

BONDINGS

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Blair Questions Papal Gay Policy

BBC News
April 8, 2009

Tony Blair has questioned the Pope's attitude towards homosexuality, arguing that religious leaders must start "rethinking" the issue.

Some older Catholics had "entrenched attitudes", while most congregations were more "liberal-minded", he added.

Mr. Blair, who converted to Catholicism after resigning as UK prime minister in 2007, told the gay magazine *Attitude* that views had to keep "evolving".

But he added that Pope Benedict XVI also stood for "many fantastic things".

Last December the Pope angered gay and lesbian groups by arguing that blurring distinctions between males and females could lead to the "self-destruction" of the human race.

In a letter to bishops in 1986, when he was a cardinal, he wrote: "Although the particular inclination of the homosexual person is not a sin, it is a more or less strong tendency ordered to an intrinsic moral evil, and thus the inclination itself must be seen as an objective disorder."

Asked about this comment, Mr. Blair told *Attitude* that "there is a huge generational difference here.

"And there's probably that same fear amongst religious leaders that if you con-

cede ground on an issue like this, because attitudes and thinking evolve over time, where does that end?"

His career is interesting in that he's attacked in certain quarters for being gay, and yet, at the same time, I don't believe that has altered in any shape or form people's opinion of him

"You'd start having to rethink many, many things. Now, my view is that rethinking is good, so let's carry on rethinking.

"Actually, we need an attitude of mind where rethinking and the concept of evolving attitudes becomes part of the discipline with which you approach your religious faith.

"So some of these things can then result in a very broad area of issues being up for discussion. That's when I understand why religious leaders are very reluctant."

Mr. Blair, who has set up his own faith foundation, was then asked: "Can you foresee a situation where in your lifetime or mine, we would have a pro-gay Pope, for example?"

"I don't know, is the honest answer. I don't know. Look, there are many good and great things the Catholic Church does, and there are many fantas-

tic things this Pope stands for, but I think what is interesting is that if you went into any Catholic church, particularly a well-attended one, on any Sunday here and did a poll of the congregation, you'd be surprised at how liberal-minded people were."

Asked if he meant that the average Catholic congregation speaks for the Catholic Church more than the Pope does, Mr. Blair replied: "Well, I'm not going to say that! On many issues, I think the leaders of the Church and the Church will be in complete agreement.

"But I think on some of these issues, if you went and asked the congregation, I think you'd find that their faith is not to be found in those types of entrenched attitudes.

"If you asked 'what makes you religious?' and 'what does your faith mean to you?' they would immediately go into compassion, solidarity, relieving suffering.

"I would be really surprised if they

went to 'actually, it's to do with believing homosexuality is wrong' or 'it's to do with believing this part of the ritual or doctrine should be done in this particular way'."

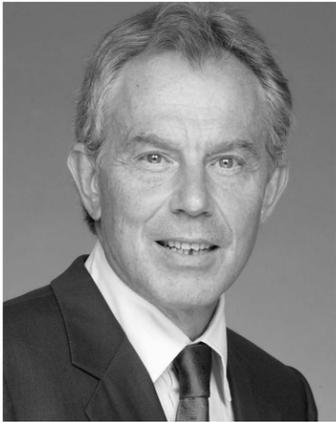
The Catholic Church opposes gay marriage, teaching that, while homosexuality is not sinful, homosexual acts are.

During his interview, Mr. Blair said homophobia in society had receded since the early 1990s and that his government's introduction of civil partnerships had given people a "sense of liberation from prejudice".

He added that Business Secretary Lord Mandelson, one of his closest advisers during his time in British politics, had suffered from anti-gay prejudice "in some quarters".

But Mr. Blair also said: "His [Mandelson's] career is interesting in both senses in that he's attacked in certain quarters for being gay, and yet, at the

BLAIR continued on page 4.



Tony Blair

Group working to overcome sexual orientation bias

Staff Report

Rio Grande Catholic—El Paso
January 30, 2009

Two years ago, a group in El Paso organized *Luminarias* Catholic GLBT to foster respect for the right of homosexuals to be free of prejudice and discrimination, and to encourage their "active role in the Christian community."

"Many gays and lesbians had left the Catholic Church because they did not feel welcome in the Catholic community," said Angelina Lugo, one of the founders of *Luminarias*.

"There were also parents who had raised their sons and daughters as Catholics, yet they too, could not bring their children back to the Catholic community."

Father John Stowe, moderator of the curia for the Diocese of El Paso, said of the *Luminarias* group, "It is admirable that those who are struggling with how to live their Catholic faith or perhaps concerned about their connection to the Church because of their sexual orientation are gathering prayerfully to reflect on their faith, the church and how to live their discipleship faithfully and with integrity."

In Church teaching all persons — heterosexual or homosexual — deserve the same respect. In December, 2008 the Vatican repeated its condemnation of violence and discrimination against homosexuals.

At the same time, the Vatican's representative to the United Nations voiced opposition to a U.N. declaration naming "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" as new categories requiring special human rights protection.

Paulist Father Richard Sparks -- a collaborator in drafting the U.S. bishop's statement "Human Sexuality" -- wrote an article in 1999 citing the bishop's teaching "that homosexual persons, like everyone else, should not suffer from

prejudice against their basic human rights. They have a right to respect, friendship and justice. They should have an active role in the Christian community."

Similarly, Father Sparks wrote in *Catholic Update*, "The same moral principles apply to homosexual and heterosexual persons." Sexual activity is rightly reserved to marriage, and in marriage should both be a unifying factor for the partners and be open to the pro-creation of children.

Lugo said, "Many gays and lesbians, although certain of God's love for them, at times still encounter an unwelcoming and unaccepting environment within some of our Catholic communities."

The group meets once a month at All Saints Parish Hall in central El Paso.

Lugo said *Luminarias* began with four people and has grown with the aid of parents who were trying to bring their sons and daughters back to the Catholic Church.

Attendance at meetings averages around 15 people, she said, but one theological presentation drew close to 75 people.

The goal is to build a welcoming, affirming and worshipping service-oriented gay, lesbian, bisexual and transsexual community "that witnesses to the faith by fostering the reign of God through reconciliation, unity and justice," Lugo said.

The group is still developing, she said, and is open to persons who want to help in its development, or who want "to obtain information, or enjoy the company of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transsexual persons and their families and friends in the Catholic community."

Luminarias, she said, is trying "to help heal the pains caused by prejudice and bigotry, to nurture spirituality, and to grow in our Catholic faith."

U.S. Catholics Lean Left on Social Issues

By Daniel Burke
USA Today
March 31, 2009

American Catholics are more liberal than the general population on social issues like divorce and homosexuality, despite the Catholic Church's longstanding conservatism on both issues, according to a new survey.

Catholics are more likely than non-Catholics to say that homosexual relations, divorce, and heterosexual sex outside wedlock are morally acceptable, according to an analysis by Gallup pollsters released on Monday.

In other areas, Catholics are nearly identical to the population at large. For example, 4 in 10 Catholics say abortion is "morally acceptable," compared to

41% of all Americans. And 63% back embryonic stem cell research, compared to 62% overall.

Catholics who attend church regularly hew more closely to church doctrine, but are still more liberal on many issues than non-Catholic regular church attendees.

Twenty-four percent of Catholics who attend Mass regularly say abortion is morally acceptable, compared to 19% of non-Catholic regular attendees. And more than half of Catholic regular worshippers say the same about embryonic stem cell research, compared to 45% of non-Catholic worshippers.

The Gallup survey was based on interviews with 3,022 Catholics adults conducted in May of 2006, 2007 and 2008. The margin of error is plus or minus 2 percentage points.

