Bishop calls homosexuality 'gift from God,' seeks to end 'prejudices that kill'

By Isis San Martin
CatholicNews.com
August 9, 2017

A Brazilian bishop said July 30 that homosexuality is a "gift from God." Seeing the reaction his homily generated, Bishop Antônio Carlos Cruz Santos of Caicó then released a statement saying that his only scope was "to save lives, after learning about the high statistics of suicide among the LGBT community.

If it is not a choice, if it is not a fashion, in the perspective of faith, it can only be a gift," the bishop of Caicó in the Rio Grande do Norte state said during his homily at a Mass closing the feast of Santana de Caicó, always marked on the Sunday following the feast of Sts. Joachim and Anne.

"The gospel par excellence is the gospel of inclusion," said the bishop. "The gospel is a narrow door, yes, it is a demanding love, but it is a door that is always open."

"When you look at homosexuality, you cannot say it's an option," Cruz said, adding that a choice has to be made freely, while sexual orientation is something a person discovers one day. However, he said, a person can choose how to live his or her sexual orientation, "in a dignified, ethical way, or in a promiscuous one. But promiscuity can be lived in any of the orientations."

The bishop then said that homosexuality hasn't been considered as a disease by the World Health Organization since the 1990s, and given this and the fact that a person doesn't choose to be gay, same-sex sex can only be "a gift from God. It's given by God. But perhaps our prejudices do not get the gift of God."

During his homily, Cruz said that when slavery was accepted, black people weren't considered human, "they said we black people didn't have a soul," because of "prejudices.

"Just as we were able to leap, in the wisdom of the Gospel, and overcome slavery, is it not the time for us, to leap, from perspective of faith, and overcome prejudices against our brothers who experience same-sex attraction?"

The bishop's homily, available in video on YouTube, was praised by some and criticized by many others, who even called his words a heresy and demanded the Vatican to get involved. Seeing the many reactions, Cruz released a statement on the diocesan website on Sunday, a week after his homily. In it, the bishop said in his remarks, saying that his goal was "to save lives, contributing so that we can overcome the prejudices that kill.

The bishop said that he did not want to induce anyone to make a mistake, but that he followed the guidelines of the church and of Francis.

"As Pope Francis told us many times, people already know by heart the doctrine of the Church about abortion, divorce and homosexual acts," Cruz wrote. "He asks us not to be obsessed with sin, increasing the wounds of these people, and insists that the doors of the church are open to welcome, instruct, discern, love in order to bring salvation to all without exception."

The bishop also wrote that his intention on addressing the issue was merely pastoral, and that his intention was not to challenge the teachings of the Catechism. Furthermore, he quotes point 2358 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

"The number of men and women who have deep-seated homosexual tendencies is not negligible," the bishop is quoted in the fall. "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. These persons are called to fulfill God's will in their lives and, if they are Christians, to unite to the sacrifice of the Lord's Cross the difficulties they may encounter from their condition."

Following this statement, Cruz said his reflection as a pastor moved by the "weaknesses of his flock, without wanting to minimize the doctrinal and moral dimensions that the subject matter involves, my intention is to save lives, helping to overcome prejudices that kill and enter into the dynamic of God's mercy that respects, rescues and saves people." +

National Catholic Reporter Editorial: Time for dialogue on sexual ethics

By Editorial Staff
The National Catholic Reporter
August 9, 2017

The Catholic church should thank Jesus Fr. James Martin for writing Building a Bridge: How the Catholic Church and the LGBT Community Can Enter into a Relationship of Respect, Compassion, and Sensitivity. Many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Catholics have spent years on the margins of our community inviting such dialogue. This book cracks open a new door to opportunities to ask important questions about the inclusion of LGBT Catholics in the church, and those opportunities should be seized.

Martin’s book exhorts church leaders and LGBT Catholics to come together in dialogue. Using the words of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, he calls both sides to treat one another with "respect, compassion, and sensitivity."

This is a needed message for a hierarchy who have made such outreach — Cardinal Joseph Tobin of Newark, New Jersey, and Bishop W. Earl Boyette of San Jose, California, to name just two — need our support.

Incapable in this bridge-building project, however, are others questions that cannot go unexamined. Can dialogue be enough to achieve a truly inclusive church? Without a change in the church’s teaching on sex and sexuality, can LGBT people ever hope to be treated with equality and justice by the hierarchy?

There is good precedent for development of the church’s sexual ethics, particularly in the last 50 years. For centuries, Catholic doctrine insisted that procreation was the sole justification for sexual acts and that sexual activity was fundamentally disordered. These teachings were questioned and modified in the mid-20th century in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, and Pope Paul VI’s encyclical Humanae Vitae ("On Human Life.") Today, the church recognizes that sex has been given by God and a woman within the bond of sacramental marriage can be a source of joy and pleasure in both body and spirit.

