argentina's population is Catholic, only 33 percent cited religion as very important in their lives, according to a 2010 Pew study, and just 19 percent said they regularly attended mass.

While the archbishop's support for civil unions was shared by some of the more liberal bishops in attendance, it was defeated by the majority, reflecting the broad resistance of conservative bishops.

One priest in the province of Córdoba who spoke publicly in favor of the gay marriage measure, the Rev. Nicolás Alessio, was suspended from his work by another archbishop, Carlos Nájiz. In an essay written after the election this month of Pope Francis, Father Alessio continued to speak out on the subject, calling Argentina a "model for the rest of the continent" on gay rights.

Nearly three years since the passage of the law, more than 1,000 gay and lesbian couples have married in Argentina, and specialized tourism for gay and lesbian travelers has grown here, with about 50 tourist couples also taking advantage of the right to marry.

"This is something Rome cannot forgive, tolerate or allow to advance," Father Alessio wrote. †

(For related stories, see pages 2 and 8.)

Message to Pope Francis: More Gospel inclusiveness, please

By Sister Simone Campbell
WashingtonPost.com/OnFaith
April 2, 2013

A journalist recently asked what I thought about possible changes in the Catholic Church with our new pope. He specifically wanted to know if I expected that relationships with women would improve. I responded that I live in hope, and the journalist laughingly remarked that he had received exactly that response from every woman he had asked.

Yes, many of us are hopeful, based mostly on the initial actions and words of Pope Francis. We are heartened that he has reached out in humility to groups such as the detainees at a Roman youth detention center, where he washed the feet of young men and women on Holy Thursday. Including the young women was unprecedented.

My deepest hope is that he will lead our church in embracing all people who feel they have been marginalized or cast out because of stridency and cruelty they have encountered in our church. Too often we have been a hurtful structure rather than a caring community. Members of LGBT communities have been particularly harmed, and that is wrong.

The Gospels are filled with examples of Jesus teaching us to reach out to and welcome those who have been mar-

ginalized by others. Jesus reached out to the lepers, healed the Roman occupier's son, asked the Samaritan woman for help, and prevented the woman taken in adultery from being stoned by judgmental men. Pope Francis seems to understand this better than many, and we now



Sister Simone Campbell

have examples of people like Cardinal Dolan making some progress in following Christ's example.

During Easter weekend, the cardinal spoke on TV talk shows, where he admitted that "we've got to do better to see that our defense of marriage is not reduced to an attack on gay people." He also stated he would say to members of the community, "...God loves you. And you are made in God's image and likeness."

Francis DeBernardo, executive director of New Ways Ministry, which seeks to build bridges between the Church and LGBT communities, commented, "This is the first time that the cardinal has made such a positive statement about God's love for lesbian and gay people. Such a statement is a refreshing change from the usual harsh rhetoric that the church hierarchy uses when discussing LGBT issues. It is a significant sign of welcome and outreach. Cardinal Dolan's statement is nothing short of an Easter miracle."

Maybe the bigger Easter miracle came during Easter Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral, when Cardinal Dolan was quoted as hinting that even more dramatic changes were coming. He said, "The Church, with a capital 'C', is undergoing renewal, repair, resurrection. I kind of think we're seeing it today in a particularly fresh and new way with our

beloved Holy Father."

Perhaps the biggest change that our Pope Francis brings is that he seems to be loosening the bondage of fear that has held our leadership silent - and stifled the Gospel of inclusion. Maybe by washing young women's feet, by speaking of the needs of people who live in poverty and by leaving behind a lot of the traditional pomp of his office, Pope Francis is freeing bishops from their fear of being censured by a harsh Vatican. As a Catholic sister I know that it is not pleasant to face such censure. But I also know that Jesus was not stopped by his fear of what authority would do.

So my prayer is that Pope Francis will continue to model an inclusive church that welcomes all in the name of Jesus. My prayer includes Cardinal Dolan and all of the other leaders of our church. I urge them to follow Jesus's words to the disciples after his resurrection: Fear not!

This is the liberating power of welcoming everyone into the community. This is the life-giving realm of living the Gospel now. †

Sister Simone Campbell is the Executive Director of NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby.

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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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Dolan: Church could do better gay outreach

By **Cathy Lynn Grossman**
USA Today
April 1, 2013

Cardinal Timothy Dolan, the top U.S. Catholic prelate, says the Roman Catholic Church has to make sure that its defense of traditional marriage is not reduced to an attack on gays and lesbians.

Dolan is president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and last month was reputed to have gathered some votes in the Vatican conclave where Pope Francis was eventually elected.

He made his remarks on two morning talk shows on Easter Sunday (March 31), just days after the Supreme Court heard arguments in two same-sex marriage cases.

Dolan says the church could work on being more welcoming to gays and lesbians, noting it hasn't "been too good at that."

Dolan, who is archbishop of New York, was blasted by gay marriage opponent for failed lobbying efforts when the state passed gay marriage legislation in 2011.

On Sunday on the ABC News program "This Week," he said the church tries its "darnedest to make sure we're not an anti-anybody."

Dolan says he would tell gay men and lesbians that God loves them and they're entitled to friendship. But he says marriage is a union between a man and a woman "where children can come about naturally."

Dolan made similar comments on CBS' "Face the Nation."

Francis DeBernardo, executive director of the gay Catholic group New Ways Ministry, which has often been at odds with the church hierarchy, called Dolan's remarks "nothing short of an Easter miracle."

"This is the first time that the cardinal has made such a positive statement about God's love for lesbian and gay people," DeBernardo said. "Such a statement is a refreshing change from the usual harsh rhetoric that the church hierarchy uses when discussing LGBT issues." ✦

(See related commentary on page 6)

Another Vatican voice backs civil unions for same-sex couples

By **John Allen**
The National Catholic Reporter
April 21, 2013

Another veteran Vatican figure has signaled openness to civil recognition of same-sex unions in the wake of similar comments in early February from the Vatican's top official on the family. It's a position also once reportedly seen with favor by the future pope while he was still Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The latest expression of support for civil recognition as an alternative to gay marriage comes from Archbishop Piero Marini, who served for 18 years as Pope John Paul II's liturgical master of ceremonies.

"There are many couples that suffer because their civil rights aren't recognized," Marini said.

Marini, now 71, is currently the president of the Pontifical Committee for International Eucharistic Congresses. He spoke in an interview with the newspaper *La Nación* in Costa Rica, where the local church wrapped up

a Eucharistic congress Sunday.

Though Marini has no responsibility to frame policy on matters of marriage, his comments may reopen questions about the Vatican's line in the wake of a similar position expressed in early February by Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, president of the Pontifical Council for the Family.

During a Vatican news conference Feb. 4, Paglia said while the church is opposed to anything that treats other unions as equivalent to marriage between a man and a woman, it could accept "private law solutions" for protecting people's rights.

In some quarters, that comment was styled as undercutting bishops in both France and the United States who at the time were fighting off proposals for gay marriage, though Paglia insisted it's not what he meant.