Moral Acceptability of Issues, Among Catholics and Non-Catholics

% Morally Acceptable

	Catholics %	Non-Catholics %
Abortion	40	41
Death Penalty	61	68
Sex between unmarried man/woman	67	57
Divorce	71	66
Embryonic stem cell research	63	62
Having a baby outside marriage	61	52
Homosexual Relations	54	45

Source: 2006-2008 Gallup Values and Beliefs polls

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

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

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

New Ways Ministry

4012 29th Street
Mount Rainier, Maryland 20712
(301) 277-5674
Info@NewWaysMinistry.org
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Speech goes on despite bishop's disapproval

By Jon Meyer

WNEP.com

February 17, 2009

A speech on gay marriage, gay rights and diversity went on as planned Tuesday at Misericordia University, a Catholic school in Luzerne County, despite the disapproval of Scranton Bishop Joseph Martino.

Bishop Martino blasted Misericordia Monday, saying it was failing to maintain its Catholic identity by allowing speaker Keith Boykin to appear on campus.

The school allowed the speech and a large crowd showed up to hear it Tuesday afternoon.

Boykin is a nationally recognized author and frequent contributor to network news programs. At Misericordia, he preached acceptance when it comes to sexual orientation and race and talked about how far we've come as a nation.

There was never a mention of Bishop Joseph Martino who voiced his absolute disapproval of this speech.

"I've never had that experience before but I'm not terribly concerned about it," said Boykin after the speech.



photo: Duane Cramer

Keith Boykin

"I think he has his job to do and I have my job to do and I'm happy I'm able to be part of a conversation here."

Martino has spoken out about numerous social issues recently. The latest was his attack on Misericordia's decision to host Boykin. He said the school rejected the essential characteristics of a Catholic College.

The university said it's merely allowing ideas and positions to be explored freely.

"People who have differing ideas, I think, have the right and the responsibility to come together at a college campus to share their ideas and have a dialogue in an intelligent way," added Boykin. Students who went to hear the speech agree.

"When I saw that this morning in the paper, I thought that was kind of ridiculous," said student R.J. Tomascik about the Bishop's reaction.

"I understand we're from a Catholic school and maybe it's not accepted but some of the students here aren't Catholic so their views might be different," added student Ashely Tassone. "I think having a speaker that supports diversity is a great thing."

Misericordia said it is deeply committed to its Catholic mission and said it's not advocating any particular issue. Keith Boykin also had an 8 p.m. speech planned Tuesday at the University.

Bishop's call shocks Misericordia students

By Erin Moody

Times Tribune—Scranton, PA

February 25, 2009

Junior Veronica Nelson's jaw dropped when she heard the news Tuesday afternoon in the Banks Student Center.

"I think that's crazy," she said of Bishop Joseph F. Martino's call for Misericordia University to consider closing the Diversity Institute. "They shouldn't close it."

Bishop Martino sent out a press release Tuesday saying he continues to feel "absolute disapproval" that the Diversity Institute arranged for nationally known gay-rights advocate Keith Boykin to speak at the university last week and said the university should discontinue the program.

"Frankly, he should be ashamed of himself that because a gay African-American came and spoke at Misericordia University, he wants to shut down the Diversity Institute," said sophomore Ebony Amora, president of the Diversity Club.

Many students were shocked at the news, including

junior George Pierce, who said the diversity and spirit of tolerance at Misericordia is part of the reason it's a great school. The university has come a long way in increasing diversity, even since his freshman year, especially in increasing the racial diversity of the teaching staff, he said.

Students are going to challenge Bishop Martino's request that Misericordia consider closing the institute, he said, and he believes they will fight to keep it open.

"I don't think that because it's coming from the bishop we're going to just roll over and accept it," Mr. Pierce said.

Senior Alyson Neely said some of the lessons students have learned about diversity are actually part of the reason students aren't going to simply accept closure of the Diversity Institute, if that were to happen.

"Part of what diversity stands for is standing up for what you think is right," she said. "The thing they have to understand about diversity is it doesn't just teach about homosexuality. They teach about race, culture, all sorts of things and that's what diversity is about."

Misericordia University response

Misericordia.edu/news

February 17, 2009

Misericordia University and its founders and sponsors, the Religious Sisters of Mercy, honor the traditions and core values of the Catholic Church and are committed to its teachings. We understand the Bishop's criticism today about the Diversity Institute's decision to host Mr. Keith Boykin as a guest and lecturer at the institute's annual dinner and as part of Black History Month.

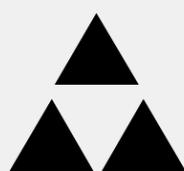
It must be noted, however, that Mr. Boykin's appearance at Misericordia University is not meant to be a forum for advocacy on any singular issue.

Misericordia University is committed deeply to its Catholic mission. Inseparable from that mission is our

identity as an academic institution where ideas and positions are explored critically and freely.

The Diversity Institute at Misericordia University is hosting Mr. Boykin based on his academic credentials, his role as an advisor to former President Clinton, his political commentary on respected news channels such as MSNBC and CNBC, and his ability to provide a glimpse into the historical presidency of Barack Obama, the nation's first African American President. Mr. Boykin and President Obama were classmates at Harvard University.

Misericordia University is an academic institution that welcomes legitimate scholarly discussion among its students, faculty, staff and guests from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds.



Your submissions requested! If your organization, parish, or religious community is doing something to promote dialogue about lesbian/gay issues, send us a photo and short article to include in the next issue of Bondings.

Catholic Church fights gay rights globally

By John Borst
EDGE—Boston, MA
March 5, 2009

The Catholic church has acted to suppress legal, organizational, and personal support for equality across the globe in recent days.

A Brazilian bishop placed a priest under suspension for speaking out against religious discrimination and questioning church doctrines regarding clerical celibacy and a requirement that practicing Catholics avoid the use of contraceptives, reported the conservative religious site *LifeSiteNews.com* on Feb. 27.

The priest in question, Fr. Luiz Couto, told an online news resource, *Congress in Focus*, "I defend the use of the condom as a matter of public health," the site reported.

Couto is also a member of the Brazilian National Congress, the site reported, and spoke on a bill that would outlaw discrimination of gays and lesbians, saying, "We must struggle day by day against prejudice and intolerance," said Couto.

Fr. Couto's remarks were judged to be "intolerable" by the Archbishop, Aldo Pagotto, who presides over Couto's di-

ocese, the article reported.

Archbishop Pagotto declared that, "As the head of the Archdiocese of Paraiaba," he was compelled to suspend the priest "from the use his orders in our ecclesiastical jurisdiction, because of his summary statements, which provoke confusion among the Christian faithful as long as they are not retracted explicitly," adding that Fr. Couto's comments contradict "the doctrinal, ethical, and moral orientations held by the Catholic Church."

The site's article noted that the church has called homosexuality "intrinsically disordered," though not sinful in and of themselves, while any contraceptive measures other than the so-called "rhythm method" are held by the church to be "intrinsically evil," the site said.

However, another church official came to Fr. Couto's defense the site reported.

Congress in Focus quoted Bishop Emeritus Tomas Balduino as saying of Couto, "He is not an isolated voice and has the sincerity to say what he thinks."

The Bishop Emeritus also referred to Fr. Couto as "a man of merit, re-

spected, taken very seriously."

A fellow political figure also spoke up for Couto, the site noted, with the Labor Party's leader hailing Couto as a "tireless defender of the rights of humanity, of citizenship, and of social justice."

Meantime, at Jesuit school Georgetown University, voices were raised in anger that student groups were allowed to make discussions about human sexuality available during "Sex Positive Week," which took place from Feb. 23 to Feb. 28, according to a Mar. 1 article posted at the Global Catholic Network.

The Global Catholic Network referred to the events as promoting "sexual ideologies," including transvestism and "homosexual ideologies."

The timing of the discussions further inflamed those who were incensed by their taking place at the school; "Torn About Porn?," a discussion on erotic material and exploitation, was scheduled for Ash Wednesday, the article said, while a Feb. 28 talk on "Relationships Beyond Monogamy" was delivered, the article said, by "a pornographic filmmaker."

