

BANDINGS

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

By Inés San Martín

Cruxnow.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 disease, 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 attraction 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 a perspective of faith, and overcome prejudices against our brothers who experience same-sex attraction?” the bishop asked.

Prejudice, he said, is a “concept before an experience,” and it’s what blinds generations to slavery, and what blinds Europe today to the “drama of refugees.”

Cruz, appointed bishop by Pope Francis in 2014, after he served in some of Brazil’s most infamous favelas, or slums, said the Argentine pontiff is sometimes accused by “some who want to be more Roman than the pope,” of wanting to water down the Church’s teaching, “they say we’re selling ourselves, that he’s selling the doctrine for something cheap.

“In truth, what Pope Francis wants is to make mercy the starting point of Catholic doctrine,” he said. “And mercy, people, is not cheap: Mercy is very expensive. Christ paid a high price for mercy.”

Cruz also quoted Francis’s famous line “If someone is gay and is searching for the Lord and has good will, then who am I to judge him?” adding, just as the pope did at the time, on the flight back from Rio de Janeiro in 2013, that the Catechism of the Catholic Church says that gay people are not to be marginalized from society.

“It’d be good for orthodox [Catholics] to read the Catechism of the Catholic Church.”

The prelate also quoted Francis’s document on the family, *Amoris Laetitia*, in which the pope talks about “accompanying, discernment and welcoming” families in irregular unions, acknowledging that even though it was addressed to divorced and civilly remarried Catholics, it could apply to gay people too.

The bishop began his homily talking about a radio interview that really affected him. The host was talking about a professor who did his thesis on the prevalence of suicide among transvestites and transsexuals.

On hearing this report, he said, he began to think about “so many brothers and sisters with a homosexual orientation who feel misunderstood and unloved by us, who are Church, by their families, by their society and even by themselves, as it was in the days of slavery.”

The bishop’s homily, available in



Bishop Antônio Carlos Cruz Santos

video on YouTube, was praised by some and criticized by many others, who even call 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 stood by 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 he’s not

challenging 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 section he quoted in full says. “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 community should thank Jesuit 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 good advice, and those in the hierarchy who have made such outreach — Cardinal Joseph Tobin of Newark, New Jersey, and Bishop Patrick McGrath of San Jose, California, to name just two — need our support.

Inescapable in this bridge-building project, however, are deeper 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 pro-creation was the sole justification for sexual acts and that sexuality 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 between a man 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 sex 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, uncontrollable 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).

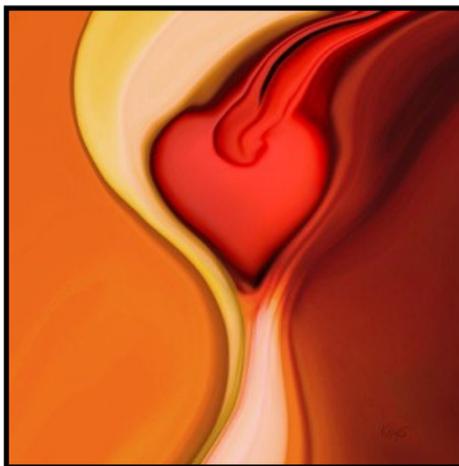
As a case in point, see Springfield, Illinois, Bishop Thomas Paprocki’s list of Catholics he suggests should not present themselves for holy Communion.

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 human beings participate in. The church condemns any sex acts — including those engaged in by married couples — that do not respect the procreative norm. Therefore, in reality, few Catholics ever 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

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

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

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

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It's Time to Canonize Fr. Mychal Judge: Seeking Personal Testimony

By Francis DeBernardo

Bondings 2.0www.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 ministered, selflessly, too, with HIV/AIDS patients and with people suffering from addictions.

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 *motu proprio* on July 11th entitled "Maiorem 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 friends" (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.

"While 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 knew 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 even 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! ✚



Fr. Mychal Judge, OFM

Here is what you can do to aid the canonization effort for Fr. Mychal Judge, OFM:

- Share the above information about Fr. Judge with your social media, email, and personal contacts. Ask them to share this information with others by the same means. We need this to go viral to find people who knew Fr. Judge, who feel they have experienced his intercession in a possible miracle, or simply want to support and help the preliminaries of his Cause.
- Refer anyone who has first-hand information about Fr. Judge to contact New Ways Ministry by email (info@NewWaysMinistry.org), phone (301-277-5674), or postal mail (4012 29th Street, Mount Rainier, Maryland 20712).
- Persons who have testimony about Fr. Judge need only make an initial contact. They do not need to explain the nature of their interaction or experience with him in the initial contact. Follow-up material will be sent to them to elicit the type of information that is needed.
- Ask other organizations to which you belong who also might know people who encountered Fr. Judge to share this information.
- Pray for the canonization of Fr. Judge. ✚

Message to Catholic LGBT people: 'Sisters are on our side!'

By Sister Jeannine Gramick, SL
Global Sisters Report
January 2, 2018

"History is written from the perspective of those who preserve their records," proclaimed Mark Bowman, the founder and director of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Religious Archives Network. Standing before 300 people who work for LGBT acceptance in their Christian churches, Mark opened the conference, "Rolling the Stone Away," to remember the history of the LGBT movement and to look toward future needs.