But the doctrine also maintains that there is an indissoluble connection between the procreative and unitive meaning of the sexual act. Therefore, according to the catechism, all sexual acts between married couples must be “ordered per se to the procreation of human life” (2366).

This “procreative norm” dates back more than 1,500 years to the time of Augustine, who developed the idea in response to his belief in the sinful, unitive nature of sexual arousal.

Today, the procreative norm is one of the fundamental reasons the church remains opposed to same-sex relationships. But, in reality, this doctrine has far-reaching consequences for all Catholics, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Much is often made about the church’s teaching that same-sex relations are “intrinsically disordered.” But equally harsh language is used for other sexual transgressions of the church’s procreative norm. For example, the catechism declares that every action used to render conception impossible, such as use of contraceptives, is “intrinsically evil” (2370). The catechism also condemns masturbation as an “intrinsically and gravely disordered action” because “the deliberate use of the sexual faculty, for whatever reason, outside of marriage is essentially contrary to its purpose” (2352).

As a case in point, see Springfield, Illinois, Bishop Thomas Paprocki’s list of Catholic sins that should not present themselves for holy Communion.

The institutional church’s vocal objections to same-sex marriage often mask the fact that church teaching is fundamentally opposed to sexual acts that a majority of humanity beings participate in. The church condemns any sexual acts, including those engaged in by married couples — that do not respect the procreative norm. Therefore, in reality, few Catholics live up to the church’s moral norms governing sexual activity.

As stark as these teachings are, other issues related to sexual relationships remain unclear and underdeveloped, such as the church’s positions on divorce and remarriage, the single life and celibacy.

If bishops like Paprocki were more vocal about their opposition to masturbation, in vitro fertilization or vasectomies
It’s Time to Canonize Fr. Mychal Judge: Seeking Personal Testimony

By Francis DeBernardo

Bondings 2.0
www.NewWaysMinistry.org/blog
July 17, 2017

The time has come to begin the initial research to make Franciscan Fr. Mychal Judge, OFM, a canonized saint in the Catholic Church. And we need the help of people like you to spread the word about such a possibility so that we can gather evidence about Fr. Judge’s life and ministry.

On September 11, 2001, Fr. Judge, who was a chaplain for the New York City Fire Department, rushed into the World Trade Center building with other first responders, after terrorists had flown planes into the skyscraper towers. As a result of his sacrifice, he died, and is now often referred to as “Victim Number One” of that tragic day which witnessed the deaths of close to 3,000 people, with over 6,000 more injured.

He was also known as an unofficial chaplain in the gay community, providing pastoral care and support wherever and whenever he could. He was also the name of an unofficial chaplain in the gay community, providing pastoral care and support wherever and whenever he could. He was also the name of an unofficial chaplain in the gay community, providing pastoral care and support wherever and whenever he could.

Pope Francis paved the way for Fr. Judge to be considered for canonization this past week when he added a new possible pathway to sainthood: the heroic giving of one’s life for others.

The pope issued a moto proprio on July 11th entitled “Materen hac dilectionem.” The Latin title is derived from St. John’s Gospel: “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friend” (John 15:13). The National Catholic Reporter explained why this development is significant:

“Archbishop Marcello Bartolucci, Secretary of the Vatican Congregation for Saints’ Causes, said the addition is meant ‘to promote heroic Christian testimony, that has been’ up to now without a specific process, precisely because it did not completely fit within the case of martyrdom or heroic virtues.

“For centuries, consideration for the sainthood process required that a Servant of God heroically lived a life of Christian virtues or had been martyred for the faith. The third, less common way, is called an equivalent or equipollent canonization: when there is evidence of strong devotion among the faithful to a holy man or woman, the pope can waive a lengthy formal canonical investigation and can authorize their veneration as saints.

“When these three roads to sainthood remain unchanged, they were not adequate for interpreting all possible cases of holiness, the archbishop wrote in the Vatican newspaper, ‘L’Osservatore Romano, July 11.’ According to the apostolic letter, any causes for beatification according to the new pathway of ‘offering of life’ would have to meet the following criteria:

Free and willing offer of one’s life and a heroic acceptance, out of love, of a certain and early death, the heroic act of charity and the premature death are connected.

Evidence of having lived out the Christian virtues — at least in an ordinary, and not necessarily heroic, way — before having offered one’s life to others and until one’s death.

Evidence of a reputation for holiness, at least after death. A miracle attributed to the candidate’s intercession is needed for beatification.”

Last week, I spoke with Fr. Luis Fernando Escalante, an Argentinian priest living in Rome, who serves as a postulator for the Vatican’s Congregation for Saints’ Causes. Fr. Escalante said that Fr. Judge clearly fits this new category of a heroic giver of one’s own life.