"The focus of this week is to intro-

duce the idea of Sex Positive, and that's really about acceptance of a wide range of desires and sexual expressions as a way of understanding one another," the article quoted Olivia Chitayat, who serves as the political chair of student organization GU Pride.

Continued Chitayat, "People have sex, and if they don't, it still impacts them.

"This is encouraging a dialogue in a way that people don't feel ashamed about engaging in it or not engaging in it."

For the Editor-in-Chief of The Georgetown Academy, David Gregory, however, the program was enough to make him "absolutely furious" because, he said, the talks did "not promote a healthy view toward human relationships.

"I'm so upset there was no one to counter this anything-goes point of view," added Gregory.

A GU professor also accused the school of not teaching students about human sexuality from a Catholic enough perspective, the article reported, quoting comments by Patrick Deneen that appeared at the blog *Crunchy Conservative*.

Declared Deneen, who is a professor of political science, "The university feebly attempts to pretend to be concerned about matters of sexuality, but addresses them in terms of 'health.'

"Students who are required to take two courses in Theology are rarely, if ever, introduced to something like Pope John Paul II's 'Theology of the Body,'" Deneen continued.

"The only orthodoxy on campus is sexual liberation."

Deneen also slammed the school for allowing a Resource Center for GLBT students, without providing a similar resource center to promote "an expressly Catholic teaching on human sexuality."

The message, Deneen said, is that, "Sex, like everything else, is a matter of preference, choice, personal liberty and utilitarian pleasure.

"It is largely consequence-free recreation."

Added Deneen, "We should recognize that the same moral climate that contributed to the devastation of the worldwide economy is the same moral climate that informs 'Sex Positive Week.'"

Meantime, another Jesuit school, Loyola University of Chicago, came in for criticism when its Student Diversity and Cultural Affairs Office showed a film in which a gay black man time-travels into the past and meets up with black American writer Langston Hughes; a third Jesuit school, Seattle University was slammed for hosting "Transgender Awareness Week," the site reported, citing the Cardinal Newman Society, which publicized those events.

The site quoted the president of the Cardinal Newman Society, Patrick J. Reilly, as saying, "These obscene abuses of Catholic values come just as Christians begin a holy season of penance, fasting and almsgiving."

Added Reilly, "Faithful Catholics have good reason to be outraged and heartbroken."

Reilly went on, "That Catholic universities would permit these events on their campuses at any time of the year is unthinkable, but to do so during the holy season of Lent is unconscionable," the article reported.

The quotation of Reilly continued: "Parents and potential students might begin to wonder how these universities can in good conscience consider themselves Catholic when they allow such perverse distortions of Catholic values to take place."

Remembering Fr. Paul Murray

Gay religious figure, author explored intersection of sexuality and spirituality

By Stephen Martz
Washington Blade
February 13, 2009

When I learned the sad news that Father Paul Murray had died, my mind wandered back to our first meeting 30 years ago. In October 1979, I was working for the *Washington Blade* and not giving a lot of thought to religion. But one Saturday morning, after exercising at the YMCA, I stopped outside St. Matthew's Cathedral and listened as the new pope, John Paul II, celebrated Mass.

As I tried to follow the then-unfamiliar liturgy over the loudspeakers that had been set up for the small crowd gathered outside, I was astonished at the emotion that began to sweep over me, which was

followed by an absolute certainty that God was calling me to become Roman Catholic. It was one of the most intense experiences of my life, and intensely unsettling.

Although the Catholic hierarchy's theological assault on gay people was still a few years away, as a young gay man the split between sexuality and spirituality that Christianity has bequeathed to Western civilization was already familiar to me. So, too, was the justifiable hostility of many in the gay community toward organized religion. I knew I was in for a difficult journey.

Eventually I would come to understand that sexuality and spirituality are twins separated at the birth of institutional Christianity. But back then it was new, confusing and a bit scary. I was fortunate

to have Paul Murray as my first guide on that journey. About the same time I was undergoing my conversion, Paul had been assigned as an associate pastor at the Cathedral. For several years, he and another associate, John Gigrich, provided a solid, if under-the-radar (and in the closet) gay presence at the Cathedral.



Rev. Paul Murray

Paul and I began to meet early in 1980 and he helped me understand not only my out-of-the-blue conversion, but also an ongoing series of mystical experiences. He patiently introduced me to the basics of theology and on Aug. 15, 1980, received me into the Roman Catholic Church. Most of all, when I finally blurted out to him that I thought I was being called to become a priest, he did not bristle at my audacity or dismiss it as the over-enthusiasm of a convert. Instead, he listened carefully and encouraged me to pursue the sense of call.

Not every vocational director I contacted was enthralled by the prospect of welcoming the editor of a gay newspaper into theological studies, but eventually I found one that was and I left for Chicago at the beginning of 1984. During the next 25 years, Paul and I talked and e-mailed occasionally. My life moved in unexpected directions, including becoming an Episcopal priest and later a Jungian analyst.

I was impressed whenever we talked about the movement in Paul's life, as he managed to continue his ministry in the Roman Church — although incurring the ire of a couple of cardinals

along the way — and come out publicly as a gay man. Our last conversation came last summer when he called to tell me of the publication of his fine memoir, "Life in Paradox: The Story of a Gay Catholic Priest."

I was so impressed by Paul's book that I included it as part of a workshop I taught a couple of times last Fall — "Those Sexy Episcopalians: Hetero-Sex, Homo-Sex, and the Spiritual Life." I had been meaning to call him and tell him of how well received his book was at my workshops.

Participants were especially inspired by a mystical experience Paul related that took place inside the old Court Jester bar. In his book, Paul describes being "surrounded by light" and "being filled with a sensation of love." He says, this was "the keenest, most powerful experience that I have ever known." He knew he was "in the presence of God" and "knew, in the totality of my being, body and mind, heart and soul, that God lives in and is exquisite, intense love for each person there."

That vision seems to me at the heart of the legacy Paul leaves. It was a personal vision that fueled his self-acceptance as a gay man. Yet it also was a glimpse of God's radical and unconditional love for all people, including gay people. In that sense, it was a rebuke to the leaders of his church. Paul lived at the intersection of sexuality and spirituality, holding together these two elemental forces that institutional religion and its leaders would at best fearfully regulate and at worst sunder.

The vision gave him the courage to be himself in an institution that mistrusts self and individuality and it was increasingly incarnated in his subsequent ministry, especially in the organization, *Among Friends*, which he founded and ran in the 1990s.

May Paul's soul, and the souls of all the departed, dwell eternally in God's exquisite, intense love.

At Loyola University, advocates of same-sex marriage find a voice

By Mary Schmich
Chicago Tribune
March 27, 2009

When John Litchfield, who's 26, enrolled at Loyola University's Chicago School of Law three years ago, he went to the student activities fair looking for the gay and lesbian support group. There wasn't one.

The lack of an official gay group at a Catholic school might not surprise you since the Roman Catholic church deems homosexual behavior a sin. But Litchfield was surprised. He had come to Loyola convinced that he'd be as accepted there as he was by his Catholic grandmother in Flossmoor, the south suburb where he grew up.

"I thought, OK, I know I'm not the only one here," he said when we met on Thursday.

"Where are they?"

He found them. That year, he and a few other gay students formed a group, called OUTlaw. One of the deans signed on as an adviser.

And on Thursday, the flat-screen TVs all over the law school were advertising the group's latest venture: a big symposium on same-sex marriage.

If Loyola were a public school, I might have deleted Litchfield's e-mail about the symposium. Life is heavy with press releases. But the fact that one of Chicago's Catholic institutions was opening its grand "ceremonial courtroom" to same-sex marriage advocates seemed worth some consideration.

"I think this reflects young Catholics in Chicago," said Litchfield, a slender guy with short auburn hair, neatly dressed in slacks, a white shirt and a navy pullover sweater. When I arrived, he'd been reading a news article—new rules for hedge funds—on his iPod.

"People in this age group, 22 to 30," he went on, "are mature, able to think things through."