The Marini comments may also reawaken interest in the new pope's history on the issue. ✦

(For related stories, see pages 1 and 8.)



Archbishop Vincent Paglia



Archbishop Piero Marini

Fired Catholic high school teacher tells gay kids to take heart

By **JoAnne Viviano**
The Columbus Dispatch
Columbus, Ohio
April 25, 2013

A gay teacher seeking reinstatement to a Roman Catholic high school in Columbus said she hopes the support she has received from around the world will encourage young people who question their sexuality.

Physical-education teacher Carla Hale referred to such youths, especially Catholic youths, during a news conference yesterday, when she addressed her efforts to get back to work at Bishop Watterson High School in Clintonville.

"Hopefully, they're seeing just the support and the love that's out there, and it's reassuring them that regardless of their sexual orientation ... we all deserve the same equalities, and the world's changing," Hale, 57, said during the appearance at Stonewall Columbus in the Short North.

Students, alumni and other supporters are seeking her reinstatement through various means, including a change.org petition that has more than 55,000 signatures from around the globe.

Hale has filed a grievance and plans to appeal to the union that represents Catholic teachers in central Ohio after Watterson Principal Marian Hutson denied her initial request on Tuesday.

"I was informed that I was not terminated because I was gay, but ... the spousal relationship that was publicized in the newspaper, which happened to be an obituary, is against church teaching," she said. Her attorney, Thomas Tootle, said he sees little distinction between the two.

Hale also will file a complaint with the Columbus Community Relations Commission under a city ordinance that makes it a crime for employers to discriminate based on sexual orientation. Mayor Michael B. Coleman is among those who have publicly supported the teacher.

Hale, a Methodist who worked at Watterson for 19

years, lost her job in March. The firing came after an anonymous letter from a "concerned parent" of a Watterson student to the Diocese of Columbus, which oversees the school. The letter complained that Hale's partner was listed in the February obituary for the teacher's mother.

In a statement yesterday, the diocese said that personnel matters are confidential and declined to discuss Hale's grievance. Catholic school employees, when hired, agree to abide by diocesan rules, regulations and policies, "including respecting the moral values advanced by the teachings of Christ," the statement said.

"The Catholic church respects the fundamental dignity of all persons but also must insist that those in its employ respect the tenets of the church," the statement said. "Personnel who choose to publicly espouse relationships or principles that are contrary to the teachings of the Catholic church cannot, ultimately, remain in the employ of the church."

Tootle said that position threatens any employee who works under the banner of the church, from teachers in Catholic schools to nurses in Catholic hospitals to groundskeepers in Catholic cemeteries.

Hale's partner, Julie Uncapher, said the attention the firing has brought the couple, who live in Powell, is unsettling.

"I try to follow her lead and stay strong," said Uncapher, 48. "Hopefully, there will be some sort of change."

The two have been together for about 15 years, but Hale said she did not discuss her sexual orientation with students.

Uncapher said she has struggled with guilt over Hale's firing and believes that "if you do your job well, it shouldn't matter what happens at home."

"It's nerve-racking, walking on eggshells," she said.

"When I go outside, I wonder if people will say something,

I wonder if people are going to care." ✦

LGBT advocates find solidarity at El Salvador gathering

By Francis DeBernardo
The National Catholic Reporter
April 27, 2013

On the day after the first Jesuit and the first Latin American was elected pope, I was fortunate to be on the University of Central America campus, a Jesuit school in El Salvador. The excitement on campus that day was electric and the student body was abuzz with energy.

But the excitement was not about the new pope. That news seemed like an afterthought compared to the event beginning that day on campus.

Gathered in the school's Segundo Montes, SJ, Auditorium (named for one of the six Salvadoran Jesuit martyrs assassinated at the school in 1989), some 350 people took part in El Salvador's first national conference on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender human rights. The March 14-15 conference, "Felicidad y Diversidad Sexual como Derechos Humanos" ("Happiness and Sexual Diversity as Human Rights"), was sponsored by ALDES El Salvador (Asistencia Legal para la Diversidad Sexual de El Salvador). It brought together lawyers, legal scholars, politicians, faith leaders and LGBT advocates to move forward El Salvador's burgeoning LGBT human rights movement. By the end of the second day, more than 1,000 people had participated in this meeting in San Salvador, the nation's capital. My colleague, longtime Catholic LGBT advocate Loretto Sr. Jeannine Gramick, and I were part of the program, presenting the topic of "Faith Communities as Promoters of Human Rights."

That first morning, the atrium echoed with voices filled with enthusiasm to begin the two days of meetings. The registration line snaked around the reception area and the aisles in the auditorium were filled with people sitting on the steps. Strangers welcomed one another, eager to meet the people with whom they would be sharing this event. In Spanish and English, people greeted each other, not letting even language become a barrier to the camaraderie.

The excitement was certainly the exhilaration of this event being a "first." The participants represented three distinct groups: University of Central America students, advocates who have been working on this topic since the Salvadoran LGBT rights movement began about 20 years ago, and U.S. visitors. Over and over I heard people say how important it was to come together, not just to learn,

but to support one another in their common work. As in any fledgling social movement, isolation is a great detriment, and the thrill of finding colleagues with whom to share the work is an enormous benefit.

The conference was a joint effort between activists and legal specialists in the United States and El Salvador. Ana Montano, a Salvadoran woman who is an immigration and LGBT rights lawyer in San Francisco, was aided in conference preparation by John Marrin and Danielle Mackey, two organizers from the United States who live in El Salvador. Lawyers and legal scholars from both nations presented at the meeting, discussing ways that professionals in both countries could help one another.

Though faith was only a small segment of the conference's program, the participants were keenly aware that the nation's leading Catholic university was hosting the event. Omar Serrano, the campus' vice rector for social outreach, welcomed the conference, saying that it was "an honor" to host the program, and acknowledged that church institutions could do more for LGBT rights, including "asking forgiveness" for previous inaction. All attendees were keenly aware of how faith groups have helped to spread homophobia; being welcomed to a Catholic campus was an important positive sign that was not lost on the participants.

The human rights situation for LGBT people in El Salvador is as bleak as it was in the United States 40 years ago. Violence, murder, ostracism and economic deprivation are all too common for those who choose to be public about their sexuality and gender identity. The "machismo" factor in Latin culture augments the repression sexual minorities experience.

Because people are fearful of coming forward after a violation of their rights, cases do not get prosecuted, and statistics reflect this underreporting. That the atmosphere is still so repressive made the fact that the conference was happening all the more remarkable. And the

courage of the presenters to discuss their work and personal stories publicly was all the more inspiring. An American participant told me, "People in El Salvador 'come out' at the risk of their own lives. In the U.S., we 'come out' at the risk of temporary hurt feelings."

Though the social atmosphere may seem to someone from the United States as if El Salvador were "behind the times," in some ways it is way ahead of its large and liberal Northern neighbor. For example, transgender issues were

warming during this conference on sexual diversity to meet with a U.S. delegation of mostly young people who traveled to El Salvador to be part of this event and to meet with Salvadoran LGBT leaders to learn ways to partner in the future for the protection of human rights.