In order to propose that Fr. Judge be investigated by the Congregation to be considered for canonization, an immense amount of research first must be done. What is needed are first-hand accounts from people who knew Fr. Judge personally or who had any correspondence with him or have other significant documents that will give a clearer, more detailed picture of his life, spirituality, and ministry.

Extremely important is any information regarding a possible miracle attributed to Fr. Judge’s intercession.

Fr. Escalante emphasized that this new category for canonization requires only an ordinary living out of Christian virtues, not an extraordinary effort. So, any stories that you or your contacts may have about Fr. Judge, even if they are seemingly ordinary, are needed.

This opportunity depends on YOU! The only way that we can make Fr. Judge’s canonization a reality is through a mass effort to find people who knew Fr. Judge. People who have been involved in Catholic LGBT activities are very likely to have met him or perhaps to have prayed to him for a miracle. That is why we are asking you to share this information. Of course, those who know Fr. Judge from other activities — his parish work, his NYC Fire Department chaplaincy, his ministry to HIV/AIDS patients and addicts — are also sought.

An official request for the Cause of Fr. Judge’s canonization can only be submitted after a great deal of this initial research is gathered. This may take many months, perhaps even a year or more. Only through a mass effort to build a network of individuals and organizations who are searching for the necessary evidence and information will we be able to get to the first step of the canonization process.

For the sake of this heroic priest who literally gave his life for others, please spread the word! +
Message to Catholic LGBT people: 'Sisters are on our side!'

By Sister Jeaninne Gramick, SL

Global Sisters Report

January 2, 2018

"Believe she was right on target."

In her outgoing address as President of LCWR in 2003, Mary Ann Zollmann spoke of the need to give some signs of repentance before pastoral care towards gay people may be affected, and the church as a whole put on notice. Women who did not flinch in the face of personal risk and Vatican pressure became, in the words of John Myers, a Benedictine priest and/or the parish to be listed in any Christian Church.

The crisis with the Vatican was a disguised blessing because it became a communication which was then reported to the local bishops about the issue of same-gender civil marriages or, if one occurs, the ordination in any Christian Church.

At this gathering in St. Louis, 50 founders, movers and shakers of the Catholic LGBT movement shared their stories to preserve a valuable piece of history. The wheelchairs parked on one side said a lot about the age of these pioneers.

I was honored to meet people like Rev. Bill Johnson who, in 1972, became the first openly gay person ordained in any Christian Church. And Jimmy Creech, who was defrocked by the United Methodist Church for performing marriages of same-sex couples.

But it was a remark by Rev. Nancy Wilson, the former Moderator of the Metropolitan Community Church which stayed with me and sparked some serious reflection. When I met Nancy, she greeted me enthusiastically, saying, "I was sailing in the same boat." I thought about Nancy's words, and I believe she was right on target. My LGBT ministry was certainly not mine." It belonged to "the sisters." My congregational leadership had vision, imagination and foresight. They were readers, thinkers and women of action who tugged into needs that had been too long neglected by our church. From the 1970s, three successive provincial leaders of the Sisters of Notre Dame assigned me to lesbian/gay ministry. (At that time, there was no discussion or awareness of transgender issues in the Catholic community.)

They were strong women who did not shrink in the face of numerous complaints from lay Catholic and some bishops and cardinals. In those days, Catholics were not as accepting of lesbian/gay people as they are today. The Vatican lodged a number of requests for internal investigations, but all provincials and three General Superiors continued to support this new ministry. As Nancy said, "The sisters were on our side!"

When Vatican pressure became too great for the School Sisters of Notre Dame, the Sisters of Loretto stepped in and accepted them into their order. The Loretto had a long history of educating themselves about the injustice of homophobia and the rightness of welcoming all people into the church, even those who disagreed with traditional sexual ethics.

Prior to Pope Francis' election, the Loretto presidents received nine letters from the Vatican calling for my dismissal from religious life if I continued in this ministry. The Loretto presidents anticipated Pope Francis' advice to the International Union of Superiors of Institutes to engage in conversations with local bishops about the issue of homophobia.

Mary Ann Zollmann, then president of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, was a part of a小组 theizing with her local bishops, in which some of them said that homosexuality was intrinsically disordered because of an ethic based on human nature.

I found myself tapping into a place of grief and alienation," Mary Ann said of that meeting. "In my heart, I saw faces and women I knew whose sexual orientation is gay or lesbian and who live compassionately, justly yearning for the respect and compassion and justice on the part of a church they love. I thought of men and women whose passion for wholeness in relationship is lived in deep commitment to life-long same-sex partners. I hear deep in my own being, their struggle to find a home in our church. … Around that meeting table, I was compelled to speak on their behalf, to tell the story of the beauty of their relationships, and to offer an alternative ethnic vision for the church.

In her outgoing address as President of LCWR in 2003, Mary Ann Zollmann spoke of the need to give some signs of repentance before pastoral care towards gay people may be affected, and the church as a whole put on notice.

