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Vatican Campaign Rejects Gay Marriage *Support of Same-Sex Unions Called 'Gravely Immoral'*

The Associated Press

The Baltimore Sun

July 31, 2003

VATICAN CITY – The Vatican launched a global campaign against gay marriages today, warning Catholic politicians that support of same-sex unions was “gravely immoral” and urging non-Catholics to join the offensive.

The Vatican’s orthodoxy watchdog, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, issued a 12-page set of guidelines with the approval of Pope John Paul II in a bid to stem the increase in laws granting legal rights to homosexual unions in Europe and North America. “There are absolutely no grounds for consider-

ing homosexual unions to be in any way similar or even remotely analogous to God’s plan for marriage and family,” the document said. “Marriage is holy, while homosexual acts go against the natural moral law.”

The Associated Press was first to report on the outline of the plan in a story Monday. The issue is particularly charged in the United States, where some in Congress have proposed a constitutional ban on gay marriage to counter state laws granting legal recognition to same-sex unions.

President Bush said Wednesday that marriage was defined strictly as a union between a man and a woman and said he wants to “codify that one way or the other.”

The Vatican document, “Considerations

Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons,” sets out a plan for politicians when confronted with proposed legislation granting homosexual couples the same rights as married heterosexuals.

It also comes out strongly against allowing gay couples to adopt, saying children raised by same-sex parents face developmental “obstacles” because they are deprived of having either a mother or a father.

“Allowing children to be adopted by persons living in such unions would actually mean doing violence to these children,” it said.

It said gay adoptions contradicted the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, which holds that the best interests of the child are paramount.

The document also says Catholic politicians have a “moral duty” to publicly oppose laws granting recognition to homosexual unions and to vote against them.

If the laws are already on the books, politicians must speak out against them and work to repeal them. “To vote in favor of a law so harmful to the common good is gravely immoral,” the document said.

The Vatican said its guidelines were not only intended for Catholic lawmakers but for non-Christians and everyone “committed to promoting and defending the common good of society” since the issue concerned natural moral law, not just Church doctrine. The document comes after an appeals court in



St. Peter's, Rome

Canada ruled in June that the country’s definition of marriage as only between a man and a woman is unconstitutional, paving the way for legalized gay unions.

Vermont and some European nations – including Germany, France, Sweden and Denmark – have “civil union” laws giving same-sex couples the rights and responsibilities of marriage.

The document doesn’t contain any new Church teachings on the issue, repeating much of the Vatican’s previous comments on homosexuality and marriage, which it defines as a sacred union between man and woman designed to create new human life.

It said homosexuals shouldn’t be discriminated against, but said denying gay couples the rights afforded in traditional marriages isn’t discrimination.

Monsignor Angel Rodriguez Luno, a professor at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, noted in a statement released by the Vatican that homosexual relationships, like other human relationships, need not be legally recognized.

Basic friendship, for example, isn’t defined

Continued on page 5

Catholic Bishop Shows Support for Gays

Worcester Sentinel-Register

Boston, MA

October 23, 2003

BOSTON, Massachusetts (AP) – Concerned about children with gay parents, a Roman Catholic bishop said Thursday that he and other church leaders from Massachusetts would support extending some benefits to same-sex couples – though they are strongly opposed to gay marriage.

Worcester Bishop Daniel P. Reilly told a state legislative committee that the issue of benefits should be dealt with separately from same-sex unions.

Massachusetts lawmakers are considering a bill that would legalize gay marriage. Reilly spoke at a hearing on behalf of the leaders of the four Massachusetts dioceses, including Archbishop Sean O’Malley of Boston.

“If the goal is to look at individual benefits and determine who should be eligible beyond spouses, then we will join the discussion,” Reilly told the Judiciary Committee.

The Rev. Christopher Coyne, spokesman for O’Malley, said the church is specifically concerned about addressing benefits that affect children in gay families, such as education and health. Extending these benefits would not in any way contradict the Catholic Church’s commitment to matrimony, he said.

“I think what’s actually being said is that the benefits that are necessary for the protection of children and families don’t necessarily involve any kind of a redefinition of relationship or marital status,” Coyne said.

Reilly told reporters after the hearing that the bill under consideration is a bad solution to a problem that could be solved through simply extending certain benefits, such as hospital visitation, bereavements rights and health insurance, to gay couples.