At this gathering in St. Louis, 50 founders, movers and shakers of the LGBT Christian 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.

Now I felt 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, "Years ago, when I read about your situation, I knew the sisters were on our side!" I have since 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 leaders had vision, imagination and foresight. They were readers, thinkers and women of action who tapped into needs that had been too long neglected by our church. From the 1970s, three successive provincial leaders of the School 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 flinch in the face of numerous complaints from lay Catholics and some bishops and cardinals. In those days, Catholics were not as accepting of lesbian/gay people as they are today. The Vatican lodged three 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 me into their community. The Loretos 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. It seems to me that the Loretto presidents anticipated Pope Francis' advice to the International Union of Superiors



Sister Jeannine Gramick, SL

General when he told them to answer any Vatican letters politely and then continue on with their ministries. The Loretto presidents did just that.

During these years, some leaders of other congregations even proposed a creative strategy if Vatican pressure persisted on the Loretto Sisters: A string of communities could be in the wings to accept me as I migrated from one congregation to another! As Nancy said, "The sisters were on our side!"

The crisis with the Vatican was a disguised blessing because it became a stepping-stone to educate some members of the hierarchy. Scores of women leaders wrote to the Vatican about the need to

support and expand the ministry. The Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) encouraged their members to engage in conversations with local bishops about the issue of homosexuality.

Mary Ann Zollman, then president of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, was a part of such a meeting with her local bishops, in which some of them said that homosexuality was intrinsically disordered because of an ethic based on natural law.

"I found myself tapping into a place of grief and alienation," Mary Ann said of that meeting. "In my heart's eye, I saw faces of men and women I know whose sexual orientation is gay or lesbian and who live compassionately, justly yearning for a return of 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 heard 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 ethic of sexuality."

In her outgoing address as President of LCWR in 2003, Mary Ann Zollman shared that story and went on to describe her feelings, using the image of two trees. "I could feel my roots moving toward theirs and they leaning toward me as together we want nothing more than to shape a home space for those who are 'other.'" She could resonate with their feelings because they were similar to the

(Continued on page 6)

Diocese: Pastors Can Deny Funerals to Married Lesbian and Gay Catholics

By Robert Shine

Bondings 2.0

www.NewWaysMinistry.org/blog
October 24, 2017

A second U.S. diocese has suggested Catholic funerals be denied to people in same-gender civil marriages, going so far as to suggest the deceased person be remembered without being named at all.

Msgr. James Bartylla, Vicar General of the Diocese of Madison which is headed by Bishop Robert Morlino, offered diocesan priests this new guidance in a communication which was then reported on by the blog *Pray Tell*. In a section titled "Consideration of Funeral Rites for a Person in a Homosexual Civil or Notorious Union," Bartylla addressed people in same-gender civil marriages or, what he described as, "an otherwise notorious homosexual relationship gravely contrary to the natural law. . ." He urged pastors to "think through the issue thoroughly and prudently" in consultation with the local Ordinary (currently Morlino) when confronted with the death of such a person. The guidance continued:

"The main issue centers around scandal and confusion. . . and thereby the pastoral task is to minimize the risk of scandal and confusion to others amidst the solicitude for the deceased and family.

"If the situation warrants (see canon 1184 – specifically canon 1184.1.3), ecclesiastical funeral rites may be denied

for manifest sinners in which public scandal of the faithful can't be avoided. If there is a doubt, the local ordinary is to be consulted, and his judgment is to be followed (canon 1184.2)."

Bartylla then listed a series of questions for pastors to consider when deciding whether to deny a funeral, including, "Was the deceased or the 'partner' a promoter of the 'gay' lifestyle? . . . Did the deceased give some signs of repentance before death?" The vicar listed some "preliminary considerations" for pastors:

"To minimize scandal, should there merely be a short scripture service at the funeral home? Or maybe merely a graveside service? Maybe a later 'Mass for the Dead' with or without explicit mention of the name of the deceased or 'partner' could alternatively or in addition be offered at the parish or even at another parish (to avoid scandal), with or without family members present.

"Any surviving 'partner' should not have any public or prominent role at any ecclesiastical funeral rite or service.

"A great risk for scandal and confusion is for the name of the celebrating priest and/or the parish to be listed in any public (e.g., newspaper) or semi-public obituary or notice that also lists the pre-deceased or surviving 'partner' in some manner. This can't happen for obvious reasons.

"There should be no mention of the

'partner' either by name or by other reference (nor reference to the unnatural union) in any liturgical booklet, prayer card, homily, sermon, talk by the priest, deacon, etc. . .

"It may be wise to keep the priest or deacon involvement to the minimum (i.e., limited to one priest or deacon and at merely essential times of a service or rite, if one occurs)."

These guidelines issued by the Diocese follow another attempt earlier this year to deny pastoral care to Catholics in same-gender civil marriages. Bishop Thomas Paprocki of Springfield issued pastoral guidelines that said such Catholics should not be given ecclesiastical funeral rites unless they show "some signs of repentance before their death." Paprocki's guidelines, released on the anniversary of the massacre at Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, also barred people in same-gender civil marriages from being received into the church or participating in any liturgical ministries.