The Interreligious Task Force on Central America, based in Cleveland, sponsored the delegation. Participants were from a diverse group of faiths and backgrounds, united by the common thread of wanting to help build a network of justice for sexual minorities. It was inspiring to see how the solidarity work continues. In the '80s, groups were working on economic and political oppression; now the topic is oppression based on sexuality and gender identity.

Different from the 1980s solidarity work, however, is the fact that, in this newer version, El Salvador now has the support of the U.S. Embassy in the area of LGBT human rights, whereas during the civil war, the embassy was seen as the symbol of oppression. On the eve of the conference, the U.S. ambassador, Mari Carmen Aponte, hosted a reception for the meeting's organizers, presenters and El Salvador's LGBT leaders. Aponte's reappointment was almost derailed by U.S. congressional leaders who were upset that she wrote a 2011 op-ed in a Salvadoran newspaper, praising that country's leaders for signing a United Nations declaration calling for an end to violence against gay and lesbian people.

At the reception, Aponte's enthusiasm for LGBT equality showed she was obviously unperturbed by these critics. Her encouraging words and gracious hospitality were signals to the attendees to continue their work for LGBT human rights. The reception was an inspiring beginning to these auspicious two days.

By the end of the conference, Montano, the emcee, joyously announced that during the two days, the first Salvadoran lawyer agreeing to work on LGBT rights cases on a pro bono basis came forward - a necessity given the economic challenges of the populace. Montano was optimistic that this lawyer would be the first of many more. She was also optimistic about the future of the conference. Her words of farewell to participants: "Hasta el año próximo" -- "Until next year." ✦

Francis DeBernardo is the executive director of New Ways Ministry.



Sister Jeannine Gramick lights candles in memory of LGBT people murdered in El Salvador.

front and center at this conference, definitely a main part of the agenda. When I attend conferences in the U.S. on LGBT topics, transgender issues often feel like an afterthought. Similarly, intersex people (those born with genitalia and secondary characteristics of both genders) were also well-represented -- something that I have seen only once at meetings in the U.S.

Attending the conference was a particularly poignant experience for me because I trace so much of how I connect faith with social justice back to the 1980s, when civil war raged in El Salvador and Archbishop Oscar Romero and the four North American churchwomen were murdered. In my early 20s at the time, those events made me see the way faith interacts with social and political life, and inspired passion within me to be involved with justice.

During those times, it was common for delegations of North Americans to visit El Salvador to monitor human rights violations and to express solidarity with the people there. Projects like this galvanized my generation. So it was heart-

Are Catholics shifting tone or substance on gay issues?

By David Gibson
Religion News Service
April 2, 2013

When New York Cardinal Timothy Dolan told national news programs on Easter Sunday that Catholic leaders need to do a better job of showing that their opposition to gay marriage is not "an attack on gay people," the nation's top Catholic bishop seemed to be signaling an important shift in tone, if not policies, that acknowledges two new realities.

One is the election of a new pope, Francis, who in less than a month has demonstrated a clear preference for engagement and inclusion (washing the feet of women and Muslim inmates at a Rome youth prison, for example) rather than the confrontation and political purism that often found favor under his predecessor, Benedict XVI.

The other is the ongoing shift in favor of same-sex marriage in the court of public opinion and — if recent arguments on Proposition 8 and the Defense of Marriage Act are any guide — perhaps soon in the U.S. Supreme Court.

Dolan himself has always been viewed as a more pastoral figure than many hard-line American prelates. As president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, he's tried — whenever possible — to steer the hierarchy on a politically realistic course, even when

he's eagerly taken on the White House when needed.

Christopher Hale, co-founder of the Millennial blog for young Catholics and an adviser for President Obama's reelection campaign, said he's had constructive exchanges with Dolan, and said Dolan's office had responded positively to Hale's March 26 *Washington Post* column that urged the very kind of pastoral shift on gays that Dolan seemed to adopt.

Hale also cited a *Religion News Service* column by Michael O'Loughlin calling for a shift in emphasis that he said Dolan's office also appreciated. "I know he listens," Hale said of Dolan. "I know he has his finger to the wind on this issue" of the church's attitude towards gays and lesbians.

Other leaders apparently do as well.

Cardinal Donald Wuerl of Washington, and his predecessor, Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, were also on Sunday morning news shows addressing the issue of gay rights and stressing that the church needed to be welcoming. As McCarrick put it, the church could be open to civil unions as an alternative to gay marriage.

Interestingly, it's the same tact Francis tried to take in Argentina, voicing support among Argentine bishops for civil unions against a national bid to allow gay marriage. He ultimately lost both battles.

Church officials insist that the Catholic bishops have always taken a "hate the sin, love the sinner" approach, and that the positive comments by Dolan and other churchmen are nothing new.

"A disagreement on the definition of marriage is a serious disagreement. It is not, however, separation from the love of God," Sister Mary Ann Walsh, a spokesperson for the USCCB, wrote in a blog post.

Yet that's not the message many bishops had been sending. During the 2012 presidential campaign, a number of bishops said that those who support civil marriage for gays should be barred from Communion, and Dolan and other bishops cast the battle over gay marriage, and against Obama, in almost apocalyptic terms.

Other church leaders used especially harsh language to describe gays and lesbians, and some barred children from attending Catholic schools because their parents are gay. Many also equated support for civil marriage for gays with support for abortion, an action that is grounds for automatic excommunication.

As Dolan himself conceded on Easter, though, the bishops "try our darnedest to make sure we're not an anti-anybody," but up to now "we haven't been too good at that."

While gay rights activists in the church welcomed the change of tone as

"nothing short of an Easter miracle," in the words of Francis DeBernardo of New Ways Ministry, church leaders also stress that they aren't softening their opposition to same-sex marriage.

At most, it appears that some leaders could be open to favoring civil unions or some alternative to gay marriage — an option that may not even be on the table anymore. Another strategy: shifting the focus from blistering opposition to gays and lesbians to ensuring that religious freedom and conscience rights are respected in future gay rights laws.

That itself could be significant, though it's not clear whether that will be enough to alter the dynamic that has built up in recent years. To be sure, the hierarchy will also face strong calls from its right flank to take a more vocal stand against gay rights.

"Why aren't their (Catholic) bishops appearing on the tube with David Gregory and Piers Morgan to defend the institution of marriage as a union of one man and one woman?" Michael Reagan wrote in a March 28 column at the conservative news site, Townhall.com.

"Like the bank executives that are too chicken to stand up to the federal bullies in Washington, and like the energy company bosses in California who won't stand up to the Green Socialists in Sacramento, the churches cower in fear." ✦

LGBT Catholics find a new supporter: An openly gay priest

By Scott Alessi
U.S. Catholic
May 2013

In 2011, an anonymous author released the book *Hidden Voices: Reflections of a Gay, Catholic Priest*. And now the book will be re-released with a new addition: the name of its author, Father Gary Meier.