“Just to put the title of marriage on it, I think that’s a wrong way to go,” he said.

Catholic bishops in New Zealand and Switzerland have issued similar statements, articulating firm opposition to gay marriage but a strong interest in protecting the rights of

Continued on page 5



Bishop Daniel P. Reilly, D.D.

Inside

Same-sex Marriage.....	1-9, 12
Supreme Court and Same-sex Behavior	3
Church Music Director Fired.....	7
International News Briefs.....	8
Interview with Sr. Gramick	10

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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 institutional structures in the Roman Catholic Church.

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

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Boldly Groomed for a New Future

By **Dennis Duggan**
Newsday, New York
 June 1, 2003

I was walking up the aisle of the Church of St. Ann and the Holy Trinity in Brooklyn last week when I heard this conversation. "Where did you meet Brendan?"

"I met him in the back of a police van when we were arrested at a St. Patrick's Day protest."

Gays often meet at bars and restaurants, but they will tell you that they also often meet after an arrest.

The two men in the pews were part of a big crowd that came to see the marriage of Dr. Thomas A. Moulton to Brendan E. Fay at this glorious old church in the heart of Brooklyn Heights

Fay is an Irish activist who four years ago formed an alternative St. Patrick's Day parade in Queens that allows gays and lesbians to march under their banners, something the hardliners in the Manhattan parade won't allow.

Both the Irish-born Fay and Moulton, an oncologist, are Catholics, but as Fay puts it, the church lost interest in performing a marriage ceremony after this conversation with a Catholic priest:

"And who is the lucky girl, Brendan?" the priest asked. "Her name is Tom," Fay replied.

And that was that, and so the two gay men, both 45, who met seven years ago in church and have been living together in Astoria, finally got the Episcopal church to agree to this ceremony, a same-sex marriage.

At the two-hour ceremony, the Rev. Barbara Crafton, an Episcopal minister, said, "There are those that are not happy with what is happening today" - meaning the marriage of two gay men - "[but] it will be commonplace one day."

It is already commonplace in the Netherlands, which is why everyone was given a pair of miniature wooden Dutch clogs at a rousing reception for 300 or so sponsored by the Catholic Worker, whose founder, Dorothy Day, is being considered for sainthood.

St. Ann's was packed with well-wishers, including gay activist Andy Humm, Assemb. Richard Gottfried, Fay's two sisters from Drogheda, Ireland, and Moulton's mother from Indiana. All were given a handful of rose petals to throw at the groom and the groom.

The marriage of the two men came at a time when legislators in Albany, including Gottfried, are pushing to gain for homosexuals who marry the same rights that are now given to heterosexuals who marry.

As it is, Fay said, "when we walk out that door we will not have a single one of more than 1,000 rights that straights have when they marry."

The state of New York does not recognize same-sex marriages, and the Catholic Church opposes them.

It was an altogether emotional and moving ceremony in the church with those glorious stained-glass windows, a choir and a crowd of guests that nearly swooned with delight when the two men kissed after the priest asked them to declare their vows.

"Tom and Brendan, you are about to make a solemn promise

to each other and to God. Do you believe that God has called you to live together in love?"

"We do believe," answered Tom and Brendan, both wearing lavender-striped kilts.

Then the two exchanged silver rings from Ireland, and the priest asked one and all to come to the front of the church to "join me in the confirmation of this holy union with a round of applause."

And then came that kiss, respectful and swift - the kisses at the reception later were far more boisterous - but this was in



Gay Marriage of Brendan Fay and Thomas Moulton. Left to right: Edward DeBonis, Brendan Fay, Tom Judge Browstone, Thomas Moulton, Vincent Maniscalco

church, after all, and as we know, such things don't happen in church.

Then the crowd trooped next door to the church hall for dinner and a cake decorated with shamrocks and pansies. Stanley Rygor, a neighbor and close pal of Fay's and Moulton's, pulled out his button accordion and played traditional Irish music, and there were fiddles and tin whistles galore.

I talked to Fay and Moulton after the marriage. They had registered with the city as domestic partners in June 2000 but wanted a religious ceremony, or, as The New York Times primly called it, a "commitment ceremony."

They said their honeymoon will be in Ireland in August when Fay's parents there celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary.

"We'll have a reception there," said Moulton, an assistant professor of pediatrics at Albert Einstein College of Medicine and an attending physician at Children's Hospital at the Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx.