Several bishops have introduced pastoral restrictions as marriage equality has spread in recent years. Philadelphia's Archbishop Charles Chaput's attempted to bar LGBT people from both Communion and liturgical ministries, and Archbishops Allen Vigneron of Detroit and John Myers, formerly of Newark, both told LGBT Catholics and their allies not to receive Communion.

Commenting on both the Diocese of Madison's actions and the firing of a church worker because of her same-gender engagement, news which *Bondings 2.0* broke, Fr. James Martin, SJ, offered his thoughts on Facebook:

"The problem, as I point out in 'Building a Bridge,' [Martin's new book on LGBT issues in the church] is that these teachings are almost always applied selectively. That is, there is no equivalent focus on the sexual morality of straight Catholics at the time of their funerals. (E.g., Was he or she divorced and remarried without an annulment? Was he or she living together before marriage?)

"Nor is the sexual morality of straight Catholic school teachers placed under such a microscope. (E.g., Is he or she living with a partner before marriage?).

"The focus solely on LGBT people

and their sexual morality, without an equivalent focus on the sexual morality (or morality in general) of straight Catholics, constitutes what the Catechism calls 'unjust discrimination' (#2358)."

Francis DeBernardo, executive director of New Ways Ministry, said the guidelines are "directly opposed to the example that Pope Francis has been giving." He continued in a statement:

"These suggestions are blatantly discriminatory and seemed designed more to push people away from the church than to receive them in a loving embrace at one of their most sensitive times of need.

"While the church leaders of the Madison diocese may think that they are preserving the Church, they are, in fact, harming it by so callously refusing to provide any sort of solace to Catholic families who are grieving. What do these leaders think about how people, gay and straight, will respond to such a gesture? Clearly, many will find comfort and solace in other places of faith. Even if not enacted, this decision's announcement alone will already cause people to flee."

DignityUSA's Marianne Duddy-Burke said in a statement that the Diocese's guidance is "the very antithesis of pastoral care" which suggests lesbian and gay people "should be demeaned even in death." It is "heartless. . . cruel. . . unchristian in the extreme," she added.

Celebrating the sacraments, especially in people's most pained moments, is central to the church's mission. While canon law may protect the right of bishops to deny sacraments as heads of dioceses, the divine law interrogates them as to why church officials seek to do so in such an aggressive manner against LGBT people. It is dehumanizing to suggest a Catholic be remembered without being named and without having their most intimate relationship valued, or at least acknowledged.

The Diocese of Madison's guidelines are a tragedy for LGBT Catholics, their loved ones, parish communities which may be affected, and the church as a whole. It is my hope pastors will have the courage to follow God's law and celebrate the lives and love of LGBT people whom God has called home. ✚

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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.A., Bruni notes:

“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 while that has long been true, it’s much more consequential since the advent of the Trump administration, a decidedly less ready ally of L.G.B.T. people than the Obama administration was.”

Bruni, a gay man, gets even more local later in the essay, stating:

“We’re at the mercy of our ZIP codes: Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are often affected most by their municipality, not their state. . .

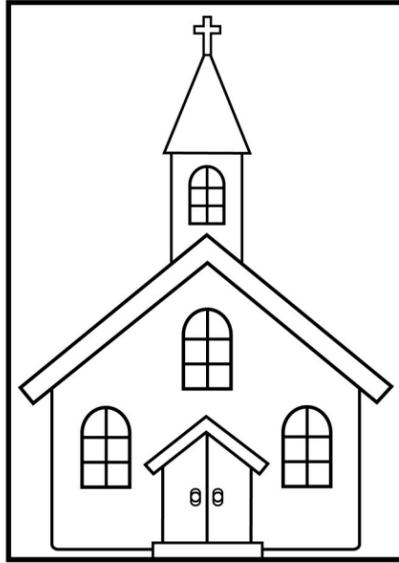
. Our cities and our states often dictate how easily we can be our true selves at work, buy wedding cakes, construct families — even die.”

How does this relate to the world of Catholic LGBT issues? I think Bruni’s analysis of the political sphere very accurately reflects the ecclesial sphere, as well. In other words, I think that Catholic LGBT people are more affected by local church attitudes and practices concerning sexual orientation and gender identity than they are by the same influences that are expressed or enacted by higher levels 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 some-thing offensive or damaging about LGBT people or issues, harm certainly is done. Yet, from what I have heard time and again from Catholic LGBT people—whose faith and resiliency are amazingly strong—is that hierarchical slights do 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.

The 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 parish 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 all 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 the 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 since 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 chronicles developments 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 special afternoon or evening program on transgender pastoral care for parishes, schools, and religious communities of men or women.

Additionally, New Ways Ministry offers a 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 “Next Steps” 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 301-277-5674.

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). ✦



PARISHES

Alabama

Decatur: Annunciation of the Lord
Montgomery: St. Bede

Arizona

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

California

Berkeley: Holy Spirit Parish
Burney: St. Francis of Assisi
Carlsbad: St. Patrick
Camarillo: Padre Serra Parish
Claremont: Our Lady of Assumption
El Cajon: St. Luke
Encino: Our Lady of Grace
Escondido: St. Timothy
Fremont: St. Joseph-Mission San Jose
Fresno: St.. Paul Catholic Newman Center
Goleta: St. Mark Univ. Parish
Hawthorne: St. Joseph (Spanish)
Hayward: All Saints
LaPuente: St. Martha
Lemon Grove: St. John of the Cross
Long Beach: St. Matthew
Los Angeles: Blessed Sacrament, Christ the King, Mother of Good Counsel, St. Camillus Center-LA USC Medical Center (Spanish), St. Agatha, St. Paul the Apostle
North Hollywood: St. Jane Frances de Chantal, St. Patrick
Oakland: Our Lady of Lourdes, St. Columba, St. Jarleth
Oceanside: St. Thomas More
Orange: Holy Family Cathedral

Pasadena: Assumption of the B.V.M.