"I could feel my roots moving through the soil," Mary Ann said. "As together we want nothing more than to be bishops, priests, deacons, and we are 'other.' She could resonate with their feelings because they were similar to the..."
All Politics Is Local. So Is LGBT Pastoral Care.

By Francis DeBernardo
Bondings 2.0
www.NewWaysMinistry.org/blog
August 31, 2017

Frank Bruni, a columnist for The New York Times offered an interesting observation in an essay entitled “The Worst (and Best) Places to Be Gay in America” that was published in last Sunday’s edition. Noting the fact that equality for LGBT people varies widely across the vast and diverse 50 states of the U.S., Bruni noted: “There’s no such thing as L.G.B.T. life in America, a country even more divided on this front than on others. There’s L.G.B.T. life in a group of essentially progressive places like New York, Maryland, Oregon and California, which bans government-funded travel to states it deems unduly discriminatory. Then there is L.G.B.T. life on that blacklist, which includes Texas, Kansas, Mississippi and South Dakota.

“The differences between states — and between cities within states — are profound, and that which has long been true, it’s much more consequential since the advent of the Trump administration, a decidedly less friendly to L.G.B.T. people than the Obama administration was.”

Bruni, a gay man, even gets more local later in the essay, stating: “We’re not in the mercy of our ZIP codes: Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are often affected most by their municipality, not their state. . . . Our cities and our states often dictate how easily we can be our true selves at work, like wedding cakes, construct families — even die.”

How does this relate in the world of Catholic L.G.B.T. people? I think Bruni’s analysis of the political sphere very accurately depicts the social sphere, as well. In other words, I think that Catholic LGBT people are far more affected by local church attitudes and practices concerning sexual orientation and gender identity than they are by the political influences that are expressed or embodied by local leaders in the Church. In other words, what matters most for LGBT Catholics is not what the hierarchy says or does but what their local pastor and parishioners say or do.

When a pope or bishop says something offensive or damaging about LGBT people or issues, harm certainly is done. But when they have said nothing, our brains have heard time and again from Catholic L.G.B.T. people whose faith and resiliency are amazingly strong that the church should not motivate them to leave their parishes. An offensive remark from a pastor, pastoral minister, or even a parishioner, however, can have an LGBT Catholic running for the exit doors. That flip side works as well. It may be great to hear Pope Francis make a positive statement of welcome to LGBT people, but what really touches people’s hearts is when their local pastor asks them to be a part of a pastoral committee because he wants the perspective of LGBT people to be heard as the parish develops a new program. All politics is local. So is pastoral care.

Throughout my years in Catholic LGBT ministry, the most frequent question that I have been asked by reporters or others not involved in Catholic LGBT community is “Why does an LGBT person stay in the Catholic Church?” If I had a nickel for each time it was asked, New Ways Ministry would be funded forever.

The presumption behind that question is that the Catholic Church is an oppressive place for LGBT people. However, as Bruni’s analysis shows for the political world, which I suggest is true for the Catholic world, everything depends on where a person lives and prays.

This reality makes it all the more urgent to develop LGBT-friendly Catholic parishes. New Ways Ministry has been promoting and supporting such communities for our creation 40 years ago. It is exciting to see the growth and vibrancy of these communities across the U.S., and, indeed, across the globe. Bondings 2.0’s “All Are Welcome” series documents our work in parish LGBT ministry and it also includes posts containing advice and resources for parishes on how to start or further develop LGBT ministry programs.

New Ways Ministry has inaugurated a new program called “Next Steps: Developing Catholic LGBT Ministry” which aids pastoral ministers and volunteers envision a plan for proceeding in regard to LGBT ministry in parish settings. The “NextSteps” program is ideally conducted over the course of a weekend, but can also be done in the course of a day, or even an afternoon (though obviously the material is abbreviated in the shorter versions). If you are interested in any of these programs, please contact New Ways Ministry at info@NewWaysMinistry.org or 301-567-5674.

Look for an LGBT-friendly parish or faith community near you using New Ways Ministry’s catalogue we have been maintaining for over 20 years (see below).

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 welcomes LGBT Catholics, please let us know. Tell us if this welcome is because of a support program, spirituality group, mission statement, participation in LGBT community events, or involvement with parents. To add your faith community to this list, please contact New Ways Ministry at info@newwaysministry.org or call 301-567-5674. Parishes are listed first and intentional Eucharistic communities follow. For links to many of these parishes’ websites, go to www.NewWaysMinistry.org

ARIZONA

By Rob Nikolowski
San Antonio Express-News
October 7, 2017

Kyle Escobar-Humphries made it a point to attend mass Saturday morning at St. John The Evangelist Catholic Church. Located in the heart of Hillcrest, the historic epicenter of the gay community in San Diego, St. John’s hosted a special service aimed at reaching out to LGBT members, their families and friends. Escobar-Humphries is gay and has been married for nearly three years to another man, Snapper Escobar-Humphries. Together they sat near the front of the church with their 8- and 9-year-old children as Auxiliary Bishop John Dolan of the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Diego celebrated mass before a crowd of about 300.