Fay directed "From Silence to Speech," a video about being gay and Irish, and he is founder of the Lavender and Green Alliance in Manhattan. He holds a master's degree in theology from St. John's University and is a graduate of the Pontifical University in Maynooth, Ireland.

Fay arrived in town 19 years ago to study theology and became a close friend of the Rev. Mychal Judge, the friar who died at the World Trade Center on 9/11.

Judge had given a Bible to Fay, and it was the Bible used in the Saturday service.

And as my Irish mother would say: "A grand time was had by all." ▸

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Law, Morality and Homosexuality

By Fr. Richard McBrien

The Catholic Messenger, Davenport, Iowa
September 4, 2003

In late June the U.S. Supreme Court handed down a landmark decision, *Lawrence v. Texas*, on the always controversial issue of homosexuality. In doing so, the court overturned a 1986 decision, *Bowers v. Hardwick*, which had upheld a similar law in Georgia banning sexual relations between homosexuals, even in the privacy of their own homes.

In *Lawrence v. Texas* the Supreme Court rejected the argument that, if "the governing majority in a State has traditionally viewed a particular practice as immoral," the State is justified in passing a law prohibiting the practice.

Needless to say, the gay and lesbian communities (and many other Americans as well) greeted *Lawrence v. Texas* with enthusiasm, while leading figures on the political and religious right expressed outrage.

Seventeen years earlier, the reactions to *Bowers v. Hardwick* had been just the opposite. Gays and lesbians (and civil libertarians) were dismayed, while others like the Reverend Jerry Falwell, congratulated the court for having "recognized the right of a state to determine its own moral guidelines" and for having "issued a clear statement that perverted moral behavior is not accepted practice in this country."

In his strong dissent from the recent 6-3 *Lawrence v. Texas* decision, Justice Antonin

Scalia complained that, in overturning both the Texas law against homosexual behavior and the previous 5-4 court decision upholding a similar law in Georgia, the court has "effectively" decreed "the end of all morals legislation."

If Justice Scalia were correct in his judgment, many of our most important laws would have to be consigned to the dustbin, because every law that touches upon personal and societal behavior has a moral dimension to it, whether



those laws concern murder, theft, and rape, or the environment, government aid to the poor, and civil rights. Morality in each of these cases is determined by what society believes is right and wrong, just and unjust, fair and unfair.

The morality in question, however, is rooted in what Catholics understand as the natural

law – a law "written in [the] hearts" of every woman and man (Romans 2:15). It is not a morality derived from any religious tradition, although the natural law and the moral teaching of particular religious groups often coincide or at least overlap at key points.

The real question, therefore, is not whether laws can any longer have a moral dimension, but rather whose morals?

It is clear that only that morality which society accepts as its own has a realistic chance of being translated into public policy. This is not to say, however, that society's moral standards are beyond challenge, or that minority views and practices are to be overridden and prohibited by the majority.

When Mario Cuomo, then-governor of New York, was criticized for his major address on the subject of religion and politics at the University of Notre Dame in 1984,

he sought to clarify his position two weeks later in a talk at St. Francis College in Brooklyn.

"I did not say that anyone's religious values or moral codes should be surrendered to a popular consensus in order to avoid disagreement and foster harmony," Governor Cuomo insisted. "I did not say that what is popular

must be good. Nor that the community's consensus on what is right or wrong should never be challenged.

"What I did say and what I repeat is that if we are serious about making certain values a part of the public morality...there must first be a public consensus; that's the way laws are made in a democratic society."

Presumably there was a consensus in Texas in support of a law prohibiting homosexual conduct, even in private between consenting adults. Sometimes, however, the moral values of a majority in a given society are so injurious to the rights of one or another of its minorities that the courts are required to nullify legislation that has such an effect. That is what happened in *Lawrence v. Texas* this past June.

In his dissent, Justice Scalia complained that the decision effectively nullified the will of a "democratic majority" in Texas by its "invention of a brand-new 'constitutional right' by a court that is impatient of democratic change."

But as *The New York Times* pointed out in its editorial the next morning, "It is the same argument made in 1967 for upholding a Virginia law banning marriage between blacks and whites. The idea that minorities must wait for the majority to recognize their basic rights is as wrong today as it was then."