He doesn't mean that all young Catholics think gays should be allowed to marry. But except for a single instance in his first year—someone ripped the group's posters off a wall in a locker room—he's felt entirely supported at this school where crucifixes hang in the classrooms.

Litchfield wasn't raised Catholic, but—"I know it sounds really schmaltzy"—Loyola feels like family. He points out that it's not just Catholic, it's run by Jesuit priests.

"The Jesuits value diversity," he said.

"They value education and discourse. If you're pro-choice or you're gay, you're someone who can add to the discussion."

And so on Friday there will be a discussion.

Greg Harris, the Chicago state representative who is shepherding a civil-unions bill through the Illinois legislature, will be on the panel. So will lawyers pressing for same-sex marriage in Iowa and California.

The panelists will be there to advo-

cate. Litchfield anticipates students who will come to argue. It's all part of the education.

Litchfield himself isn't ready to be married.

"But when I am," he said, "I want my devotion to this person to be recognized the same way my parents' devotion to each other is recognized. I want my kids to be able to say, 'Yeah, my parents are married.'"

After a while, we walked over to the ceremonial courtroom where the

symposium will be held. The ceilings soared, and Chicago rose across the walls of windows.

Out in the changing, growing city, old buildings crowded next to new ones, and next to buildings so freshly under construction that you couldn't know exactly what they'd look like, only that one day soon they'd be there, and that once they were there, we'd take them for granted.

Just like, I'm betting, same-sex marriage.

Gay-friendly Catholic Colleges and Universities

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



California

Belmont: Notre Dame de Namur University
Goleta: St. Mark's University
Los Angeles: Loyola Marymount University, Mount Saint Mary's College
Moraga: St. Mary's College
Ranchos Palos Verde: Marymount College
San Diego: University of San Diego
San Francisco: University of San Francisco
Santa Clara: Santa Clara University

Colorado

Denver: Regis University

Connecticut

Fairfield: Fairfield University, Sacred Heart University
New Haven: Albertus Magnus College
West Hartford: Saint Joseph College

District of Columbia

Georgetown University, Trinity University

Florida

Miami Gardens: St. Thomas University
Miami Shores: Barry University

Hawaii

Honolulu: Chaminade University

Illinois

Chicago: DePaul University, Loyola University, St. Xavier University
Romeoville: Lewis University

Indiana

Notre Dame: Holy Cross College, St. Mary's College, University of Notre Dame

Iowa

Dubuque: Loras College

Kentucky

Louisville: Spalding University, Bellarmine University

Louisiana

New Orleans: Loyola University

Maryland

Baltimore: College of Notre Dame of Maryland, Loyola College of Maryland

Massachusetts

Boston: Emmanuel College, Boston College
Chestnut Hill: Boston College
Easton: Stonehill College
North Andover: Merrimack College
Weston: Regis College
Worcester: Assumption College, College of the Holy Cross

Michigan

Detroit: University of Detroit Mercy
Grand Rapids: Aquinas College

Minnesota

Collegeville: St. John's University
Duluth: College of St. Scholastica
Minneapolis: College of St. Catherine
St. Joseph: College of Saint Benedict
St. Paul: St. Thomas University
Winona: St. Mary's University of Minnesota

Missouri

Kansas City: Avila University, Rockhurst University
St. Louis: Fontbonne University, St. Louis University

Montana

Helena: Carroll College

Nebraska

Omaha: Creighton University

New Hampshire

Nashua: Rivier College

New Jersey

Caldwell: Caldwell College
Jersey City: St. Peter's College
South Orange: Seton Hall

New York

Albany: College of Saint Rose
Bronx: Fordham University, Manhattan College
Buffalo: Canisius College
Loudonville: Sienna College
New Rochelle: College of New Rochelle, Iona College
Poughkeepsie: Marist College
Riverdale: College of Mount St. Vincent
Rochester: Nazareth College of Rochester, St. John Fisher College
St. Bonaventure: St. Bonaventure University
Sparkill: St. Thomas Aquinas College
Syracuse: LeMoyne College
Queens: St. John's University

Ohio

Cincinnati: Xavier University
Cleveland Heights: John Carroll University
Dayton: University of Dayton
Pepper Pike: Ursuline College
Sylvania: Lourdes College

Oregon

Marylhurst: Marylhurst University
Portland: University of Portland

Pennsylvania

Cresson: Mount Aloysius College
Dallas: Misericordia University
Erie: Mercyhurst College
Greensburg: Seton Hill University
Philadelphia: Chestnut Hill College, LaSalle University, St. Joseph's University
Pittsburgh: Carlow University, Duquesne University
Radnor: Cabrini College
Reading: Alvernia University
Scranton: Marywood University
Villanova: Villanova University

Rhode Island

Newport: Salve Regina University
Providence: Providence College

Texas

Austin: Saint Edward's University
San Antonio: University of the Incarnate Word, Our Lady of the Lake University

Vermont

Colchester: Saint Michael's College

Washington

Lacey: St. Martin's College
Seattle: Seattle University
Spokane: Gonzaga University

West Virginia

Wheeling: Wheeling Jesuit University

Wisconsin

De Pere: St. Norbert College
Madison: Edgewood College
Milwaukee: Alverno College, Cardinal Stritch University, Marquette University

Continued from page 1

Blair questions papal gay policy

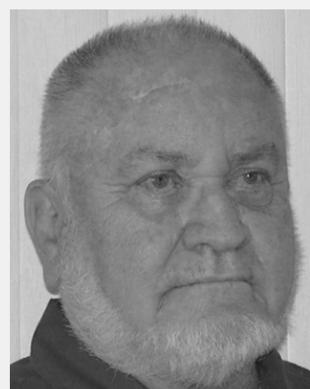
same time, also, I don't believe that has altered in any shape or form people's opinion of him.

"What those comments indicate is that the prejudice is still there, but what they also indicate is that its force is very weak, really. Because people like him or don't like him, but it's not based on his sexuality."

Mr. Blair, who was prime minister from 1997 to 2007, usually refused to discuss his religious views while in office. He converted to Catholicism, a faith he shares with his wife Cherie, in December 2007.

The BBC has contacted the Catholic Church in England and Wales but it has not so far been able to comment on Mr. Blair's remarks.

New Ways Ministry 2009 Bridge Building Award Honoring John J. McNeill



The Board and Staff of New Ways Ministry honor John J. McNeill for his lifetime of theological and pastoral contributions which build bridges between lesbian/gay people and the Catholic Church.

Awards Luncheon

October 4, 2009
1:00 to 5:00 pm

Desmond Tutu Center
180 Tenth Avenue
New York, New York

Contact New Ways Ministry for additional information.
(301) 277-5674 or info@newwaysministry.org

Rebel Australian priest defies sacking

By Daniel Burke
USA Today
March 31, 2009

A rebel Catholic priest sacked for blessing gay couples and allowing women to preach has vowed to defy his archbishop and lead mass on Sunday.

Father Peter Kennedy of St Mary's parish in the east coast city of Brisbane said he expected a "packed church" to show support against his dismissal this week by Archbishop John Bathersby.

"I think he's sacked me unjustly and the community agrees so I'm standing

strong and I don't think he can do anything about that," Kennedy told AFP.

"I don't know what will happen but we will just continue with our liturgy as we normally have it," he said in a telephone interview from the inner-city church where he has preached for 28 years.

Kennedy, 71, agreed he had breached church rules, but strongly defended his actions as in line with the Vatican's call for people to take full and active participation in the liturgy.

"We've taken that seriously and we've welcomed women to preach at our

mass and women to begin the liturgy," he said, describing the Catholic Church as "the biggest boys' club in the world".

Kennedy said he had blessed about 10 gay and lesbian unions during his time at St Mary's.

"We haven't married them but we've conducted a ceremony of blessing," he said. "That's been inclusive of gay and lesbian people but the church is exclusive of gay and lesbian people."