“It’s important because my kids have two gay dads and I would like for them to understand that this church is open for everyone,” said the 46-year-old, who said he is a lifelong Catholic. “I want them to understand how to treat each other equally.”

The service commemorated the 20th anniversary of a document released by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops called “Always Our Children” that offered “an outstretched hand” to parents and family members of gay Catholics. Accompanied by San Diego Bishop Robert McElroy and priests from around the area, Dolan underscored the pastoral message released in 1997.

Doug Metz of Sacred Heart Catholic Church, left, and Richard McElroy of the Diocese of San Diego, right, join parishioners at the St. John the Evangelist Church at a Mass to reach out to families and friends of the LGBT community sure they have a welcome home in some fashion here within the church.”

McElroy said the diocese is making an effort to reach out to LGBT members at parishes across the San Diego area, but the mass Saturday amplified something larger. “The ‘Always Our Children’ is calling us to reach out to everyone with a message of radical inclusion,” McElroy said. “Sadly, there has been an estrangement and an alienation with LGBT people, and the Church needs to take steps to heal that.”

“Once becoming pope in 2013, Francis has not made major changes to the Catholic Church’s doctrine against homosexual acts but made headlines when, early in his papacy, he said, ‘If a person is gay and seeks God and has good will, who am I to judge?’”

Richard Peterson, 26, is a gay parishioner at St. John’s who volunteers with the church’s LGBT ministry. Although Peterson said he “has never had a large crisis of faith,” he acknowledged that many in the gay community have problems with Roman Catholic leadership.

“The Church is made of humans and humans are not perfect,” Peterson said. “I think at the core of it you have to look at what the church stands for, which is love and mercy and forgiveness and community. That’s what this parish is trying to do here.”

But while the church gets criticism for not moving fast enough on sexual and social issues, it also gets grief from some on the opposite end.

A group of about a dozen-doth gathered outside St. John’s, handing out literature criticizing Saturday’s service.

“We’re criticizing the church for modernism,” said Allyson Smith, a bishop McElroy said he understands the criticism the church receives from a variety of sources.

“Our founder was Jesus Christ. Jesus took it from all sides,” McElroy said. “And even if we’re doing things right — and I’m not saying we are doing all things right, we’ve got things to learn about this — but even when we’re doing it right, it’s not a bad sign if you’re getting it from all sides.”

Emily Reimer-Barry, an associate professor and theologian at the University of San Diego, attended Saturday’s mass and called it “beautiful and empowering.”

“I think anyone doesn’t wrestle with their faith is not a thinking person,” said Reimer-Barry, who is heterosexual, married with two children and Catholic.

“It’s not an easy process. But I also have faith that God is there in the messiness … An event like today’s is a time when the community gathers to support each other and say, yes, we are all in this together.”

(Continued from page 4)

Missouri
Kansas City: Guardian Angels, Holy Family
St. James
St. Joseph: St. Francis Xavier
St. Louis: St. Louis, 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
Keypoint: St. Joseph
Lawrenceville: St. Ann
Long Beach Island: St. Francis of Assisi
Mapledale: St. Joseph
Monmouth: Church of the Precious Blood
Pompton Lakes: St. Mary
South Plainfield: Sacred Heart
Tinton Falls: St. Anselm
New Mexico
Albuquerque: Holy Family, Shrine of St. Bernadette
Espanola: Sacred Heart of Jesus
New York
Albany: St. Vincent DePaul
Balchville: St. Augustine
Baltimore: St. Angela Merici
Bayside: Mary Immaculate
Bayhampton: St. Francis of Assisi
Brookside: St. Andrew the Apostle
Bonniface: St. Boniface, St. Athanasius, St. Augustine: Holy Heart of Mary
Deer Park: St. 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. Ignatius
Loyola, St. Paul the Apostle, Church of the Ascension, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Francis de Sales
Pittsford: Church of Transfiguration
Rochester: Blessed Sacrament, St. Mary (Downtown), St. Monica
Saratoga Springs: St. Peter
Syracuse: St. Lucy, All Saints
Utica: Our Lady of Mount Carmel
Historic Old St. John’s: Wading River: St. John the Baptist
Wantage: St. Francis de Chantal
West Islip: Our Lady of Lourdes
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 Gesu
Westlake: St. Ladislas
Wooster: St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception
Oregon
Beaverton: Mission of the Atonement
Portland: St. Andrew, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Philip Neri, Down- town Chapel (St. Vincent de Paul)
Pennsylvania
Danville: St. Joseph
Philadelphia: Old St. Joseph, Old St. Mary, St. John the Evangelist, St. Vincent DePaul
Wilkesburg: St. James
Rhode Island
Providence: St. Raymond
Wickford: St. Bernard
Tennessee
Memphis: Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception
Texas
Dallas: Holy Trinity
El Paso: All Saints
Houston: St. Anne, St. Teresa
Indio: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
Virginia
Alexandria: Our Lady Queen of Peace
Glenn Allen: St. Michael the Archangel
Mechanicsville: Church of the Re- alms
Richmond: Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Sacred Heart Parish
Roanoke: St. Gerard
Trinity: St. Francis
Virginia Beach: St. Nicholas
Washington
Seattle: Christ Our Hope, St. Benedict, St. James Cathedral, St. Joseph, Prince of Peace
Newman Center
Tacom: St. Leo
Wisconsin
Fond du Lac: Holy Family
Madison: Our Lady Queen of Peace
Menomonee Falls: Good Shepherd
Milwaukee: Good Shepherd,