Meier, a priest of the Archdiocese of St. Louis, is apparently tired of the treatment of Catholics who experience same-sex attraction by their own church. In the past couple of years, we've seen headlines about LGBT Catholics being denied communion, fired from teaching gym class, fired from leading music ministry, and removed from volunteer parish ministry, to name just a few examples. We have even seen a straight woman fired after 11 years of teaching because she privately supported the idea of same-sex civil marriage. Apparently, Meier had seen enough.

In a statement released this week, Meier decided that as he marks 15 years of priesthood he would publicly reveal that he authored the 2011 book and that he is in fact a celibate gay man. Meier writes:

"It has been difficult to remain part of a hierarchy that has been so hostile towards homosexuals in recent years... Our church once stood for and represented the radical nature of God's love for all people. That is not the true today – especially towards the LGBT community – and therefore I feel compelled to stand in solidarity with those Catholics who have lost their jobs, have been denied the sacraments, have been excommunicated or who have been made to feel 'less than' by their church leaders because of who they love."



Father Gary Meier

Interestingly enough, Meier also says that his sexuality wasn't really a secret, even when he was in the seminary. But teachers didn't object to him becoming a priest and there was just an understanding that Meier, like any straight or gay man entering the priesthood, was committing to a life of celibacy.

Of course, things have changed in recent years, and it takes a lot of courage for Meier to make such a public stand today. The initial reaction of his own archdiocese has been mostly positive, as a statement released emphasizes that all people are children of God and no one is to be condemned for their sexuality. The statement also says that "Fr. Meier has before him an opportunity to be an example and mentor to Catholics in the archdiocese who struggle with the same feelings," which while true in the sense that he will be a mentor to others may not be the best choice of words, as

"struggle" still implies that there is still something wrong with people who are attracted to members of the same sex. Regardless of what the archdiocese

says, the floodgates are likely to open and Meier will undoubtedly receive some harsh criticism from many in the church. Some will probably call for him to be dismissed from the priesthood or banned from public ministry. He's undoubtedly aware of this, and hopefully he will maintain his resolve to speak up for others who must deal with the same type of

criticism from their brothers and sisters in Christ.

For many who have already reconciled their same-sex attraction with their identity as children of God, the real "struggle" is being accepted in their own church. Having an advocate like Meier in the ranks of the priesthood can only help their cause. †

Fr. James Martin on Jason Collins

By Bob Shine
Bondings 2.0
NewWaysMinistryBlog.wordpress.com
May 1, 2013

Splashed across the cover of *Sports Illustrated*

Illustrated this week is Jason Collins, the first athlete on a male professional sports team to come out as gay. Collins has been celebrated across the sports world and the internet, but he has also faced harsh criticism. Jesuit Fr. James Martin posted the Collins' story, and then provided lengthy remarks about why Catholics should support the athlete's coming out without reservation. Fr. Martin writes:

"There are many times that Catholics are called to support their gay brothers and sisters wholeheartedly, unreservedly and publicly. This is one of them. All of us are created by God, and all of us have an undeniable and unassailable human dignity. And part of that dignity is accepting that you are a beloved creation of God. For many gays and lesbi-

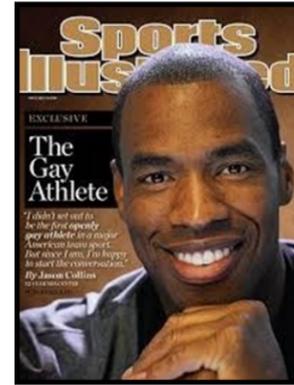
ans, however, accepting that they are beloved creations of God is a

very difficult task, made more difficult by a variety of social pressures. 'Coming out' is often an important step, sometimes the most important step, to a deeper relationship with God, to spiritual wholeness...

"Loving means first accepting a person, in all their complexity and beauty, as God has created him or her. This kind of love precedes questions about judging the actions of any person – straight or gay. Besides, we know how Jesus felt about our judging others. Love precedes all of that. True love means loving a person as he or she is – not as we would wish them to be, or as

we think they should be, or worse, as we think God should have created him or her. But as they are.

"As the Psalmist says, 'I praise you God, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.' We should be grateful to Mr. Collins for reminding us that all of us are indeed 'wonderfully made.' †



Jason Collins

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.



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

Gay Catholic delivers petition to bishop asking to be reinstated

By David Gibson
Religion News Service
April 11, 2013

NEW YORK—A gay man ousted from posts at his Long Island parish after a critic complained that he had married his partner delivered a petition with more than 18,000 signatures on Thursday (April 11) to Bishop William Murphy, asking to be reinstated.

“Bishop Murphy, please let Nicholas Coppola resume volunteering at his parish – and make it clear that faithful gay and lesbian Catholics are welcome to participate fully in parish life in your diocese,” reads the petition. Murphy is longtime head of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rockville Centre.

According to gay activist network GLAAD, which has been assisting Coppola, a security guard at the diocese agreed to deliver the petition but said that neither Murphy nor diocesan officials would meet with Coppola and representatives of the activist groups who accompanied him.

The diocese later released a statement saying that it “respects those who may have signed a petition” but said that it cannot change church teaching against gay marriage and expects others to respect that position as well.

Catholic doctrine “is not discrimination against homosexual men and women” and “no one has a right to discriminate against persons because of sexual orientation,” Murphy said in the statement.

But “all church institutions and teachers of the faith are bound to support this teaching, particularly by their public action,” the statement added.

In January, the pastor at St. Anthony’s Roman Catholic Church in Oceanside stripped Coppola of his jobs as a religious education teacher, lector and visitation minister. A top aide to Murphy had conveyed concerns to the parish after the bishop received an anon-

ymous letter pointing out that Coppola wed his partner under New York’s new gay marriage law.

The case came to light last week after top Catholic officials, led by New York Cardinal Timothy Dolan, president of the U.S. Conference of Cath-



Nicholas Coppola delivers 18,603 signatures through Faithful America, asking to be active in his Roman Catholic parish. Photo courtesy GLAAD

olic Bishops, said that the church needs to do a better job welcoming gays and showing that the institution is not “anti-anybody.”

GLAAD responded by promoting Coppola’s story to show that the church’s actions were not matching its words.

The petition drive, organized by the group Faithful America, was another effort to put pressure on the hierarchy, which is facing a sea change in public opinion on gay rights as well as the prospect of

state laws and even the Supreme Court opening the door to same-sex marriage.

“The best part about telling my story is that it has reminded me that I’m not alone,” Coppola said

Thursday, according to GLAAD. “I have been given so many words and signs of support and love by my fellow parishioners at St. Anthony’s parish. I’ve been stopped during my routine day by people who are letting me know that they care for me.”

While many Catholics have voiced support for Coppola, church conservatives have blasted his cause as an example of liberal intolerance and “bullying,” as the Catholic League’s Bill Donohue put it on Thursday.

“The American people respect the autonomy of religious institutions to craft their own rules and regulations, and they do not look kindly on bullying,” Donohue said in a statement.