Kennedy said he had been a priest for 44 years and "pretty serious about it," serving as chaplain in hospitals, the navy and prisons before settling at St

Mary's, where the congregation includes poor and homeless people.

"I think we will stay here as long as it takes and in the end the archbishop would be smart for his own sake to let us be here," he said.

"He can say 'you're outside the Catholic church,' but we don't believe that for a moment."

Kennedy said the community had shown strong support for his position, with the weekly collection having shot up from a normal 2,100 dollars (1,365 US dollars) to 5,400 dollars last week.

Catholic Church must rediscover a tolerant God

By Juliette Hughes
Sydney Morning Herald
February 21, 2009

The banner outside St Mary's Catholic Church, South Brisbane, reads: "Everyone has a place in the church. Every person without exception should be able to feel at home and never rejected." These are the words of Pope Benedict XVI himself. But it seems they don't apply to the community of St Mary's.

God is good. Organised religion is often not. To some in the Catholic hierarchy, it doesn't matter how much godly good you do if you don't toe the line. The past 40 years have seen a determined fundamentalist backlash against the openness and reforms of the Second Vatican Coun-

cil that began so hopefully in the 1960s.

Now an entire parish of decent, spiritual people can be threatened with expulsion from the faith because some bigot has protested to Rome that they are, horror of horrors, too tolerant and accepting of diversity... In August last year, the Archbishop of Brisbane, John Bathersby, wrote a letter to Peter Kennedy, St Mary's parish priest. In it he objected to the kind of prayers said at the parish's liturgies and to the style of clothing worn by Father Kennedy at Mass (Kennedy wears ordinary clothes much of the time).

It wasn't only about clothes. The parish was adapting some prayers, allowing divorced and gay people to receive the Eucharist and letting groups

such as a Buddhist group and a gay choir use the church when it wasn't in use for Catholic celebrations. According to the letter, this was enough to put them outside the Catholic Church.

"The question for me," the archbishop wrote, "is not so much whether St Mary's should be closed down, but whether St Mary's will close itself down by practices that separate it from communion with the Roman Catholic Church."

Now Kennedy has been sacked and yesterday a new, Vatican-approved parish priest was shoehorned into the place. Kennedy has said that he intends to offer the 9am Mass today, and many are expected to attend.

In the meantime, the Pope is bat-

tlung on another front: the public relations disaster he incurred when he rescinded the excommunication of four dissident hyper-conservative bishops. These chaps, so much more acceptable to the Vatican than the gentle people of St Mary's, belong to the Society of St Pius X. The SSPX adheres to a form of liturgy that was rejected by the Second Vatican Council as anti-Semitic: it includes a disgraceful Good Friday prayer for the conversion of "the perfidious Jews".

Unfortunately, Richard Williamson, one of the four bishops, went further, stating on Swedish television that no more than 300,000 Jews perished under the Nazis, and that he did not believe there were gas chambers in Auschwitz.

It is baffling that the Vatican machinery that can sniff out a recalcitrant liberal in Queensland did not pick this up. For those who adhere to notions of papal infallibility, it wasn't a good look: either the Pope didn't know and blundered into this, or he knew and didn't care until the international fuss. In damage control, the Pope stated that Holocaust denial was "intolerable". And then he had to go and threaten to excommunicate Williamson again.

Now that puts the excommunicated Kennedy and the St Mary's folk in some unpleasant company. But we have to realise that to the mindset of fundamentalists, all deviation from the party line is intolerable, so Holocaust denial is only as bad to them as some other things that wouldn't bother you or me.

Let's see: allowing women to preside at the Eucharist and preach homilies; that'll get you into heaps of strife. Bless the loving union of gay or divorced couples? Ouch. Wear ordinary clothes to celebrate Mass? That's it, you've done it now: the vestment police are at your door.

Fundamentalists are so afraid of freedom. The deity they believe in is one whose morals are like any sociopathic despot's: toe its line, obey, don't commit a thought-crime or it will chuck you into a lake of fire for all eternity. Do these worshippers ever think how they would judge a human who was such a sadistic tyrant as this nightmarish torturer-god?

But for the majority of Catholics (only 13 per cent of us even bother to go to church these days), their God does not sit there devising horrible punishments and scourging the unbeliever, but is infinitely, unconditionally loving and kind. That's the God I can believe in. The one who understands failure, suffering and frailty. I hope the hierarchy of my church can rediscover the God of all creation, with the gentle son of a humble Jewish woman as our guide.

Proudly gay and proudly Catholic

By Martin Pendergast
guardian.co.uk—London
April 10, 2009

Two days after the 1999 Soho pub bomb, monthly Masses were launched at a Catholic convent in London, welcoming lesbian and gay Catholics, their parents and families. Unable to find a central London Catholic church, after the convent's closure, LGBT Catholics found hospitality at Soho's Anglican parish church. Increasing numbers resulted in the Masses being held twice a month. While the Diocese of Westminster might have believed that the group would fade away, it recognised that real pastoral needs were being met, converts to Catholicism were being made, and a vibrant community could offer something to the local Church. In March 2007, Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor invited the Soho Masses LGBT community, in contact with around 300 people overall, to transfer its services to one of Soho's Catholic parishes.

A positive grass-roots story, but the Church worldwide still fails to dialogue formally with its LGBT members. Official statements reflect harsh judgments, uninformed either by increasing knowledge about human sexual diversity, or Catholic theological pluralism. The pastoral practice on the ground varies enormously. LGBT pastoral ministries operate with differing degrees of hierarchical support. The Catholic Church reflects the kind of divisions seen in the Anglican Communion over the issue of homosexuality, with some Bishops formally recognising only those groups which advocate celibacy.

Those viewing Catholicism from afar can be forgiven for assuming that the Church has held its views on homosexual-

ity for centuries. In fact, it only began to detail this teaching in a 1976 Declaration on Sexual Ethics, through the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, then headed by the present Pope. This coined an untraditional Catholic term, "intrinsic disorder" to describe homosexuality, applying an intricate philosophical term to a complex human and theological reality.

Successive Roman documents have embroidered this offensive and confusing vocabulary to the present day. The Vatican becomes more and more isolated from other parts of the Church in theological reflection and pastoral practice. It has ratcheted up its rhetoric, forcing Bishops to defend the indefensible, whether with regard to admission of candidates to seminaries or religious communities, same-sex marriage and civil unions, or same-sex couples ability to foster or adopt children.

Roman Catholic teaching on homosexuality highlights some of Catholicism's best kept secrets: the primacy of a fully informed personal conscience, the hierarchy of truths, and the development of doctrine. The Catholic Bishops of England & Wales rose to these challenges when they authorised the publication of "An Introduction to the Pastoral Care of Homosexual People" in 1979.

These guidelines stayed faithful to Catholic teaching that sexual activity is only admissible within marriage, but stated that both homosexual orientation and heterosexual orientations are morally neutral. This underscores the Vatican position that the orientation in itself is not sinful, but moral decisions relate to how that orientation is expressed

sexually. Whereas the Vatican would go no further in the discussion, the local Pastoral Care guidelines encouraged clergy to adopt a more nuanced approach when faced with two people in a permanent, faithful relationship who choose to exercise their rights of conscience. The Vatican was not pleased with this liberal interpretation.

Recognising that LGBT Catholics have the same rights to the sacraments as straight Catholics and should not be automatically excluded, the guidelines also strongly denounced prejudice and discrimination: "As a group that has suffered more than its share of oppression and contempt, the homosexual community has a particular claim upon the concern of the Church." The late Cardinal Hume went further, trying to interpret in acceptable language the Vatican's discordant tones: "Homophobia should have no place among Catholics. Catholic teaching on homosexuality is not founded on, and can never be used to justify homophobic attitudes."

The Vatican has made it clear that its tenets on homosexuality are not first level in the order of Catholic teachings. As such, Catholics hear what the Church's teaching authority has to say, but neither the Vatican nor the Pope is an oracle, in the presence of which Catholics cast aside human capacity, and fall to their knees in irrational submission. Third level Catholic teachings, such as those dealing with human sexuality, have to be discerned in the light of faith-filled experience and human knowledge, reflected upon in that deep place of conscience, where the believer can know God, and then received as good and true.