Catholics, who have known what it is to have lived as a minority in a politically and religiously unfriendly society, should have welcomed *Lawrence v. Texas*. ▀

Massachusetts gives green light for gays to wed

By Chuck Colbert

The National Catholic Reporter
November 28, 2003

The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court became the first state court to rule that same-sex couples have the legal right to marry. In a Nov. 18 decision, the court endorsed civil-marriage rights for gays under the equal protection and due process provisions of the state's constitution.

But the court stopped short of requiring towns and cities to issue marriage licenses to gay couples, giving the legislature 180 days to "take such action as it may deem appropriate in light of this opinion."

The issue before the court was civil marriage, "whether, consistent with the Massachusetts Constitution, the Commonwealth may deny the protections, benefits, and obligations conferred by civil marriage to two individuals of the same sex who wish to marry," wrote Chief Justice Margaret Marshall, for the majority, in a 4-3 split decision.

"We conclude that it may not. The Massachusetts Constitution affirms the dignity and equality of all individuals. It forbids the creation of second-class citizens," she wrote, adding, "[The state] has failed to identify any constitutionally adequate reason for denying civil marriage to same-sex couples."

The ruling was a major victory for gay-rights advocates. At a news conference, Mary Bonauto, lead attorney for the 14 plaintiffs, said: "I can't imagine for a single second that there aren't going to be people who are upset with this and will do everything they can to muddy the waters or try to create a legislative issue or to suggest the court didn't say what it did. And so be it. That's part of the process."

Legal action began in April 2001 when the Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders, known as GLAD, filed suit in Suffolk Superior Court after seven same-sex couples applied for marriage licenses and were denied. The Boston-based group asked the court to remove discriminatory barriers that bar lesbian and gay couples from civil marriage.

The court dismissed the suit in May 2002, but the Supreme Judicial Court agreed last year to hear the case, known as *Goodrich et al v. Department of Public Health*. On March 4, Bonauto argued the plaintiff's case before the court (NCR, April 11).

Lawyers and lawmakers now are coming to terms with the decision. Many see little wiggle room for the legislature, which is controlled by the Democrats with big majorities.

State Senate president and Democrat Robert Travaglini told *The New York Times*, "The strength of the language and the depth of the decision" clarifies that civil marriage and not civil unions "is the wish of the court."

However, Republican Gov. Mitt Romney denounced the ruling. "I agree with 3,000 years of recorded history. I disagree with the Supreme Judicial Court," he said.

The ruling, however, comes at a time when polling indicates that most of the state's residents -- 59 percent overall and 55 percent of Catholics -- support civil marriage rights for gay couples.

The poll was commissioned by the Freedom to Marry Coalition, a gay-rights advocacy organization, and conducted by Decision Research. Boston Globe polling has reported similar findings.

Local church leadership holds a different view. Boston's Archbishop Sean O'Malley said in a statement, "It is alarming that the Supreme Judicial Court in this ruling has cast aside what has been not only that interpretation of the Massachusetts Constitution but the very definition of marriage held by peoples for thousands of years. My hope is that legislators will have the courage and common sense to redress this situation for the good of society."

Massachusetts' lawmakers are scheduled to consider such redress. Both houses of the state legislature meet in a joint-session -- a Constitutional Convention -- on Feb. 11 and are expected to vote on a proposed amendment that would bar civil marriage for gays. The earliest such a measure could go before state voters is November 2006. ▀

New Ways Ministry Response to the Vatican's Statement on Same-Sex Marriage

New Ways Ministry
Mt. Rainier, Maryland
August 20, 2003

The Vatican's opposition to same-sex marriage initiatives has been well known and long-standing. Thus, one of the most disturbing aspects of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's recent document, *Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons*, is that it was written at all. Instead of preventing the legal recognition of same-sex relationships, the actual effect will be greater discrimination and intolerance of lesbian/gay people because the document is based upon ill-informed knowledge of homosexuality and the relationships of lesbian/gay people.

At the outset of *Considerations*, the Vatican refers to homosexuality as "a troubling moral and social phenomenon." Inaccurately characterizing a person's basic homosexual make-up as a mere "inclination" or just "tendencies," it repeatedly describes the orientation, with lack of pastoral sensitivity, as an "anomaly" that is "intrinsically" and "objectively disordered."