Arizona
Sedona: Franciscan Renewal Center
California
Orange: Koinonia
Placentia: Catholic Community of Pleasanton
San Diego: Mary Magdalene Catholic Community
District of Columbia
Communities
Florida
Tampa: Franciscan Center
Iowa
Coralville: Full Circle Small Faith Community
Maryland
Baltimore: Annapolis, Thurmont: Living Water Inclusive Catholic Community
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
Pennsylvania
Pittsburgh: Dignity/Pittsburgh
Virginia
Arlington: NOVA’s Catholic Community
Washington
Lewiston: Holy Wisdom Inclusive Catholic Community
Wisconsin
Madison: Holy Wisdom Monastery
Milwaukee: Mary of Magdala, Apostile to the

INTENTIONAL EUCHARISTIC COMMUNITIES

Arizona
Scottsdale: Franciscan Renewal Center
California
Orange: Koinonia
Placentia: Catholic Community of Pleasanton
San Diego: Mary Magdalene Catholic Community

District of Columbia
Communities
Florida
Tampa: Franciscan Center
Iowa
Coralville: Full Circle Small Faith Community
Maryland
Baltimore: Annapolis, Thurmont: Living Water Inclusive Catholic Community
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
Pennsylvania
Pittsburgh: Dignity/Pittsburgh
Virginia
Arlington: NOVA’s Catholic Community
Washington
Lewiston: Holy Wisdom Inclusive Catholic Community
Wisconsin
Madison: Holy Wisdom Monastery
Milwaukee: Mary of Magdala, Apostile to the...


"God bless you, Father!" Parishioners support pastor who reveals he gay

By Heidi Schlempf
The National Catholic Reporter
December 18, 2017

Milwaukee — Fr. Greg GREENEN was halfway through his homily, during which he shared that he is a gay, celibate priest, when a woman rose from her pew and shouted, "God bless you, Father!" The rest of the congregation at St. Bernardette Parish, where GREENEN is pastor, responded with applause.

More applause and a standing ovation came when GREENEN went on to say that he was going to "no longer live in the shadow of secrecy" during the 10:30 a.m. Mass Sunday, Dec. 17. After Mass, over coffee and doughnuts, parishioners responded positively or with nonchalance.

"I could care less," said Madge Powell, a parishioner of 16 years. "I love him for the person he is." Choir member Luci Cozalnd and other parishioners supported his bravery, especially since they suspect not every parishioner will be supportive.

Shawn Conversation, who was married once, but was impressed by his pastor's honesty, "He made a choice to walk in the light, because he's going to be accepted by everyone," said Govert. "I was adding that St. Bernardette's is not a liberal bastion.

Margaret Thom, chair of the parish festi val committee, supported theGREENEN 100 percent. "He's such a kind and caring person," Thom said. "That's what makes him gay priest is doesn't matter," she said.

GREENEN's experience is not unusual. In fact, many priests have experienced opposition about their sexual orientation say they are supported and have received visitation from other priests.

And their parishioners, fellow priests and even superiors usually respond positively to their coming out.

"All of the priests I've met who have come out have told me that their parishioners the people they want to be. They had no problem with learning their sexual orientation," said Francis DeBernardo, who has worked with LGBT Catholics for orientation, "I think the Catholic community is far more open to" getting to know new people.

"Father Daley declares he's gay" — his parish gave him a standing ovation. He recounted his ordination, except for a few letters to the editor from national news coverage.

I think the Catholic community is far ahead of its leadership on this issue," he said.

Research data supports Daley's. For example, more than two-thirds of all priests have come out to have gay marriage, according to a 2017 Pew Research Center poll.

Coming out is not easy, but staying "closeted," isn't easy or healthy, said Loette St. Jeannine Granick, a co-founder of New Ways Ministry. It "doesn't enable them to be the full human beings that God intended them to be."