Push is on for same-sex celibacy

Raleigh diocese directs ministry to gays, lesbians

By Yonat Shimron

The News & Observer—Raleigh, NC
February 15, 2009

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Raleigh is starting a new ministry to gays and lesbians. Yet those who have embraced that identity may not like it.

The ministry is called Courage, and its aim, in the words of its executive director, is to "assist men and women who are afflicted with the thorn of same-sex attraction." A 29-year-old international ministry with about 90 U.S. chapters, the Courage Apostolate will serve as a kind of support group -- like Alcoholics Anonymous -- for men and women who want to remain celibate.

The move is part of a more aggressive push by the dioceses of Raleigh and Charlotte to march in step with the Vatican on the issue of homosexuality. On Feb. 24, the bishops of both dioceses will hold a news conference at the legislature to announce their support for an amendment to the state's constitution defining marriage as a union of a man and a woman. The effort is intended to quash the possibility of same-sex marriage, should a court find North Carolina's law prohibiting gay unions unconstitutional.

Such a bill has been introduced before, but has not drawn support from the leading Democrats who control the state

House and Senate and has stalled in committee. With Democrats still in command, the bill is unlikely to gain much support this time.

Of course, homosexuality is a hugely divisive issue in many Christian denominations. The ordination of a gay bishop by the Episcopal Church six years ago led several churches and dioceses to bolt from the denomination. Presbyterians, Lutherans and Methodists are also battling how much standing to give gays and lesbians.

The Catholic Church maintains that same-sex attraction is not sinful but that homosexual sex is. That has given gays and lesbians wide latitude in finding their place within the Roman Catholic Church. Nationally, there are several gay and lesbian ministries -- some that accept gays and lesbians as they are, others like Courage that view homosexuality as a problem to be overcome.

Though retired Raleigh Bishop F. Joseph Gossman chose not to wade into

this thorny thicket, his successor, Bishop Michael Burbidge, is more eager to conform to the Vatican line.

The late Pope John Paul II endorsed the work of Courage. More recently, Pope Benedict XVI reiterated the implacable opposition of the church to homosexuality.

The Vatican refused to back a United Nations resolution urging the banning of criminal penalties against homosexuality. Last year the Vatican urged seminaries to enlist the aid of psychologists in screening candidates for homosexuality and other "psychic disturbances."

The Rev. James Fukes, pastor of St. Julia Catholic Church in

Siler City, who will serve as the spiritual director for Courage, said the new ministry was added at the request of parishioners.

"There have been some people who asked for some ministry by the Catholic Church to help them deal with the challenges and difficulties they have and remain close to God," he said.

Next month, the Rev. Paul Check,

"For example, many men with same sex attraction lack hand-eye coordination and as a result were spurned or the subject of jokes by their fathers or the neighborhood boys because they could not play certain sports easily."

-Rev. Paul Check,
National Director, *Courage*

Book Review

McNeill on Sex as God Intended

By Rev. Paul K. Thomas

John McNeill, gay priest and psychotherapist, has been a marvelous spokesperson on religious LGBT issues for many fruitful years. In the 1970's he published his first groundbreaking work, *The Church and the Homosexual*, advocating new approaches to the morality of same-gender relationships. His latest controversial book, *Sex As God Intended*, reflects upon human sexuality, whether homo or hetero, "as a form of play" purposed thus by the Creator from the beginning. In other words, God envisioned genital relations not just in procreative terms but "as a source of pleasure, joy, and love," radically distinct from the Church's own mostly negative views of sex throughout history.

The author, as in previous publications, shines new light on God's sexual intent as subtly revealed within both the Hebrew and Christian Testaments (which McNeill still refers to as "Old" and "New"). Through careful scholarly exegesis he brings out sex-positive aspects in the book of *Genesis* and especially in the enchanting *Song of Songs*. He tentatively yet convincingly reclaims the latter "as originally a gay love song" whose true meaning was suppressed in a later unenlightened age.

McNeill recaps his earlier approach

to the destruction of Sodom as an issue of gross inhospitality rather than as a matter of deviant sexuality. He also briefly describes the same-gender orientation of such biblical figures as David/Jonathan, Ruth/Naomi, John "the beloved," Lazarus "the friend," the Roman centurion, and the Ethiopian eunuch.

Throughout his rather brief text, from the **Introduction** (pp. 19-22) to the **Conclusion** (pp. 131-139), the writer stresses over and again our need "to recover and affirm the feminine," so as to regain "the sex-positive message revealed by God" in the bible, through "the balancing of the masculine and feminine" within ourselves. Unfortunately, however, he somewhat undermines his thesis by repeatedly employ-

ing the term "gay" in its generic sense subsuming the female (like the sexist word "men" when used to include women), and he expresses strong disagreement on one issue with Catholic lesbian theologian Mary Hunt in her feminist concordance with Rosemary Ruether.

Perhaps most importantly McNeill insists that the *lived* experience

of LGBT people must guide the Church in its pastoral approach to homosexuality. In fact, by including a final provi-

**Sex as God Intended:
A Reflection
on Human Sexuality as Play**
By John J. McNeill
Lethe Press, 268 pp, \$20

dential chapter on marriage, he rightly posits that lesbian and gay conjugal unions, based primarily on the equality of committed partners, should

serve as an ideal model for the renewal of wedded heterosexual relationships! McNeill adds an **Epilogue** disparaging the Vatican's use of the term "objective disorder" and an **Appendix** with his letter to U.S. bishops in 2000 and a speech to Dignity/Chicago in 2005. The volume concludes with a nearly 100-page **Festschrift**, a collection of congratulatory essays by thirteen scholars, including Sr. Jeannine Gramick, who celebrate his life and work.

The book has no footnotes, bibliography, or index, although throughout McNeill's text there are many notable quotations (used therein without helpful page citations). Some may criticize his arguments as rather simplistic at times, also often weakly organized, and even generally lacking in originality. But, regardless of any such observations, every reader can benefit from his wonderful insights with reference to many current controversial issues. Moreover, despite some poor editing and a few egregious errors, he expresses his views succinctly and thoughtfully, even humorously. All of us are certainly indebted to his supportive reflections and his courageous stance on our behalf!

Fr. Paul Thomas is board chair of *New Ways Ministry* and *archivist emeritus of the Archdiocese of Baltimore*.

national director of Courage, will lead a workshop in Raleigh for priests and lay leaders. A priest in the Diocese of Bridgeport, Conn., Check has written widely on homosexuality, including one article in which he suggests that gay men come from broken homes or grew up alienated from their fathers and over-protected by their mothers.

"For example, many men with same sex attraction lack hand-eye coordination and as a result were spurned or the subject of jokes by their fathers or the neighborhood boys because they could not play certain sports easily," Check wrote in the St. Austin Review's November-December 2008 edition.

Church, SF Archbishop at odds over gay play

By Rhiza Dizon
The Advocate
March 10, 2009

A local Catholic school's production of *Be Still and Know*, a play that details the adolescent struggles of teenagers in conflict with their sexual identity and Christian faith, was stopped by San Francisco archbishop George Niederauer before its scheduled premiere at the Most Holy Redeemer Church in the city's Castro district.

The production by Sacred Heart Preparatory high school, based on the 2007 novel *The God Box*, was personally adapted by the school's drama director, John Loschman.

Niederauer was a staunch supporter of Prop. 8 -- his website released a statement defending his diocese's role in passing the ballot initiative, stating, "Religious leaders in America have the constitutional right to speak out on issues of public policy. Catholic bishops, specifically, also have a responsibility to teach the faith, and our beliefs about marriage and family are part of this faith."

However, Most Holy Redeemer, where the play was to be performed, is an inclusive Catholic church, stating on its website that the church welcomes "Catholics, as well as those people interested in learning about the Catholic experience -- regardless of their background, gender, race, social status, gender identity, or sexual orientation."