“How ironic it is that those who have been screaming the most about the evils of bullying are the very ones who are its greatest practitioners – against Christians, no less. It’s time they learned the virtue of tolerance.” †

Toronto Catholics vote to support gay-straight alliances

By Francis DeBernardo
Bondings 2.0
NewWaysMinistryBlog.wordpress.com
May 25, 2013

The Toronto Catholic School District Board has turned down a proposal brought by two of its trustees to ban gay-straight alliances at the state-funded Catholic schools in that province.

The *Toronto Star* reports: “Trustees voted 7 to 4 against a motion Thursday by trustee Garry Tanuan calling on the board to defy Ontario’s year-old Accepting Schools Act that says boards must let students set up gay-straight alliances (GSAs) if they wish. Tanuan’s motion, seconded by trustee John Del Grande, said gay-straight alliances ‘promote a positive view of homosexual activity, which undermines Catholic teaching on chastity and marriage.’”

But students involved in a gay-straight alliance at a Catholic school says that the two trustees’ notion about what the student clubs do is incorrect:

“Gay-straight alliances and Catholicism are not mutually exclusive; they go hand in hand ... and provide a safe space for those who need support,” said student Jersey David from the gay-straight alliance at Mary Ward Catholic Secondary School. “Our discussions are about anti-

bullying and inclusive language,’ and does not conflict with Catholic schools’ promotion of chastity, argued fellow student Erin Edgehill.

“Students from the gay-straight alliance club of Francis Liberman Catholic High School — which is called Bridges — noted they start each club meeting with a prayer and believe the Catholic faith extends to accepting those of different sexual identities.”

One of the trustees who voted to support the continuation of gay-straight alliances explained his position in terms of gospel inclusion:

“Trustee Sal Piccininni said Catholic education must change with the times, and that he was always taught that ‘Jesus accepts everybody.’ He said he was proud of the students who defended GSAs at the meeting.”

The decisive defeat of the attempt to squash the GSAs is a victory for positive Catholic social teaching about non-discrimination. GSA’s not only help LGBT students feel safer, but they help other students get over their ignorance and fear about sexual minorities. Catholic institutions should follow the Toronto Catholic District School Board’s example by instituting programs to eliminate bullying and end homophobia in young people. †

McQuaid HS Juniors allowed to go to Ball together

By Ben Amey
RochesterHomePage.net
March 28, 2013

Two gay students who attend an all-boys Catholic school will be allowed to attend a school dance as a couple. That’s the word from the President of McQuaid Jesuit High School in Brighton.

The students had asked for permission to attend McQuaid’s Junior Ball as a couple, and there was even an online petition to support them. In a lengthy note to parents Wednesday, school president, Father Edward Salmon, said, “If our two brothers who have asked to attend the Junior Ball wish to do so, they will be welcomed.” The full text of the note is below.

Father Salmon went on to say that he was not encouraging or condoning homosexual activity, or contradicting church teachings.

The students are both juniors at McQuaid, and according to online petitions, openly gay. †

Here is the full text of Father Salmon’s note.

March 27, 2013

Dear Sisters and Brothers of our McQuaid Jesuit Community:

Our new Holy Father, Pope Francis, in the homily for his Inaugural Mass, had encouraging and inviting words: “Today amid so much darkness we need to see the light of hope and to be men and women who bring hope to others. To protect creation and to protect every man and every woman, to look upon them with tenderness and love, is to open up a horizon of hope, it is to let a ray of light break through heavy clouds.”

Darkness and heavy clouds have gathered here at McQuaid recently because of misinformation, fear, misunderstanding, and even anger. That misinformation, fear, misunderstanding, and even anger came about after two of our brothers asked whether they could attend the Junior Ball together. Into the darkness of misinformation, fear, misunderstanding and anger, together with Pope Francis, I invite and encourage each and every one of us in the McQuaid family to be men and women who bring hope to one another. I invite and encourage each and every one of us in the McQuaid family to be men and women who look upon one another with tenderness and love. I invite and encourage each and every one of us in the McQuaid family to open up a horizon of hope, to let a ray of light break through heavy clouds.

I myself would like to let a ray of light break through by correcting some misinformation. It is simply not true, as was reported and as many seem to have assumed, that a decision had been made by McQuaid authorities not to allow the young men in question to attend the Junior Ball. No decision had been made.

I would like to let a ray of light enter into the darkness of fear. I, together with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, who in their Pastoral Message, “Always Our Children,” “. . . call on all Christians and citizens of good will to confront their own fears about homosexuality and to curb the humor and discrimination that offend homosexual persons. We understand that having a homosexual orientation brings with it enough anxiety, pain and issues related to self-acceptance without society bringing additional prejudicial treatment.”

I would like to let a ray of light enter into possible misunderstanding of the Church’s teaching. In that same message, Always Our Children, the Bishops are clear --“Nothing in the Bible or in Catholic teaching can be used to justify prejudicial or discriminatory attitudes and behaviors.” The Bishops continue: “It is also important to recognize that neither a homosexual orientation, nor a heterosexual one, leads inevitably to sexual activity. One’s total personhood is not reducible to sexual orientation or behavior.” In that same message, the Bishops refer to a 1986 Letter from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith which emphasizes that “Respect for the God-given dignity of all persons means the recognition of human rights and responsibilities. The teachings of the Church make it clear that the fundamental human rights of homosexual persons must be defended and that all of us must strive to eliminate any forms of injustice, oppression, or violence against them.”

The Bishops continue, “It is not sufficient only to avoid unjust discrimination. Homosexual persons ‘must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity’ (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2358). They, as is true of every human being, need to be nourished at many different levels simultaneously. This includes friendship, [brotherhood] which is a way of loving and is essential to healthy human development. It is one of the richest possible human experiences. Friendship can and does thrive outside of sexual involvement.”

Lastly, I would like to let a ray of light into the darkness that anger can bring. Based on the misinformation circulating and a certain misunderstanding of Church teaching, some people began posting prejudicial and humiliating comments in the social media. Speaking or writing or acting out of anger is not usually helpful. Others, however, deeply concerned for the dignity and respect of all persons, wrote thoughtful and encouraging e-mail messages to McQuaid officials.

In conclusion and in the hope that I and all of us at McQuaid Jesuit will let a ray of light break through the darkness and the heavy clouds that have surrounded us, I have made the decision that, if our two brothers who have asked to attend the Junior Ball together wish to do so, they will be welcomed.

With this decision I am not contradicting the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church with regard to human sexuality; I am not encouraging nor am I condoning homosexual activity just as I do not encourage or condone heterosexual activity at a dance. I am not contradicting the Church’s opposition to the redefinition of marriage. With this decision I invite and encourage us all, as Pope Francis does, to exercise care, protection, goodness which calls for a certain tenderness “which is not a virtue of the weak but rather a sign of strength of spirit and a capacity for concern, for compassion, for genuine openness to others, for love. We must not be afraid of goodness, of tenderness.”