In effect, the doctrinal Congregation blames gay/lesbian people for the deterioration of "the dignity of marriage, the foundation of the family, and the stability of society," all of which it considers as somehow threatened by homosexual unions. It ignores the alarming divorce rate already prevalent even among many practicing Catholics. The Vatican once again negatively singles out the lesbian/gay minority within society, rather than addressing itself to widespread heterosexual behaviors that are objectionable. To uphold the permanence of heterosexual bonds in the past, Church leaders sometimes remained silent in the face of certifiable violence directed against wives and children by abusive husbands. The heterosexual couples most wronged by this document are the parents of lesbian daughters and gay sons. The Vatican seems not to realize that striking the child injures the parent.

The Congregation disregards the findings of the human sciences when it claims that same-sex unions "create obstacles in the normal development of children" and wrongly asserts, "such unions would actually mean doing violence to them." Studies published in reputable journals have documented that children conceived, adopted, or raised by lesbian/gay couples develop in a similar way to children raised in heterosexual households.

When citing the Book of Genesis, the Vatican statement calls sexuality "something that pertains to the [heterosexual] physical-biological realm." In condemning homosexual unions as unnatural, the document invokes the scriptural image of "sexual complementarity" between female and male as the decisive factor for "procreative" fruitfulness. However, in light of today's understanding of human development, we must not limit our view of nature to

its purely "physical-biological" functions. We need to acknowledge its complex personal and psychological components, including profound attraction between individuals of the same gender, who "complement" one another on an emotional level and help each other "procreate" in intellectual and artistic ways.

The document almost implies that the first chapters of Genesis, "in which the voice of nature itself is heard," are a biblical revelation of mandatory heterosexuality, although the latter concept has been defined only by modern science. The relevant passages (Gen.1:26-31; 2:7,18-25) principally reveal the creation of sexual human beings in God's own image. The divine image is neither male nor female, neither heterosexual nor homosexual, and not concerned with marriage. The divine image concerns itself with loving relationships.

The Vatican document attempts to influence not only civic governmental bodies but also

all those "who believe in Christ" and everyone "committed to...the common good." Yet in speaking of the "natural moral law," the authors of the document disregard the fact that some religious denominations have blessed homosexual unions for years, without viewing such practices as contrary to scripture, nature, or moral principles.

Despite the Vatican's persistent view that same-sex "unions are harmful to the proper development of human society," some prominent theologians, such as Philip Keane in *Sexuality Morality* (1977), have long suggested that the Catholic Church itself should find ways of supporting stable homosexual partnerships. In fact, according to John Boswell's *Same-Sex Unions in Premodern Europe* (1994), historically the Church may even have blessed such relationships at certain times and places under more enlightened circumstances.

New Ways Ministry repeats its persistent call

to the Vatican and the U.S. bishops to engage in a broad, diverse dialogue with theologians, social scientists, psychologists, pastoral ministers, and lesbian/gay people and their families before they issue another word on homosexuality. This document illustrates how much education Catholic Church leaders need in this area before they can speak authoritatively and persuasively.

Furthermore, New Ways Ministry calls on the Vatican and the U.S. bishops, and indeed all Church institutions, to correct this pastorally egregious document by writing a subsequent statement on eliminating prejudice, discrimination, and violence that lesbian/gay people experience because of the ignorance of people in the Church and the wider society. Church teaching is clear that prejudice against lesbian/gay people is a serious moral evil, yet Vatican leaders have yet to explore this destructive social phenomenon in any sort of comprehensive and high-level document. ▀

Catholic Bishops Oppose Legalizing Gay Marriage

By Alan Cooperman
The Washington Post
November 13, 2003

The nation's Roman Catholic bishops weighed into the political debate over same-sex unions yesterday, declaring that legal recognition of gay relationships would undermine marriage and the family.

The bishops said they plan to publish their statement in an eight-page pamphlet with a simple, question-and-answer format that will be widely distributed, in churches and by mail, to Catholics and to "other people of good will who are trying to understand what is at stake."

While the statement echoes recent declarations by the Vatican, it aims to present church teachings in a way that will appeal to Americans. By voice votes, the nearly 300 bishops meeting in a Capitol Hill hotel defeated amendments that would have condemned gay sex as "gravely sinful" or "gravely evil," opting instead for a sentence saying that "both homosexual acts and unjust discrimination against homosexual persons" are immoral.