Redondo: St. Lawrence Martyr
Redwood City: St. Matthias
Ross: St. Anselm
Sacramento: St. Francis of Assisi
San Carlos: St. Charles
San Diego: Ascension, St. John the Evangelist, St. Jude Shrine, Catholic Community of UC, San Diego
San Dimas: Holy Name of Mary
San Francisco: Most Holy Redeemer, Old St. Mary Cathedral, St. Agnes, St. Dominic, St. Ignatius, St. Teresa of Avila
San Jose: St. Julie Billiart, St. Martin of Tours (Emmaus Community)
San Luis Obispo: Mission San Luis
San Ramon: St. Joan of Arc
San Raphael: Church of San Raphael &

Mission San Raphael Arcangel
Santa Barbara: OL of Guadalupe
Santa Cruz: Holy Cross
Santa Monica: St. Monica
Simi Valley: St. Rose of Lima
Spring Valley: Santa Sophia
Stanford: Catholic Community at Stanford University
South Pasadena: Holy Family
Valinda: St. Martha
Vernon: Holy Angels Catholic Church of the Deaf
Walnut Creek: St. John Vianney
West Hollywood: St. Ambrose, St. Victor
Whittier: St. Mary of the Assumption

Colorado

Arvada: Spirit of Christ
Avon: St. Edward
Colorado Springs: Sacred Heart
Denver: St. Dominic, Christ the King, Our Lady of Mount Carmel
Lafayette: Immaculate Conception
Littleton: Light of the World, St. Frances Cabrini

Connecticut

Guilford: St. George’s
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
Flagler Beach: Santa Maria del Mar
Ft. Lauderdale: St. Anthony, St. Maurice
Kissimmee: Holy Redeemer
St. Petersburg: Holy Cross
Tampa: Sacred Heart, Christ the King

Georgia

Atlanta: Shrine of the Immaculate Conception

Idaho

Boise: St. Mary

Illinois

Berwyn: St. Mary of the Celle
Chicago: Immaculate Conception, St. Clement, St. Gertrude, St. Gregory, St. Peter, St. Sylvester, St. Teresa of Avila, St. Thomas the Apostle, Our Lady of Lourdes, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Old St. Patrick
Clarendon Hills: Notre Dame
Country Club Hills: St. Emeric
Evanston: St. Nicholas
Inverness: Holy Family
Johnston City: St. Paul
Morton Grove: St. Martha
Oak Park: Ascension, St. Catherine of Sienna-St. Lucy, St. Giles
Schaumburg: St. Marcelline

Indiana

Dyer: St. Maria Goretti
Indianapolis: St. Thomas Aquinas

Iowa

Coralville: St. Thomas More

Kentucky

Lexington: Historic St. Paul Church
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
Buzzard’s Bay: St. Margaret’s/St. Mary’s
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

(Continued on page 5)

Catholic church offers outstretched hand to LGBT community with special Mass

By Rob Nikolewski
San Diego Union-Tribune
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 everybody," 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.

"To you parents, there is no denying your own sons and daughters, whatever their walk in life," Dolan said during his homily.

Just before mass, Dolan said: "This parish falls within the Hillcrest district and there are a number of people in our community here who want to participate in the life of the church, and we want to make



Doug Metz of Sacred Heart Catholic Church, left, and Richard Marquez 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.

"Pope Francis 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's 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 cultural issues, it also gets grief from some on the opposite end.

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

"We're criticizing the church for modernism," said Allyson Smith, a

Catholic from El Cajon who called the "Always Our Children" pastoral message "a flawed document that had to be revised" the following year.

"The church is bending with the cultural zeitgeist. The church is bending with the times and with the pervasiveness of homosexual activism throughout the country and indeed the globe," Smith said. "And we feel the Church should stand strong as a bulwark against cultural trends ... Our concern today is the Church is becoming too accommodating to homosexuality."

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 who 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. 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

Keyport: St. Joseph
Lawrenceville: St. Ann
Long Beach Island: St. Francis of Assisi
Maplewood: 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
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, Immac.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. 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
Wantagh: St. Frances 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. Ladislav
Wooster: St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception

Oregon

Beaverton: Mission of the Atonement
Portland: St. Andrew, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Phillip Neri, Downtown 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

Colleyville: Good Shepherd
Dallas: Holy Trinity
El Paso: All Saints

Houston: St. Anne, St. Teresa
Odessa: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

Virginia

Arlington: Our Lady Queen of Peace
Glen Allen: St. Michael the Archangel
Mechanicsville: Church of the Redeemer
Richmond: Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Sacred Heart Parish
Roanoke: St. Gerard
Triangle: St. Francis
Virginia Beach: St. Nicholas

Washington

Seattle: Christ Our Hope, St. Benedict, St. James Cathedral, St. Joseph, Prince of Peace Newman Center
Tacoma: St. Leo