Sincerely in the Lord,
Edward F. Salmon, S.J.
President

LGBT Delegates from Belarus Visit New Ways Ministry

By Bob Shine

Bondings 2.0

NewWaysMinistryBlog.wordpress.com
February 8, 2013

New Ways Ministry welcomed a delegation of LGBT advocates from Belarus yesterday who are currently touring the United States to learn about LGBT leadership in this nation. They visited New Ways Ministry's office in Maryland because they wanted to connect with a religious organization that works for LGBT equality.

Staff members Francis DeBernardo and Bob Shine joined co-founder Sr. Jeannine Gramick and supporter Patrick Wojahn in explaining the ministry's purpose and programs. The New Ways Ministry representatives set the work within the broader context of LGBT rights advocacy, giving particular emphasis to the role that Catholics have been playing in marriage equality victories in recent years.

Kiryl Prasniakov, Aliaksandr Paluyan, Natallia Mankouskaya, and Irina Solomatina then explained their struggles in Belarus to support the LGBT community. Free speech and assembly rights are severely limited with public demonstrations frequently leading to arrests and police brutality. Police have raided four gay clubs in the last two

months and travel restrictions imposed by the government have limited international fact-finding delegations. However, all spoke positively of progress being made, and they remain optimistic and undaunted by their struggles.

Belarus is a less religious nation than the US. Eastern Orthodox Christians are the dominant denomination, and this church has close ties to the government. The delegation seemed curious that US Catholics so freely speak their minds. They were particularly intrigued that US Catholics speak earnestly with their bishops and clergy about supporting the LGBT community.

Sister Jeannine said of the morning meeting: "I was delighted to know that the women in the delegation were strong feminists and were glad American Catholic women were likewise. That was a highlight for me that they really perked up over feminism."

Bob Shine commented: "The dangers these human rights activists confront daily gives me a helpful perspective for our work in the United States. While the challenges from the Catholic hierarchy and anti-equality activists in this nation are frustrating, the freedom we have to dialogue openly and honestly cannot be understated."

Francis DeBernardo observed: "I was amazed at their courage in working



Back row, left to right: Patrick Wojahn, Aliaksandr Paluyan, Kiryl Prasniakov, Irina Solomatina, Bob Shine
Front row, left to right: Sr. Jeannine Gramick, Francis DeBernardo, Natallia Mankouskaya

under such a harsh and oppressive legal system. These men and women are doing important and heroic work, and it was an honor to meet with them and be inspired by their example."

The Belarusian delegation will be hosted at the White House this week before traveling to California, Texas, Alabama, and New York through February.

LGBT advocates, like these from Belarus, are sponsored through a newly implemented leadership program administered by the US State Department.

New Ways Ministry sends our new friends many blessings as they continue their travels and for the work that lies ahead of them in their homeland! ✚

Australian priest backs support for gay and lesbian relationships

By Larissa Nicholson

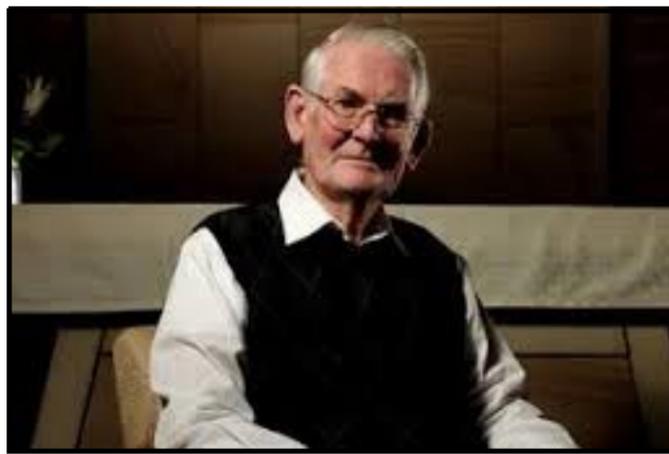
The Canberra Times, Australia
May 3, 2013

Australians should rejoice in committed gay relationships and afford them the same legal rights and public recognition as the union of a man and woman, says a Canberra Catholic priest.

But he stopped short of supporting gay marriage, saying it would be more appropriate to give formalised homosexual unions a different name.

In a notable departure from the public teachings of some church authorities, Dickson-based priest Michael Fallon called for a "public celebration of committed love for homosexual couples", saying he feared ordinary people were being driven away from the Catholic faith by views they saw as hardline and irrelevant.

Ordained in 1961, Father Fallon said his time as a chaplain at the Univer-



Father Michael Fallon

sity of NSW, where he met gay students, helped him look past prejudices against homosexual people and convinced him that their relationships should be welcomed by the community. "[The public should offer] not just recognition, but

joy, public joy in their communion with each other, that's the least we can offer people," he said.

The sacred scriptures scholar, who is receiving aggressive treatment for leukaemia, said there were church authorities who saw homosexual behaviour and partnerships as immoral, but many priests he spoke to supported recognition of committed same-sex relationships.

He said biblical references to homosexuality should be seen within the context of the time, rather than taken literal-

ly. "When Paul spoke about homosexual behaviour, the key is what was he actually speaking about? Did he know about two adults lovingly committing themselves to each other? We haven't the faintest idea, and it's quite unlikely," he said.

Father Fallon said there was a growing movement within the church towards greater recognition of gay relationships. "I'm just confident from the people I talk to that love will prevail, rather than a fixed position based on an understanding of what's called natural law that I think needs revisiting," he said.

But the priest said he did not support calling gay unions "marriage", because he said heterosexual and homosexual unions were not identical.

"If it happened I wouldn't lose a lot of sleep over it, but I don't think it's a good idea to confuse the issue, so I'm hoping they can come up with another word," he said. ✚

If Church Hierarchy Is Serious About Welcoming Gays & Lesbians...

By Marianne Duddy-Burke and Mary Ellen Lopata

NYTimes.com
April 5, 2013

In an Easter morning appearance on ABC's "This Week," Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan, the archbishop of New York, spoke words that some gay and lesbian Catholics thought they might never hear.

Asked by the host, George Stephanopoulos, what he would say to people who felt excluded from the Roman Catholic Church because of their sexual orientation, the cardinal said: "Well, the first thing I'd say to them is, 'I love you, too. And God loves you. And you are made in God's image and likeness.'"

Just words? Perhaps. But many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Catholics have been waiting for decades to hear words of solace and comfort from a church hierarchy that has too often repaid their fidelity with marginalization and condemnation. To hear Cardinal Dolan, arguably the most prominent Catholic prelate in the United States, say that "Jesus died on the cross for them as much as he did for me," was an unexpected gift to gay Catholics and their families and allies.

But the cardinal continued his message to those who felt excluded by saying, "We want your happiness. But ... you're entitled to friendship." He also hesitated when Mr. Stephanopoulos

asked him how the church might show its love to people that it often seemed intent on demonizing. "I don't know," he said. "We're still trying. ... We've got to listen to people... We've got to do better to see that our defense of marriage is not reduced to an attack on gay people."