The bishops' declaration, approved by a 234 to 3 vote, effectively allies them with a coalition of mainly evangelical Protestant groups that want to make opposition to "gay marriage" a major issue in the 2004 presidential election.

"Both the state and the church can regulate marriage, but they can't change its definition," said Bishop J. Kevin Boland of Savannah, Ga., chairman of the committee that drafted the

statement. "It's the basic unit of society, and we've become very cavalier about it."

Energized by polls indicating that a majority of Americans oppose same-sex unions, Christian groups such as Focus on the Family and the Traditional Values Coalition are also pushing for a constitutional amendment to limit marriage to one man and one woman.

The administrative committee of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, which set the agenda for its four-day meeting in Washington this week, declared its "general support" last month for a Federal Marriage Amendment without endorsing any of the various versions circulating on Capitol Hill. The bishops conference as a whole, however, did not address the issue of a constitutional amendment in yesterday's statement.

The bishops also sidestepped the question of whether gay couples should be entitled to particular social and economic benefits. They said it "would be wrong to redefine marriage for the sake of providing benefits" to same-sex partners.

But they noted that some benefits commonly sought by gay couples can already be obtained without regard to marital status. "For example, individuals can agree to own property jointly with another, and can generally designate anyone they choose to be a beneficiary of their will or to make health care decisions in case they become incompetent," they said.

In keeping with long-standing church

teaching, the bishops argued that both "human reason" and "divine revelation in the Bible" dictate that marriage should be only between a man and a woman.

"For several reasons a same-sex union contradicts the nature of marriage: It is not based on the natural complementarity of male and female; it cannot cooperate with God to create new life; and the natural purpose of human sexuality cannot be achieved by a same-sex union," they said. "Because homosexual persons cannot enter into a true conjugal union with each other, it is wrong to equate their relationship to a marriage."

The bishops also voted yesterday to draft a statement explaining the church's teaching against artificial contraception. Denver Archbishop Charles J. Chaput told reporters that they hope to "stir up new interest and support" for natural family planning, which he said is practiced by only 4 percent of Catholic couples of child-bearing age.

Outside the meeting, a group of protesters from Soulforce, a Christian gay rights group, held red stop signs and banners saying, "Stop Spiritual Violence by the Church Against God's Gay Children."

"The Roman Catholic Church has the right to marry, or not marry, whoever they want," said the Rev. Mel White, a Protestant minister and Soulforce's founder. "But let them not use their spiritual force as a political lobby to take away the civil rights of gay and lesbian people." ▀

Priest, Church at Odds on Marriage

By Matt O'Brien
Sentinel & Enterprise
Fitchburg, MA
June 2, 2003

One local Catholic priest says he doesn't agree with the church's approach to protesting same-sex marriage.

As every Catholic pastor across the Commonwealth was urged by the four Massachusetts bishops to reaffirm the church's opposition to gay marriage at Masses this weekend, most area clergy complied with the request.

In interviews on Sunday, some said though they didn't read the statement aloud, as was specifically requested when the Worcester Diocese faxed the letter to churches over a week ago, they still published the full document in a church bulletin.

The Rev. Richard Lewandowski, pastor of St. Camillus in Fitchburg, said he passed out a copy of the bishops' joint "Statement on the Definition of Marriage" to every churchgoing member of his parish this weekend.

But Lewandowski doesn't agree with all of its message of support for the proposed Marriage Affirmation and Protection Amendment, a proposal that if passed would make it impossi-

ble for gays and lesbians to legally marry under the state constitution.

"My fear is that the bishops' support of House Bill 3190 may be perceived as lacking pastoral sensitivity to the gay and lesbian population, and cause terrible confusion and even serious scandal," Lewandowski told the Sentinel & Enterprise on Sunday afternoon. "Instead of strengthening marriage and family life, it may be seen as promoting the anti-gay agenda of right-winged religious extremists."

Lewandowski, the chaplain at Fitchburg State College and a longtime outreach minister for gay Catholics and parents with gay children, publicly spoke out against the proposed bill at the State House in April.

The proposal was a response, sponsored by state Rep. Philip Travis, D-Rehoboth, to the upcoming Supreme Judicial Court case, *Goodridge vs. the Department of Public Health*, that could potentially force the state's legal definition of marriage to include same-sex couples.