Wisconsin

Fond du Lac: Holy Family
Madison: Our Lady Queen of Peace
Menomonee Falls: Good Shepherd
Milwaukee: Good Shepherd,



Prince of Peace, Trinity-Guadalupe Wauwatosa: St. Pius X

Canada

Montreal: Holy Cross, Saint-Pierre-Apôtre,
Ottawa: St. Joseph
Toronto: Our Lady of Lourdes

England

London: Church of the Immaculate Conception (Mayfair)

INTENTIONAL EUCHARISTIC COMMUNITIES

Arizona

Scottsdale: Franciscan Renewal Center

California

Orange: Koinonia
Pleasanton: Catholic Community of Pleasanton
San Diego: Mary Magdalene Catholic Community

District of Columbia

Communitas

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 Catholic Community

Washington

Lacey: Holy Wisdom Inclusive Catholic Community

Wisconsin

Madison: Holy Wisdom Monastery
Milwaukee: Mary of Magdala, Apostle to the Apostles

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

By Heidi Schlumpf
The National Catholic Reporter
December 18, 2017

Milwaukee — Fr. Greg Greiten 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. Bernadette Parish, where Greiten is pastor, responded with applause.

More applause and a standing ovation came when Greiten finished explaining 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 for eight years. "I love him for the person he is."

Choir member Luci Crosland and others were impressed with Greiten's bravery, especially since they suspect not every parishioner will be supportive.

Shawn Govern doesn't support gay marriage, but was impressed by his pastor's honesty. "He made a choice to walk in Christ's shoes, because he's not going to be accepted by everyone," said Govern, adding that St. Bernadette's is "not a liberal bastion."

Margaret Thorn, chair of the parish festival committee, said she supports Greiten "100 percent."

"He's such a kind and caring person," Thorn said. That her parish priest is gay "doesn't matter," she said.

Greiten's experience is not unusual. In fact, most gay priests who tell others about their sexual orientation say they are happier and healthier since "coming out." And their parishioners, fellow priests and even superiors usually respond positively to the news.

"All of the priests I've met who have come out have told me that their parishioners or the people they minister to have had no problem with learning their sexual orientation," said Francis DeBernardo, who has worked with LGBT Catholics for 22 years as part of New Ways Ministry and is currently its executive director.

Although accurate numbers about out gay priests — or gay priests at all — are hard to come by, DeBernardo said most are supported by their bishops or religious superiors. It's likely, however, that priests who sense their bishop or superior would

react negatively may be choosing not to come out to him and risk retribution.

Franciscan Fr. Ralph Parthie, who was ordained in 1975, considers himself lucky since early on in his priesthood, a "very enlightened" provincial suggested the friars have an open conversation about homosexuality to better understand one another and live their vocations.

He came out slowly, first to close friends and family, but has been open about his sexual orientation for a couple of decades, especially as he became involved in LGBT ministry and service those with HIV/AIDS.

"I wasn't afraid, because my province was really so healthy about it," said Parthie, who is director of friar life and secretary for formation for the Franciscan Province of the Sacred Heart, based in St. Louis.

The first person Fr. Frederick Daley, now 70 and pastor of All Saints Parish in Syracuse, New York, told about his sexual orientation was his spiritual director, a common experience with gay priests.

Daley expected condemnation, but instead received the "tremendous grace" of understanding and compassion.

He was inspired to come out more publicly in the wake of the clergy sexual abuse crisis in the church, when he felt gay priests were being unfairly scapegoated. After meeting with his auxiliary bishop, Daley shared that he was gay with a local newspaper reporter who interviewed him about an award he had won.

After the next day's headline — "Father Daley declares he's gay" — his parish gave him a standing ovation. He received no negative reaction, 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 assertion. For example, more than two-thirds of U.S. Catholics now support gay marriage, according to a 2017 Pew Research Center poll.

Coming out is not easy, but staying

"closeted," isn't easy or healthy, said Loretto Sr. Jeannine Gramick, a co-founder of New Ways Ministry. It "doesn't enable them to be the full human



Fr. Greg Greiten presiding at Mass at St. Bernadette parish, Milwaukee, on the day he came out as gay to his congregation.

beings that God intended them to be." That is "so debilitating ... for their ministry and their relationships in general."

Parthie said, "Secrets kill. When you have to keep parts of yourself secret because 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 discussion 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.

"The 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 necessary, because some people equate homosexuality with sexual activity. "It's unfortunate but necessary for priests who do come out to have to add that qualification," noted DeBernardo.

Daley did get some pushback in 2006 when he was being considered for a position with Catholic Relief Services in Africa, when the job offer was rescinded over what he believed was his sexual orientation. CRS told ABC News it was Daley's activism, not his orientation that would have been problematic in Africa.

Parthie 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 really been an issue," he said, including when requesting priestly faculties when working in a diocese.

That does not 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, although the punishment ostensibly was for Hall supporting gay advocacy groups, not for being gay himself.

"The gay priest does not know what will happen and maybe is not willing to take a risk because there may be negative consequences — or he thinks there will be negative consequences," said Gramick.