In the spirit of compromise, then — and realizing that we and the cardinal are not soon going to agree on how the church and state should treat same-sex couples who want to make a lifetime commitment to each other — we offer a few suggestions that do not require the hierarchy to adjust its teachings on the nature of marriage, but would send a clear message against distaste and mistrust.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops should drop its opposition to including the gay and lesbian partners of American citizens in the immigration-reform proposals now being developed in Congress. Allowing gay and lesbian citizens to obtain permanent legal status for their partners, some of whom face deportation, confers no legal status on same-sex relationships. It simply keeps two people who love each other from being separated.

The bishops should support anti-bullying programs in Catholic schools. Despite repeated urgings from the faithful, the bishops' conference has refused to state clearly and forcefully that bullying young people because of their sexual

orientation or gender identity is wrong. Surely the bishops share our conviction that children shouldn't be beaten or bullied for any reason.

The hierarchy should also change its tone. Cardinal Dolan spoke beautifully at moments in his interview with ABC. Others have not. In December 2012, Cardinal Francis E. George, the archbishop of Chicago, compared a gay pride parade to a Ku Klux Klan demonstration (in remarks for which he has since apologized) and in September 2012 Bishop Thomas Paprocki of Springfield, Ill., said that parishioners who supported candidates who favored gay rights risked eternal damnation. Those statements conveyed the very opposite of the love and mercy that Cardinal Dolan expressed.

The church hierarchy should also publicly dissociate itself from the National Organization for Marriage. The American bishops and their allies, especially the Knights of Columbus, have poured millions of dollars into the organization, which has sought to turn African-Americans and Hispanics against the gay community in fights over ballot initiatives regarding gay rights. The bishops would not tolerate such divisive behavior in other political allies, and they should not make an exception for National Organization for Marriage.

The bishops should abandon their opposition to placing adopted children with same-sex couples. The church be-

lieves that children flourish best when raised by their biological parents, but — leaving aside whether that teaching is always correct — the reality is that that is not an option for every child. The bishops would improve the lives of many children, and many potential parents, if they would acknowledge the basic fairness of evaluating all couples seeking to adopt children according to the same standards.

Perhaps most important, the bishops should stop hiding from us. There is no reason the bishops, priests and deacons of every diocese in the United States cannot hold regular meetings with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Catholics and their families to allow them to speak honestly about their experiences within the church. The result might not always be agreement, but at least it could be a spirit of respect and openness.

We suspect that some of these recommendations will be received more warmly than others. But having them received at all would be progress for which we might one day have Cardinal Dolan to thank. ✚

Marianne Duddy-Burke is executive director of DignityUSA, an organization of gay and lesbian Catholics. Mary Ellen Lopata is a founder of Fortunate Families, which represents Catholic parents of gay and lesbian children.

(See related article on page 2.)



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
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
La Puente: 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 Billiart,
St. Martin of Tours (Emmaus
Community)
San Luis Obispo: Old Mission of
San Luis Obispo
San Raphael: Church of San Raphael &
Mission San Raphael Archangel
Santa Barbara: OL of Guadalupe
Santa Cruz: Holy Cross
Santa Monica: St. Monica
Simi Valley: St. Rose of Lima
Spring Valley: Santa Sophia
Stanford: Catholic Community at Stan-
ford University
South Pasadena: Holy Family
Valinda: St. Martha
Vernon: Holy Angels Catholic Church
of the Deaf
Walnut Creek: St. John Vianney
West Hollywood: St. Ambrose,
St. Victor
Whittier: St. Mary of the Assumption

Colorado

Arvada: Spirit of Christ
Avon: St. Edward
Colorado Springs: 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
Littleton: Light of the World,
St. Frances Cabrini

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/

Connecticut

Hartford: St. Patrick-St. Anthony

Delaware

North Wilmington: Holy Child
Wilmington: St. Joseph

District of Columbia

Holy Trinity, St. Matthew Cathedral

Florida

Daytona Beach: Our Lady of Lourdes
Ft. Lauderdale: St. Anthony,
St. Maurice
Naples: St. John the Evangelist
St. Petersburg: Holy Cross
Tampa: Sacred Heart

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

Massachusetts

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

Michigan

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

Minnesota

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

Missouri

Kansas City: Guardian Angels,
St. 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
Wantaugh: St. Frances de Chantal
Westbury: St. Brigid

North Carolina

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

Ohio

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

Oregon

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

Pennsylvania

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

Rhode Island

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

Tennessee

Memphis: Cathedral of the
Immaculate Conception

Texas

Colleyville: Good Shepherd
Dallas: Holy Trinity
El Paso: All Saints
Houston: St. Anne
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, St. Joseph, Prince
of Peace
Newman Center
Tacoma: St. Leo

Wisconsin

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

Canada

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

England

London: Church of the Immaculate Con-
ception (Mayfai)

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
Catholic Community

Oregon

Portland: Journey and Koinonia
Catholic Community

Washington

Olympia: Holy Wisdom Inclusive
Catholic Community

Wisconsin

Madison: Holy Wisdom Monastery

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

Catholics protest in support of gay rights at Detroit archdiocese

Anti-gay protesters demonstrate at Dignity anniversary Mass

By Patricia Montemurri
Detroit Free Press
May 2, 2013

The controversy over the rights of gay Catholics is heating up in the Detroit area.

This afternoon, supporters of gay Catholics gathered for a prayer vigil in front of the Archdiocese of Detroit's chancery headquarters. They prayed to protest Archbishop Allen Vigneron's comments last month that Catholics who support gay marriage or unions should not present themselves to receive communion.

About 25 people sang, "All are welcome in this place," and marched with rainbow flags in front of the downtown chancery building, saying they had gay relatives and friends.

Artemae Anderson, 69, of Detroit said she attends mass regularly, receives communion and supports gay marriage. "It's very hurtful," Anderson said of Vigneron's comments. "If we just follow the gospel message of Jesus, we'll be OK."

This weekend, another support group for Detroit-area gay Catholics, known as Dignity Detroit and part of the national DignityUSA organization, will mark its 39th anniversary with a Saturday banquet in Dearborn and weekly

Sunday mass at Marygrove College.

But some conservative Detroit-area Catholics are upset and say they'll protest the mass and ask Vigneron to block it.

Vigneron is aware of the weekly Dignity mass at Marygrove, archdiocese spokesman Ned McGrath said.

"There are hundreds of masses celebrated in the Detroit archdiocese every weekend. It's always Archbishop Vigneron's expectation that these liturgies are conducted in full conformity with the Catholic Church's teachings and practices," McGrath said.

Vigneron is currently in France with the Knights of Malta, a Catholic group, accompanying ill and disabled children on a pilgrimage to the Our Lady of Lourdes shrine.

Sister Mary Jane Herb, president of the Monroe-based Immaculate Heart of Mary nuns who founded Marygrove College, said the Dignity mass is welcome at the campus. Retired Detroit Auxiliary Bishop Thomas Gumbleton will be the celebrant of Sunday's anniversary mass, and other priests rotate to officiate.

"The Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, support the openness of Marygrove College to host Dignity Detroit's 39th anniversary celebration," said Herb, citing a 1997 statement by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bish-



Artemae Anderson, 69, of Detroit participates in a prayer vigil today to support the rights of gay Catholics in front of the Archdiocese of Detroit's headquarters downtown.

ops about homosexuality.