Since, according to their statement, the bishops say the "odds are high" the court could rule to allow same-sex marriage, they have implored clergy to enlist the Catholic faithful to call and write to legislators. "The church is just saying, look, marriage is something unique in

society between a man and a woman and by its very nature has the ability to be procreative," said Raymond Delisle, spokesman for Bishop Daniel Reilly and the Worcester Diocese.

Delisle said the Catholic understanding of marriage is "more than a contract."

"All it's really doing is reaffirming what the church's position was all along," Delisle said of the statement. "That there's something unique about marriage...What (the bishops) are trying to do is reinforce basically what we believe marriage is. It's not an anti-anything."

The bishops warned in the statement that if the state redefines legal marriage and no longer promotes "the union of a man and a woman as uniquely beneficial to society," then the church may someday face discrimination lawsuits.

"Some people think it is an anti-gay bias," said Frank Liistro, a pastor at Madonna of the Holy Rosary in Fitchburg, who published the statement in a bulletin but didn't read it. "Actually that's not true, because the church has gone on record about speaking on compassion about people who have a homosexual lifestyle."

Both Lewandowski and Liistro say they abide by a 1997 nationwide Catholic statement, directed toward concerned parents of gay children, that reaffirmed church doctrine on homosexuality.

The document explained the church's dedication to supporting chaste homosexuals, among other things.

Lewandowski said it was Bishop Reilly who first really compelled area priests to begin outreach for gays and lesbians.

"He's a very pastoral man. He saw the need for it," said Lewandowski. "I have tremendous respect for Bishop Reilly but I think there's a lot of fear going on," he said. "I really don't see how this bill will protect and defend marriage. I just don't see it."

Area priests took a variety of approaches this weekend after receiving the statement.

The Rev. Timothy Brewer of Our Lady of the Lake in Leominster said he did not read the statement nor did he place the message in the bulletin, but would make no further comments on the issue.

In Lunenburg, the Rev. Edward Nicolls of St. Boniface Church said he talked about the issue during Mass and provided the letter in a bulletin to accompany his own words.

"We did as we were told," said the Rev. Francis Goguen of St. Cecilia's Church in Leominster. "We read it at every Mass... I'm sure the bishop thought it was an important issue at the moment in Massachusetts."

All the priests who spoke to the Sentinel & Enterprise on Sunday said they received little to no reaction from parishioners after reading or publishing the statement.

"I read the whole thing," said Goguen. "Not one person said anything. No one asked any questions, and I was around." ▀

Vatican Campaign Rejects Gay Marriage

Continued from page 1

legally because it is a private relationship, he said. In a footnote, the Vatican document noted that there was a danger that laws legalizing same-sex unions could actually encourage someone with a homosexual orientation to seek out a partner to "exploit the provisions of the law."

A small group of demonstrators from Italy's Radical Party held up banners today at the edge of St. Peter's Square to protest the document. The banners read "No Vatican, No Taliban," and "Democracy Yes, Theocracy No."

Other opposition to the document came from the Green Party in predominantly Catholic Austria. Ulrike Lunacek, a party spokeswoman, said Catholic politicians should follow human rights conventions, "not the old-

fashioned views of the Vatican."

"This hierarchy, which also rules on other issues like forbidding the use of condoms to avoid AIDS, is far from reality," she said in a statement. Volker Beck, a lawmaker from Germany's Greens Party, which led the drive for the same-sex civil union legislation, described the Vatican guidelines as "a document of narrow-minded fanaticism."

A leading conservative politician and a Catholic, Wolfgang Bosbach, gave it a warmer reception: "I assume every Catholic lawmaker will take account of the Holy Father's words in making his decision." ▀

Catholic Bishop Shows Support for Gays

Continued from page 1

children in gay families, according to Stephen Pope, a professor of theology at Boston College.

There have been cases in which gay couples with children have run into trouble at schools, which will not let one of the parents pick up the student or sign off on documents because the parental relationship is not legally recognized.

The groups in New Zealand and Switzerland were not criticized by the Vatican, Pope said, but came under fire from conservative Catholic groups.

Supporters of gay marriage said they welcomed the opportunity to discuss the issue with church leaders, but said that equality will only happen when gay couples are given the full rights of marriage.