This "is so obliterating...for their minis try and their relationships in general."

Parhie said, "Secrets kill. When you have to keep parts of yourself, especially you're afraid people won't love or respect you, that's not healthy."

Before Daley was ordained in 1974, he repressed any thoughts, feelings or desire of sexuality. After ordination, he found that though he loved being a priest, he felt unusually sad. Ultimately, he said, he realized it was because he hadn't acknowledged, even to himself, that he was gay.

"There was fear and depression around coming to that conclusion was very agonizing," remembered Daley. "Slowly, but surely, I was able to accept who I was and ultimately rejoice in who I was."

"I loved being a priest and was committed to the priesthood," he said. "So I chose to continue in ministry and continue living a celibate life.

His explicit mention of celibacy is unnecessary, because some people equate homosexuality with sexual activity in an unfortunate but necessary for priests who do come out to have that qualifi
cation, noted DeBernardo.

Daley did get some pushback in 2006 when he was being considered for a position with Catholic Health of South Africa, when the job offer was rescinded over what he believed was his sexual orientation. The Catholic Health News was Daley's activism, not his orientation that we've been critical of," an executive said.

Parhie has never had any negative reaction, although he is sure that some fellow priests are not comfortable with his being out. "But it's never been an issue," he said, including when requesting priestly faculties when working in a dis
case.

That does mean, however, the fear of coming out is not real. For example, in 2015, Fr. Warren Hall was fired from his job as chaplain at Seton Hall University and later barred from ministry by then-Archbishop John Myers of Newark, N.J., although his real motivation ostensibly was for Hall supporting gay advocacy groups, not for being gay himself.

"The gay priest does know what will happen and maybe is not willing to take that chance, because of the consequences...or he thinks there will be negative consequences," said Granick.

But Granick also said that such situations come from the very top of the Catholic hierarchy. Just a year ago, the Congregation for Clergy updated the norms and guide
tines for men studying for the priesthood.

The updated directives came from guidelines issued in 1992 under Pope John Paul II and 2005 under Pope Benedict XVI that, in part, prohibit admission to "the seminary or to holy orders those who practice homosexuality, present deep-seated homosexual tendencies or support the so-called 'gay culture.'"

These documents, and some church leaders, confute sexual orientation and sexual activity, according to Granick.

"There's a tremendous grace out there, means you're sexually active. But if you have this orientation and are not sexually active, you're not really gay. That's a fallacy."

Gay, celibate priests are actually few from the perspective of sexual ethics, she said.

"I know from conversations about priests in the 2016 document formation were hurtful, Parhie said. "I know many holy gay priests. I know many gay straight priests."

Daley worries that the current pronouncements are not helpful for LGBT priests. But his biggest concern is formation of new priests and the reaction the Catholic Church has to some seminaries.

"That's a very unhealthy atmosphere for a person to grow in psycho-sexual development," Parhie said. "The story of his fellow priests reacted to his coming out with silence."

But Parhie believes "God doesn't care if a person is gay or straight," he said. "One can do what with that's most important."

At 71, he knows who he is and who God calls him to be. "I'm not worried about people who can't see beyond their own fears and prejudices," said Daley.

"I've been blessed with a gift to his ministry. I realized one of my greatest gifts to those who are marginalized because of their sexuality or their struggle," he said. "I have no regrets at all."

Drew Prusko, who attended Mass at St. Bernardette with his husband and head priest, said he was inspired by the priest's words. "I grew up Catholic, but I haven't stepped foot in a Catholic Church in a long time," he said. "If I had known a priest that shared what he did today, maybe my spiritual development would have been different."
At the end of each year, New Ways Ministry asks the readers of *Bonds* 2.0 our daily blog on Catholic LGBT news, opinion, and spirituality, to vote for the worst and best Catholic LGBT news events of the previous 12 months. The following are the 10 highest vote-getters for the "Worst" and for the "Best" category. They are presented in order of highest votes (#1) to lowest votes (#10). Each item contains the percentage of votes cast for that event.

### The Worst

1. Bishops Paprocki (Springfield, Illinois) and Morlino (Madison, Wisconsin) issue guidelines denying pastoral care, sacraments, and funerals to legally married gay/ lesbian couples. (87%)
2. At least four cases became public this year of gay and lesbian teachers being fired, continuing the national employment crisis in the Catholic Church around LGBT issues. (50%)
3. (TIE) In approving its agenda, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops continues its “culture war” mentality, in spite of guidance from Pope Francis to instead emphasize mercy and accompaniment. (44%)
4. (TIE) M. Shawn Copeland and Fr. James Martin, SJ, have lectures canceled in Catholic venues because of their support for LGBT people. (44%)
5. A National Catholic Reporter investigation into the Knights of Columbus’ finances reveals that the Knights have spent significant money to oppose pro-LGBT initiatives. (42%)
6. Church leaders, including Pope Francis, continue to decry the undefined concept of “general morality” as part of their statements criticizing the transgender equality movement. (36%)
7. In at least two cases, transgender individuals are denied health care at Catholic hospitals. (29%)
8. Archbishop Broglio of the U.S. Military Archdiocese supports President Trump’s proposed ban on transgender people serving in the armed forces. (27%)
9. An Illinois state court upholds the firing of Colmin Collette, a gay man fired from his job as parish music director because of his intent to marry his partner. (21%)
10. In Malawi, Catholic bishops promote and participate in nationwide marches which were held to oppose the legalization of homosexuality. (18%)