Fear of negative consequences comes from the very top of the Catholic hierarchy. Just a year ago, the Congregation for Clergy updated the norms and guidelines for men studying for the priesthood. The updated norms draw heavily from guidelines issued in 1992 under Pope John Paul II and 2005 under Pope Benedict XVI, which advise against admitting "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, conflate sexual orientation and sexual activity, according to Gramick. "They believe that if you're gay, that means you're sexually active. But if you have this orientation and are not sexually active, then you're not really gay. That's a fallacy."

Gay, celibate priests are actually following the church's teaching on sexual ethics, she said.

The generalizations about gay priests in the 2016 formation document were hurtful, Parthie said. "I know many holy gay priests, just like I know many holy straight priests."

Daley worries that the current polarized climate in the church is not helpful for LGBT people. But his biggest concern is formation of new priests and the repressive attitude at some seminaries.

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

But Parthie believes "God doesn't care if a person is gay or straight," he said. "It's what you do with that 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," he said.

For Daley, being out has been a gift to his ministry. "I realized one of my greatest gifts to those who are marginalized and struggling is to share my own struggle," he said. "I have no regrets at all."

Drew Prusko, who attended Mass at St. Bernadette with his husband and heard the homily in which Greiten came out, 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." ✦

LGBT People: 'Sisters are on our side!'

(Continued from page 3)

ache of homelessness she felt as a woman in the church.

Not surprisingly, her address was part of the Vatican's investigation of LCWR. Answering the Vatican's concerns took much time and energy, but it was worth it because it was another instance where sisters were educating church authorities. If Nancy knew, she would say, "The sisters were on our side!"

But the first Catholic organization to support gay and lesbian persons was the National Coalition of American Nuns. The board of this small, grassroots nuns' group publicly called for civil rights for gay and lesbian people back in 1974. The organization also publicly supported the right of same-sex couples to marry and spoke out against bullying of LGBT people. Once again, "The sisters were on our side!"

Since the late 1990s, sisters have ministered among transgender people, healing spirits and saving lives. Members of several congregations including the Eucharistic Missionaries of St. Dominic, Racine Dominicans, Dominican Sisters of Peace, and the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet have accompanied transgender people and their families on this sacred journey. Through a ministry of presence and accompaniment, the sisters have welcomed transgender folks into their lives and been welcomed in return. The sisters' basic message is that God loves them for who they are.

The sisters' support has not been only on a private level. Last year, a Catholic

teacher in San Francisco came out as transgender and had the public backing of the Sisters of Mercy who operated the high school. Shortly thereafter the Sisters of St. Agnes in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, organized a public prayer vigil after the rampant shooting of LGBT people at an Orlando night club. Six months later, the Sisters of the Congregation of Mother Carmel in India offered their buildings for a school for transgender people who had dropped out because of the psychological trauma they experienced. Yes, "The sisters were on our side!"

So many women religious have affirmed the goodness of LGBT students or strangers. Sisters have opened their motherhouses and retreat centers for LGBT programs. Many have signed petitions, demonstrated, or written letters of complaint when LGBT people are fired from Catholic institutions. Some have marched in solidarity in gay pride parades. Sisters have been part of the LGBT struggle in the past; they are their allies today. And, as this conference made me so very aware, sisters give LGBT people much hope for the future.

I'm counting on the fact that the names and ministries of all these sisters are preserved in the archives of women's religious congregations. What a loss to church history and to the cause of justice if these records were not saved or were thought too sensitive to keep. Mark Bowman's opening words at the conference play like a refrain in my ears: "History is written from the perspective of those who preserve their records." ✦

Time for dialogue on sexual ethics

(Continued from page 1)

as they are in their campaign against same-sex marriage, perhaps more Catholics would realize how urgent the need is to rethink the entirety of the church's sexual ethics.

We strongly encourage dialogue between laypeople and church leaders regarding all issues in the sexual sphere. But we also recognize that dialogue can have its limits, particularly if those in leadership do not demonstrate an openness to developing the church's teaching on sex and sexuality.

We call on bishops to continue the work of developing the doctrine of sexuality that began in Vatican II. This work has largely been stalled by the hierarchy's unwillingness to loosen its rigid interpretation of millennia-old ideas about natural law and the procreation norm.

Of course, the work has continued outside of the walls of the Vatican, led by Catholic moral theologians who have

spent the past four decades developing new frameworks for sexual morality and ethical decision-making based on our evolving understanding of sexuality. Sadly, those who have made the greatest contributions to deepening our understanding of sexual ethics, such as Fr. Charles Curran and Mercy Sr. Margaret Farley, have been silenced or had their work condemned by bishops and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

If we truly are living in a new culture of encounter in the church, perhaps it is time for the Vatican to engage these Catholic theologians and ethicists in a constructive dialogue about the fruits of their ethical inquiries. Until the church is willing to engage in a deep re-examination of its doctrine on sexuality and sexual relationships, any dialogue around LGBT inclusion or divorce and remarriage will only be stymied. ✦

The Ten Worst and the Ten Best Catholic LGBT News Events of 2017

At the end of each year, New Ways Ministry asks the readers of *Bondings 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 lesbian/gay 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 “gender ideology” 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 Colin 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.



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.



- | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| <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, Univ. of Notre Dame</p> | <p>Iowa
<i>Davenport:</i> St. Ambrose University
<i>Dubuque:</i> Loras College, Clarke University</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 of 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, Marygrove College
<i>Grand Rapids:</i> Aquinas College</p> <p>Minnesota
<i>Collegeville:</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’s 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>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> |
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Always Our Children: U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Letter 20 Years Later

By Casey and Mary Ellen Lopata
Bondings 2.0
www.NewWaysMinistry.org/blog
October 1, 2017

Twenty years ago today, on October 1, 1997, the U.S. bishops' Committee on Marriage and Family issued *Always Our Children: A Pastoral Message to Parents of Homosexual Children AND Suggestions for Pastoral Ministers* (AOC). This document was long overdue given the pastoral damage caused by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's (CDF) 1986 letter, *On the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons*. The harmful language in the 1980s document — e.g. newly characterizing a homosexual orientation as an “objective disorder” — still arouses rage in many people.

After 1986, advocates slowly began to challenge the CDF's soul-sapping letter. Of significance was the 1992 New Ways Ministry Symposium. There, Bishop Tom Gumbleton told of his mother asking if her gay son, Dan, would go to hell. Gumbleton replied: “No.... That is the way God made him, and God wouldn't make people a certain way that means inevitably they're going to hell.”

In 1993, New Ways Ministry wrote to Gumbleton saying it was time “to study, discuss, and draft a document on gay and lesbian issues as they relate to family life.” Gumbleton, with 13 other bishops, officially proposed this to the U.S. bishops' Committee on Marriage and Family, and the project that would culminate in *Always Our Children* was born.



Mary Ellen & Casey Lopata

As consultants, we provided initial input during the document's preparation and we commented on a draft. Understanding that the bishops were limited in their purpose— to reach out to parents based on the “Church's teaching” and to not “break any new ground theologically” — we were still elated when the final draft was issued. To the *New York Times* Mary Ellen said: “... many parents struggle with the conflict between loving their child and their understanding that church teaching condemns their child. For them to hear the bishops say to love their child first... can go a long way to help them resolve those conflicts and begin some healing.” We know

many parents shed tears of reassurance and hopefulness upon reading the bishops' closing words: “to our homosexual brothers and sisters.... In you God's love is revealed.”

The *National Catholic Reporter* stated: “Parents and activists generally welcomed... [AOC] for its appeal to parents to place support of gay and lesbian children first, above moral condemnation of homosexual activity....”

The Bishops' Conference reported more than 500 letters were received expressing support and gratitude. No more than 50 criticized and found fault with AOC.

However, strong protests from supporters of Courage, a Catholic ministry which views a gay and lesbian orientation as a defect, resulted in AOC being re-issued in June 1998 with several modifications. The Committee reported: “The

core message, tone, and direction... remain the same... the [CDF] has reviewed [it] and... is satisfied with the result.” But to LGBTQ advocates, adding footnotes citing Church documents that call homosexual orientation a disorder and say sexual orientation can be taken into account in opposing nondiscrimination legislation significantly diluted AOC's intent “to speak words of faith, hope, and love to parents who need the Church's loving presence...” Also, a description of sexual orientation as a “fundamental” dimension of a person was changed to “deep-seated.” This change discredited actual gay and lesbian experiences.

These changes compounded AOC's original shortfalls:

- 1) no mention of Catholic teaching on the primacy of conscience and how it can and does save families and lives
- 2) the institutional Church's failure to promote the statement.

Despite these issues, AOC was and still is significant for these reasons:

Silence Broken: Major media coverage of the document shattered silence in the Church about homosexuality. AOC humanized this “issue” that is too often buried in theological jargon and abstract rules.

Best Possible: Despite zealous opposition from Courage, enough dedicated gay-supportive bishops had enough savvy to produce the best possible document at that time.

Gay-Friendliest/Invaluable: Arguably the most gay-friendly official document from the U.S. bishops or Vatican, AOC's overall tone and its

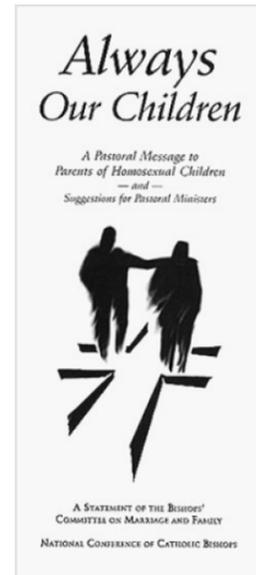
sensitive language send a powerful message. An affirmative pastoral ministry tool for parents, church ministers and allies, AOC's welcoming pastoral focus continues to challenge the doctrinal severity of the institutional Church.

Vatican “Satisfied”: Of major significance, the CDF said it is “satisfied” with the modified 3rd version. In effect, AOC now conveys the influence of a CDF document.

Empowered Parents/Ministers: By our count, the “official” recommendations enabled parents, ministers, allies to begin and enhance at least 76 ministries (not counting Dignity chapters) during these 20 years. AOC's official language and compelling quotes provided a foundational support for these ministries.

AOC was a significant response to the heartlessness of the CDF's 1986 letter. Strategically developed by some courageous bishops and staff, AOC's tone and message is reminiscent of the 1976 U.S. Bishops Call To Action Conference that prophetically called for justice for homosexual persons.