"In this statement, the bishops stated that gay and lesbian persons are 'God's precious creation,' and the bishops ask us to accept and love these individuals as gift(s) of God," Herb said in a statement.

"By joining with retired Bishop Thomas Gumbleton as celebrant, Marygrove College is attending to the pastoral needs of all God's children."

Since 1997, Catholics who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender gather for a weekly Sunday mass at the Marygrove College chapel. Before that, the group met at Most Holy Trinity near downtown Detroit.

DignityUSA, a support group for LGBT Catholics with chapters in 46 cities, holds weekly Catholic masses for members, usually in a rented space or borrowed non-Catholic sanctuary.

Detroit is one of the few chapters that holds its weekly service in a Catholic chapel, said national executive director Marianne Duddy-Burke.

Some local Catholics have said they are planning to protest at Marygrove against the Dignity mass, said David Theisen, a White Lake Township real estate broker active in anti-abortion groups.

Theisen said he wants to support Vigneron and his stance that Catholics who support gay unions or marriage should not receive communion.

"This (Dignity) mass is a public witness against church teaching" on homosexuality, Theisen said. †

Laity Is Changing the Hierarchy's Position on Same-Sex Relationships

By Francis DeBernardo and Sister Jeannine Gramick
HuffingtonPost.com
April 29, 2013

In 2003, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, who was then prefect of the Roman Catholic Church's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, wrote that "respect for homosexual persons cannot lead in any way to approval of homosexual behavior or to legal recognition of homosexual unions."

Ten years later, the Catholic hierarchy may be in the process of repudiating the teaching of its former pope. In an interview with a Costa Rican newspaper recently, Archbishop Piero Marini, president of the Pontifical Committee for International Eucharistic Congresses, told a reporter that society should "recognize the union of persons of the same sex, because there are many couples that suffer because their civil rights aren't recognized."

His comments came on the heels of an interview in which Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, the Archbishop of Vienna and editor of *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, said: "There can be same-sex partnerships and they need respect, and even civil law protection."

Members of the Catholic hierarchy are seldom so straightforward in contradicting the Vatican. Yet in the decade since Ratzinger issued "Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal

Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons" countries in which Catholicism is the dominant religion -- Argentina, Portugal, Spain, Uruguay and now France -- have legalized same-sex marriage. Ireland and the United Kingdom seem likely to do the same. In the United States, Catholic politicians such as Andrew Cuomo of New York, Christine Gregoire of Washington and Martin O'Malley of Maryland, have led successful campaigns to establish marriage equality in their states.

Faced with mounting evidence that the hierarchy is rapidly losing influence in Europe and the Americas, and alienating the faithful in the process, some leading bishops are seeking to soften the hard line that Benedict XVI drew when he was still Cardinal Ratzinger. Their argument -- articulated by prelates from Colombia, France, Italy, Germany, the United Kingdom, the United States and within the Vatican itself -- is that marriage, even civil marriage, must be defined as a relationship between one man and one woman, but that legal recognition of same-sex relationships is permissible or even desirable.

This new position is not one that many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Catholics, their friends and families will endorse because it falls short of full marriage equality. Nor is it clear that members of the hierarchy will maintain this stance if they determine that it is no longer useful to appear mod-

erate on this issue. But this moment is worth studying and celebrating nonetheless.

Reform-minded Catholics are often told that the church is not a democracy. In the conventional political sense, that may be true. But the church ministers in democracies. And in country after country, Catholic voters have gone to the polls, ignored the often heavy-handed lobbying of their bishops, and voted in favor of marriage equality, or legislators who support marriage equality. They are changing the teachings of the church by changing the culture in which the church functions.

Pope Francis himself has participated in this trend. In 2010, with the Argentine government poised to write marriage equality into law, Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio urged his fellow bishops to support civil unions as a compromise. His colleagues rejected this strategy, and the future pope led a futile campaign to persuade voters in that heavily Catholic country to discriminate against same-sex couples.

No one knows how Francis will behave now that he is pope. Progressive Catholics have learned through decades of bitter experience to live with high hopes but low expectations. We understand that a hierarchy that opposed marriage equality but tolerated civil unions would be a mixed blessing, but a blessing nonetheless.

If the pope adopted the position espoused by Schönborn and others, the Catholic hierarchy would have no reason to oppose including the same-sex partners of U. S. citizens among those who could be granted citizenship under the immigration bill about to come before the U. S. Senate. The hierarchy could support or remain neutral on legislation

that extends to gay and lesbian couples legal protections and benefits that they are now denied in most states in this country. It could speak in less vitriolic terms about same-sex couples and their families, as the bishops of England and Wales did recently in acknowledging "that many same-sex couples raise children in loving and caring homes."

The Catholic hierarchy is by no means committed to this sort of conciliatory course, and bishops in the United States are among the most zealous in working against the interests of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and their families. But the demographic forces that inspired a future pope and several high profile European bishops to seek a compromise are clearly present in the United States.

Although the U.S. bishops and their allies, including the Knights of Columbus, have poured millions of dollars into opposing legal recognition of same-sex relationships, Catholic support for marriage equality has leapt from 40 percent to 59 percent in the last decade, according to a recent survey by *ABC News* and the *Washington Post*. Those numbers are even higher among younger Catholics, so the course of lay opinion on this issue seems well established.

The choice before our bishops now is whether to continue a divisive battle that will only diminish their own authority, or to follow where the laity has led. †

Francis DeBernardo is executive director and Sister Jeannine Gramick, SL is co-founder of New Ways Ministry, a member of the Equally Blessed, coalition, which works for LGBT equality in the Catholic Church and the wider society.

Vatican Official on Civil Unions

Bondings 2.0
NewWaysMinistryBlog.wordpress.com
May 14, 2013

Archbishop Vincent Paglia, the head of the Vatican's Pontifical Council on the Family, was recently interviewed by *National Catholic Reporter's* John Allen, who asked the prelate to clarify his recent statements which supported civil unions for lesbian and gay couples. Though some commentators felt that Paglia had retracted his support, his comments in the Allen interview indicate that he continues to back civil unions. Here's the relevant excerpt:

"ALLEN: Speaking of private law, you recently created a small media frenzy by suggesting that nations could find "private law solutions" to protect the rights of unmarried couples, potentially

including gays and lesbians. In some quarters, that was seen as softening the Vatican's line on gay marriage at a time when bishops in various countries are trying to resist a push for it. Did you learn anything from that episode?

"PAGLIA: Yes, that I have to be more careful in how I talk about these things, and more aware that words can be derailed. You may think they're going to take you to the station, but in reality they can carry you to the edge of a cliff! But to make clear to you what I actually meant at the time, I proposed what the church has maintained: it is a matter of [protecting] individual rights. Facing the explosion in various forms of living together today, I simply called on states to find solutions which help people and avoid abuses. †

(For related stories, see pages 1 & 2)

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Bondings 2.0

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