### The Best

1. Fr. James Martin, SJ, publishes *Building a Bridge: How the Catholic Church and the LGBT Community Can Enter into a Relationship of Respect, Compassion, and Sensitivity*, a book which sparks a global conversation in church circles. (79%)
2. Cardinal Joseph Tobin welcomes a pilgrimage of LGBT people to the cathedral in Newark, New Jersey. Welcome Masses for LGBT people also held in San Diego (US), Nottingham (UK). (58%)
3. Pope Francis continues to make positive statements towards LGBT people, in one case sending blessings and congratulations to a gay couple on the baptism of their children, and in another case acknowledging the need for legal civil unions for lesbian and gay couples. (48%)
4. A nationwide survey in the U.S. shows that Catholics oppose allowing small businesses to refuse service to gay and lesbian people because of a religiously held belief. (36%)
5. Irish bishops indicate that all families will be welcome at World Meeting of Families gathering in Dublin in 2018. (32%)
6. (TIE) Cardinal Blase Cupich of Chicago says he wants to dialogue with LGBT people to learn from them. (31%)
7. (TIE) Luxembourg’s openly gay prime minister and his husband were officially welcomed at the Vatican. (31%)
8. Malta, Australia, Germany pass marriage equality laws with minimal interference from Catholic leaders. (28%)
9. Bishop John Stowe, OFM, Conv., emerges as a voice for LGBT inclusion at New Ways Ministry’s Eighth National Symposium and an interfaith prayer service for Pride. (27%)
10. In India, Carmelite Sisters and lay Catholics open school for transgender youth.

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**LGBT-friendly Catholic Colleges and Universities**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alabama</th>
<th>Mobile: Spring Hill College</th>
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<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>Belmont: Notre Dame de Namur University, St. Mary’s University of San Francisco</td>
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<td>Colorado</td>
<td>Denver: Regis University</td>
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<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>Fairfield: Fairfield University, Sacred Heart University</td>
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| 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, Univ. of Notre Dame, Iowa | Davenport: St. Ambrose University, Dubuque: Loras College, Clarke University, Kentucky | Louisville: Spalding University, Bellarmine University, Louisiana | New Orleans: Loyola University, Maryland | Baltimore: Notre Dame of Maryland University, Loyola University of Maryland, Massachusetts | Boston: Emmanuel College, Chestnut Hill: Boston College, Chiepeo: Elms College, North Andover: Merrimack College, Weston: Regis College, Worcester: Assumption College, College of the Holy Cross, Michigan | Detroit: University of Detroit Mercy, Marygrove College, 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: River 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’s College, Bronx: Fordham University, Manhattan College, Buffalo: Canisius College, Loudonville: Siena College, New Rochelle: College of New Rochelle, Iona College, Poquogue: Mariot College, Rochester: St. John Fisher College, St. Bonaventure: St. Bonaventure University, Sparkill: St. Thomas Aquinas College, Syracuse: Le Moyne 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, Sydney: Lourdes College, Oregon | Marylhurst: Marylhurst University, Portland: University of Portland, Pennsylvania | Crescor: 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: Aoeria 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, Middleton: Alverno College, Cardinal Stritch University, Marquette University, Canada | Toronto: Regis College,
Always Our Children: U.S. Bishops’ Pastoral Letter 20 Years Later

By Casey and Mary Ellen Lopata

In its discussion of gender ideology, the U.S. bishops warn against the idea that transgender individuals are simply an attempt to conform to some new social norm or identity. They suggest that the concept of a transgender identity is rooted in a misunderstanding of the Church’s teachings on the human person and the nature of sin.

The bishops also point out that the Church has a long history of supporting and protecting transgender individuals, and that the Church’s teaching on the dignity of the human person is consistent with the teaching of the Gospel. They emphasize that the Church’s teaching on the dignity of all human beings, including transgender individuals, is based on the belief that all people are created in the image and likeness of God and have the vocation to reflect that image.

The bishops conclude by encouraging the Church to continue to support and protect transgender individuals, and to offer them compassionate and non-judgmental care. They also encourage the Church to continue to study and learn more about transgender issues, and to work to eliminate discrimination and prejudice against transgender individuals.