Despite a passive launch by most bishops and strong criticism from Courage, AOC's compassionate, pastoral approach has inspired and has empowered many supportive ministries. Today, AOC lives comfortably in the Catholic world of Pope Francis. ✦



Casey & Mary Ellen Lopata are the founders of *Fortunate Families*, a ministry with Catholic parents seeking justice for their LGBT daughters and sons in Church and society.

Gender Ideology, Transgender Reality: A Deacon Parent's Perspective

By Deacon Ray Dever
Bondings 2.0
www.NewWaysMinistry.org/blog
September 18, 2017

One morning this past spring, I found myself somewhere I honestly never could have imagined I would be: sitting in a dreary courtroom in Washington, DC, with my firstborn. We were patiently awaiting her turn before a judge.

It was a long way from the familiar, comfortable surroundings of my home and my Catholic parish in sunny Tampa, Florida. And it was an even longer way from a place I was almost ten years ago, a place of almost total ignorance of LGBTQ issues. The issue that morning was a legal name change for my 23-year old transgender daughter, a recent graduate of Georgetown University. The name change was another milestone in her challenging journey towards living as her authentic self. While this milestone was certainly positive for my daughter, it forced me to reflect once again on the enormous and painful disconnect between the reality of the lives of transgender individuals and the rampant misinformation that often dominates discourse about transgender issues in both the Church and the public square.

In his apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis expressed concern with “an ideology of gender,” which he imagines to be an ideology that seeks to eliminate sexual differences in society, thereby undermining the basis for the family.

Independent of *Amoris Laetitia*, individuals in the Church hierarchy have issued blanket condemnations of trans individuals, occasionally citing discredited or marginal information sources as “science” to support their positions. I

have nothing but respect for the good intentions that undoubtedly underlie these statements, but my personal experience is that these statements have fueled misunderstanding and bigotry, and not love, truth, and life that are the essence of Jesus Christ.

These church discussions of “ideology of gender” do not ring true for anyone with any significant first-hand knowledge of trans individuals. Such people would be baffled by the suggestion that the trans people they know, or the presence of trans individuals in society, are somehow the result of an ideology of gender. Long before there were gender studies programs in any universities or the phrase “gender ideology” was ever spoken, transgender people were present, recognized, and even valued in many cultures around the world.

Trans individuals are not people who have been indoctrinated into some ideology that convinces them they can simply choose their own gender. They

don't just decide one morning to start dressing differently. They are transgender by virtue of some combination of biological and psychological factors that scientists are just beginning to understand. The only choice that trans individuals have in the matter is the challenging choice to

embrace who they are and to live their lives openly as their authentic selves, in the face of rejection, discrimination, bigotry, and even violence that they know they will have to endure.

In the public sphere, recent efforts to curtail legal protections for the transgender community, including all the nonsense around bathroom bills, are further evidence of how pervasive the misunderstanding and confusion about gender identity continues to be. Given the wide

availability of information and testimonials, there really is no excuse for that kind of thinking. The American Medical Association, the American Psychological Association, the American Psychiatric Association, and the World Professional Association for Transgender Health, who together represent over 300,000 doctors, psychiatrists, and psychologists, have each affirmed the reality of transgender individuals, and have issued documents opposing all forms of discrimination against them and providing standards of health care for them. The United Nations has opposed legal discrimination and violence that trans individuals suffer in many parts of the world. Companies and organizations we all do business with every day—from Apple to Wal-Mart—recognize trans individuals with equal employment opportunity policies and inclusive health insurance.

Since I wear the two hats of parent of a transgender woman and permanent deacon in the Church, my reaction to gender identity controversies is both personal and pastoral.

From the personal perspective, I share the concerns of all parents for the well-being of their children, including their adult children. These concerns are amplified when an LGBTQ individual is involved. Our prayers and hopes for our children are colored by the reality of the discrimination they will likely face for the rest of their lives. The probability of being a victim of violence or committing suicide is greater for the LGBTQ community than for the general populace, and even greater for the transgender community in particular. My family is always a bit on edge when we go out together, constantly worried that unfriendly stares and remarks might escalate to a con-

frontation, and that a confrontation could become violent. Nobody should have to live that way. All that transgender individuals want is simply to live their lives as who they are, with the same rights and freedoms that the rest of us enjoy.

My pastoral perspective is informed by the call that all permanent deacons share: to bring the Church into the world and to bring the problems of the world

back to the Church. Well, here's one such problem: the community of faith includes transgender people who are marginalized, unjustly condemned, and suffering simply because of who they are, and that marginalization and suffering extends to their family and friends. Every time that a trans (or gay, lesbian, bisexual) kid is rejected by their family in the name of faith and ends up homeless and struggling to survive, we as a people of faith need to take responsi-

bility. We can't just sweep it under the rug and hide behind some vague Church document or isolated scripture passage.

In its discussion of gender ideology, *Amoris Laetitia* warns against falling into the sin of trying to replace the Creator. I definitely agree. But I think this warning begs the question: are we guilty of that sin when we look at a transgender person and we have the hubris to deny what God has made? I pray that the Church will be open to learning and embracing the truth about transgender individuals, who have the same inherent value and dignity as all human beings. Perhaps we all need to have a little more humility and a little more faith in what God has created here on earth. ✦

Deacon Ray Dever ministers at St. Paul Catholic Church, Tampa, Florida.