The church's pastor, Fr. Steve Meriwether, also includes his support in his opening welcome letter, stating, "You will find the good people of our parish old, young, married, gay, lesbian, transgender, affluent, homeless, blue-collar, converts, cradle Catholics, radical, traditional, questioning, fervent."

The church complied with the archbishop's order without protest, though the production was rumored to have been moved to the University of San Francisco later that day.



**Alabama**

Montgomery: St. Bede

Arizona

Mesa: Christ the King
Scottsdale: Franciscan Renewal Center
Tucson: St. Cyril of Alexandria,
SS. Peter and Paul, St. Pius X,
Our Mother of Sorrows, St. Odilia

California

Berkeley: Holy Spirit Parish
Burney: St. Francis of Assisi
Carlsbad: St. Patrick
Claremont: Our Lady of the Assumption
El Cajon: St. Luke
Escondido: St. Timothy
Fremont: St. Joseph - Mission San Jose
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. Paul the Apostle
North Hollywood: Blessed Sacrament,
St. Jane Frances de Chantal, St. Patrick
Oakland: Our Lady of Lourdes
Oceanside: St. Thomas More
Orange: Holy Family Cathedral, Koinoia
Pleasanton: Catholic Community of
Pleasanton
Sacramento: St. Francis of Assisi
San Carlos: St. Charles
San Diego: Ascension, San Rafael,
St. Jude Shrine
San Francisco: Most Holy Redeemer,
Old St. Mary Cathedral, St. Agnes,
St. Dominic
San Jose: St. Julie Billiart,
St. Martin of Tours (Emmaus Community)
San Luis Obispo: Old Mission of
San Luis Obispo
San Rafael: Church of San Rafael &
Mission San Rafael Archangel
Santa Clara: GALA
Santa Cruz: Holy Cross
Santa Monica: St. Monica
Spring Valley: Santa Sophia
Walnut Creek: St. John Vianney
West Hollywood: St. Ambrose, St. Victor
Whittier: St. Mary of the Assumption

Colorado

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

Connecticut

Hartford: St. Patrick-St. Anthony

District of Columbia

Holy Trinity, St. Aloysius,
St. Matthew Cathedral

Florida

Cocoa Beach: Our Savior
Ft. Lauderdale: St. Anthony, St. Maurice
Naples: St. John the Evangelist
St. Petersburg: Holy Cross
Tampa: Franciscan Center
Winter Haven: St. Matthew

Georgia

Atlanta: Shrine of the Immaculate
Conception

Illinois

Berwyn: St. Mary of the Celle
Chicago: Immaculate Conception,
St. Clement, St. Gertrude, St. Gregory,
St. Peter, St. Sylvester, St. Teresa of Avila,
St. Thomas the Apostle

Gay-friendly Catholic Parishes

Below is a partial list of known "gay-friendly" Catholic parishes. Thank you for helping us add to this growing list! If you are aware of such a parish that is known as welcoming to lesbian/gay Catholics as members and active parishioners, please let us know. Tell us if this welcome is because of a support program, spirituality group, mission statement, participation in gay community events, or involvement with parents.

Clarendon Hills: Notre Dame
Country Club Hills: St. Emeric
Evanston: St. Nicholas
Morton Grove: St. Martha
Oak Park: Ascension, St. Catherine of
Sienna-St. Lucy
Schaumburg: St. Marcelline

Indiana

Evansville: St. Mary
Indianapolis: St. Thomas Aquinas

Iowa

Iowa City: St. Thomas More

Kentucky

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

Maine

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

Maryland

Baltimore: Corpus Christi, St. Francis
of Assisi, St. Matthew, St. Philip and
James, 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
Newton: St. Ignatius
Springfield: Sacred Heart
Worcester: Holy Cross College

Michigan

Ann Arbor: St. Mary Student Parish
Detroit: St. Leo, Christ the King
Kalamazoo: Lambda Catholics
St. Ignace: St. Ignatius Loyola

Minnesota

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

Missouri

Kansas City: Guardian Angels,
St. Francis Xavier, St. James
St. Louis: St. Cronan, St. Margaret of
Scotland, St. Pius V

Montana

Billings: Holy Rosary

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

Clifton: St. Brendan
Lawrenceville: St. Ann
Long Beach Island: St. Francis of Assisi
Trenton Falls: St. Anselm

New Mexico

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

New York

Baldwinsville: St. Augustine
Bellmore: St. Barnabas the Apostle
Bellport: Mary Immaculate
Brooklyn: St. Andrew the Apostle,
St. Boniface, St. Athanasius, St. Augustine
Deer Park: Ss. Cyril and Methodius
East Islip: St. Mary
Elmira: St. Mary
Fairport: Church of the Assumption
Henrietta: Good Shepherd
Manhattan: Holy Name of Jesus,
St. Francis Xavier, St. Paul the Apostle
Melville: St. Elizabeth
Rochester: Blessed Sacrament,
St. John the Evangelist (Humboldt St.),
St. Mary, St. Monica

Syracuse: St. Andrew the Apostle, St. Lucy
Utica: St. Francis DeSales
Wantagh: St. Frances de Chantal
Westbury: St. Brigid

North Carolina

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

Ohio

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

Oregon

Central Point: Shepherd of the Valley
Portland: Journey and Koinonia Catholic
Community, St. Andrew, St. Phillip Neri,
St. Vincent dePaul

Pennsylvania

Huntingdon: Most Holy Trinity
Philadelphia: Old St. Joseph, Old St. Mary,
St. John the Evangelist, St. Vincent DePaul
York: St. Joseph

Rhode Island

Providence: St. Francis Chapel

Wickford: St. Bernard

Tennessee

Memphis: Cathedral of the Immaculate
Conception

Texas

Colleyville: Good Shepherd
Dallas: Holy Trinity
Plano: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

Virginia

Arlington: Our Lady Queen of Peace
Richmond: Cathedral of the Sacred Heart,
Sacred Heart Parish
Roanoke: St. Gerard
Virginia Beach: St. Nicholas

Washington

Pullman: Sacred Heart
Seattle: St. Benedict, Prince of Peace
Newman Center
Tacoma: St. Leo

Wisconsin

Madison: Our Lady Queen of Peace, St.
Benedict Center Sunday Assembly
Menomonee Falls: Good Shepherd
Milwaukee: Good Shepherd, Prince of Peace,
Trinity-Guadalupe

Canada

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

England

London: Our Lady of the
Assumption & St. Gregory

New Ways Ministry

Upcoming Programs

June 22-24, 2009—Philadelphia area

"Understanding Jesus: The Challenge of Christology Today"

Facilitated by Rev. Diarmuid O'Murchu

July 26-31, 2009—Baltimore area

"Word/Flesh/Spirit: An Exploration of Sexuality,
Intimacy, and Celibacy"

Facilitated by Cornelius Hubbuch, CFX, and John Perito, MD

August 7-9, 2009—Southern Louisiana area

"Next Steps: Developing Catholic Lesbian/Gay Ministry"

Facilitated by Francis DeBernardo

September 11-13, 2009—Baltimore area

"War and the Soul"

Facilitated by Richard Rohr, OFM

October 4, 2009—New York, New York

Bridge Building Award Luncheon

Honoring John J. McNeill

October 9-11, 2009—Syracuse, NY area

"Transformed into the Compassion of Christ"

Facilitated by Michael Crosby, OFM Cap

For more information, visit www.NewWaysMinistry.org,
email info@newwaysministry.org,
or call the NWM office at 301-277-5674.



Our journey to holy union

By **Kate Childs Graham**
National Catholic Reporter
December 4, 2008

About a month before Proposition 8 passed in California Nov. 4, taking away an array of human rights, and the U.S. bishops decided to team up with the Knights of Columbus to make the "preservation of marriage" one of its key focuses for the next five years, my partner, Ariana, and I made our commitment to one another.

Our marriage was not "legal" by terms of the District of Columbia or the institutional Catholic church. Yet, in our eyes and in the eyes of our friends and family, our union is indeed holy.

As society has not yet defined the norms for our relationship the way it has for heterosexual couples, we had the freedom to be the architects of our own journey. And so, when Ariana and I initially realized that we were building a lifelong partnership, we had the opportunity to choose whether or not we needed or wanted a ceremony to mark our commitment.

After many discussions, we decided that not only did we want to have a wedding ceremony in order to express our love and commitment to each other in the presence of the Creator, our friends and our family, but we also wanted to take the year before the ritual to traverse through our version of a Pre-Cana marriage preparation program.

Our Pre-Cana was quite different from the Pre-Cana courses that many heterosexual couples go through kicking and screaming. Diann Neu, co-founder and co-director of the Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Religion (WATER), walked with us through the journey.

She challenged us with questions we had not thought to ask or were afraid to ask. We discussed everything: finances, children, fair fighting, spirituality and so on. We tackled the last-name debacle and settled on a combination of our mothers' maiden names. We came to new levels of understanding -- and, sometimes, new levels of misunderstanding.

After we had journeyed through several months of our Pre-Cana, realizing that the work of communication would



never be finished, we turned our focus to our ceremony. Diann helped us understand that we were the priests of our wedding. With great care, we crafted every moment of the ceremony to reflect a delicate balance of Ariana's Unitarian Universalist tradition and my Catholic faith tradition.

We each chose a reading -- my pick

was from the Book of Ruth, while her choice was Alice Walker's "While Love Is Unfashionable." The songs -- "Morning Has Broken," "Water Is Wide" and "Swimming to the Other Side" -- each signified an important aspect of our relationship. With Diann's expertise, we even managed to create a beautiful eucharistic prayer that was inclusive of our faiths and the faiths of all who celebrated with us.

In the end, we had a ceremony that was truly *us*.

The year of preparation flew by and before we knew it our friends and family were arriving from all over the world for the affair. The ceremony, held at a local Swedenborgian church, was everything we had imagined it would be from the moment our families lit the candles to our tear-filled exchange of vows to the closing prayer when our family and friends raised their hands to bless us.

And, of course, no wedding would be complete without a party to follow. We led the parade of guests to a small restaurant around the corner for dinner. At the reception, folks shared songs and poetry, laughter and tears. From the deep holiness of the ceremony to the lighthearted humor and love of the reception, Ariana and I both felt blessed to

have had the opportunity to marry one another surrounded by those closest to us.

In the days following our holy union, fully sated by our love and the love of our community, we did not necessarily feel any change in our relationship. For us, our marriage was and is about the journey, and the ceremony was one marker along the path. However, our story is just one of many. And surely, other stories will vary greatly, as what it means to be family comes in a multitude of shapes and sizes. Still, common themes will certainly arise -- love, commitment, passion, devotion and so on.

Indeed, this past month has offered many challenges to the LGBTQ community and society at large. The institutional Catholic church and the state cannot take away our commitment to each other. However, as my legal right to marriage and family has been called into question, I have felt that attack on my life and the lives of my friends deeply.

My only hope is that these stumbling blocks on the road to justice will help open the dialogue, compel more people to tell their stories of love, and bring our church and our world closer to a discipleship of equals.

Catholics argue for right to refuse goods, services

By **Daniela Altimari**
Hartford Courant
March 7, 2009

No one is arguing that a Catholic priest should have to perform a gay marriage.

But the church says that doesn't go far enough.

The Connecticut Catholic Conference is asking lawmakers to expand the category of those who don't have to comply with the state's new same-sex marriage law if their religion holds that such unions are wrong.

People such as florists, wedding photographers and justices of the peace.

"Same-sex couples have their liberties protected fully. Religious people are wondering, 'How is this going to affect me?'" said David Reynolds, lobbyist for the Catholic Church.

Reynolds raised his concerns Friday as the legislature's judiciary committee considered a bill to ensure that existing statutes comport with the landmark state Supreme Court ruling legalizing same-sex marriage.

"A situation has been created ... where state policy seriously conflicts with the religious beliefs of a large number of the citizens of the state," Reynolds said. He cited examples in other states where businesspeople have faced legal action because they declined, on religious grounds, to provide goods or services to same-sex couples.

The judiciary committee hearing is likely the final chance opponents will have to put up obstacles to gay marriage. But several lawmakers oppose extending the religious exemption. Sen. John Kissel is Catholic and has long shared his church's opposition to gay marriage.

"I've been with you guys all along," said Kissel, a Republican from Enfield. But, "we're at a fork in the road and I have to let go of your hand."

A law preventing a Catholic caterer from serving guests at a same-sex marriage could also be used by a Protestant baker who doesn't want to sell a cake to a Catholic father for his son's first communion, Kissel said. "It could just as easily turn against each and every Catholic in the state of Connecticut."

In October, the state Supreme Court ruled that gay and lesbian couples had the right to marry and, the following month, Connecticut became the second state to legally recognize same-sex marriage. The legislature is now codifying the court's decision.

"I understand the feelings of the church, they don't like this decision," said Kissel, a ranking member of the committee. The battle against gay marriage was "a good fight, fought to the end. But that's the end of the road. The Supreme Court is the highest court in the land. They've made a determination; now we have to sort of live with that."

The state's civil union law, ruled unconstitutional by the court, is set to expire in October 2010. At that time, all civil unions will be automatically converted to marriages.

Peter Wolfgang, executive director of the Family Institute of Connecticut, dismissed the idea that lawmakers are merely conducting a bit of legislative housekeeping. "The negative effect of same-sex marriage on religious liberty and rights of conscience involve far more than the question of whether clergy will be forced to perform same-sex weddings," Wolfgang said in testimony submitted to the committee.

But for supporters of gay marriage, who have pressed their case at the legislature for more than a decade, the hearing had a celebratory flavor...

At one point, committee co-Chairman Rep. Michael Lawlor congratulated Stanback on her wedding -- she and longtime partner Charlotte Kinlock recently eloped -- and the audience burst into applause.

"Marriage equality is the law in Connecticut and this bill won't make it any more legal," Stanback said. But in addition to making sure that the statutes line up with the court's decision, the bill would eliminate language in the state's 1991 gay rights act that many gays and lesbians consider archaic and demeaning...

Said Stanback: "That language was insulting to many of us when it was added 18 years ago and today it is simply unacceptable. ... Words matter, and the only thing [those] words ... do is demean gay people and our families."

Florists can't discriminate against gay couples

Editorial
Hartford Courant
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The Connecticut Catholic Conference is overreacting to a bill that would update statutes to conform with the state Supreme Court's landmark 2008 decision legalizing same-sex marriage.

The conference, the lobbying arm of Catholic bishops, wants an exemption for florists, justices of the peace, photographers and others who do weddings but object to same-sex marriage on religious grounds.

This proposal has no place in a pluralistic society. Imagine Jewish businesses refusing to serve Arabs or Muslims or conservatives blacklisting liberal customers.

Under the law, clergy can't be forced to perform gay marriages. They can officiate if they want to, but the law gives them a pass in a nod to the principle of separation of church and state. Justices of the peace, however, are secular officials

sworn to uphold earthly laws.

Wedding vendors must also comply with the law of the land -- just as the restaurants and hotels that refused service to blacks had to comply when the Civil Rights Act was made law in 1964.

It's doubtful that Connecticut would become a battleground over the right of florists and photographers and wedding halls to boycott same-sex marriage business. It's the rare florist and photographer who turns away a client these days. And gay couples are unlikely to take their business to hostile vendors anyway.

If they do, however, and the parties can't work out a mutually respectful accommodation, the law is on the couples' side.

In a battle between the First Amendment's guarantee of religious freedom and the 14th Amendment's guarantee of civil rights, the latter, with its stirring pledge of "equal protection of the laws," must prevail.