"It's the first time I've heard them say something like this," said Sen. Cheryl Jacques, a gay lawmaker who has two children with her partner. "But I also heard someone who said his church's doctrine should control civil law. We're not trading in our civil rights for some civil benefits." ▀

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The Conservative Case for Gay Marriage

Want to foster responsibility and commitment? There is no better way

By Andrew Sullivan
Time Magazine
 June 30, 2003

A long time ago, the *New Republic* ran a contest to discover the most boring headline ever written. Entrants had to beat the following snoozer, which had inspired the event: WORTHWHILE CANADIAN INITIATIVE. Little did the contest organizers realize that one day such a headline would be far from boring and, in its own small way, a social watershed.

Canada's federal government decided last week not to contest the rulings of three provincial courts that had all come to the conclusion that denying homosexuals the right to marry violated Canada's constitutional commitment to civic equality. What that means is that gay marriage has now arrived in the western hemisphere. And this isn't some euphemism. It isn't the quasi-marriage now celebrated in Vermont, whose "civil unions" approximate marriage but don't go by that name. It's just marriage — for all. Canada now follows the Netherlands and Belgium with full-fledged marital rights for gays and lesbians.

Could it happen in the U.S.? The next few weeks will give us many clues. The U.S. Supreme Court is due to rule any day now on whether it's legal for Texas and other states to prosecute sodomy among gays but not straights. More criti-

cal, Massachusetts' highest court is due to rule very soon on whether the denial of marriage to gays is illicit discrimination against a minority. If Massachusetts rules that it is, then gay couples across America will be able to marry not only in Canada (where there are no residency or nationality requirements for marriage) but also in a bona fide American state. There will be a long process of litigation as various married couples try hard to keep their marriages legally intact from one state to another.

This move seems an eminently conservative one — in fact, almost an emblem of "compassionate conservatism." Conservatives have long rightly argued for the vital importance of the institution of marriage for fostering responsibility, commitment and the domestication of unruly men. Bringing gay men and women into this institution will surely change the gay subculture in subtle but profoundly conservative ways. When I grew up and realized I was gay, I had no concept of what my own future could be like. Like most other homosexuals, I grew up in a heterosexual family and tried to imagine how I too could one day be a full part of the family I loved. But I figured then that I had no such future. I could never have a marriage, never have a family, never be a full and equal part of the weddings and relationships and holidays that give families structure and meaning. When I looked forward, I saw nothing but emptiness and loneliness. No wonder it was hard to connect sex with love and commitment. No wonder it was hard to feel at home in what was, in fact, my home.

For today's generation of gay kids, all that changes. From the beginning, they will be able to see their future as part of family life — not in conflict with it. Their "coming out" will also allow them a "coming home." And as they date in adolescence and early adulthood, there will be some future anchor in their mind-set, some ultimate structure with which to give their relationships stability and social support. Many heterosexuals, I suspect, simply don't realize how big a deal this is. They have never doubted that one day they could marry the person they love. So they find it hard to conceive how deep a psychic and social wound the exclusion from marriage and family can be. But the polls suggest this is changing fast: the majority of people 30 and younger see gay marriage as inevitable and understandable. Many young straight couples simply don't see married gay peers next door as some sort of threat to their own lives. They can get along in peace.

As for religious objections, it's important to remember that the issue here is not religious. It's civil. Various religious groups can choose to endorse same-sex marriage or not as they see fit. Their freedom of conscience is as vital as gays' freedom to be treated equally under

the civil law. And there's no real reason that the two cannot coexist. The Roman Catholic Church, for example, opposes remarriage after divorce. But it doesn't seek to make civil divorce and remarriage illegal for everyone. Similarly, churches can well decide this matter in their own time and on their own terms while allowing the government to be neutral between competing visions of the good life. We can live and let live.

And after all, isn't that what this really is about? We needn't all agree on the issue of

Gay M

homosexuality to believe that the government should treat every citizen alike. If that means living next door to someone of whom we disapprove, so be it. But disapproval needn't mean disrespect. And if the love of two people, committing themselves to each other exclusively for the rest of their lives, is not worthy of respect, then what is?

Vatican Document on Same Sex Unions

By John Allen, Jr.
National Catholic Reporter
The Word From Rome
 August 8, 2003

On July 31, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued a document on gay marriage titled, "Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions between Homosexual Persons."

Early commentary on the document dwelt on its strong language denouncing homosexuality, and on its challenge to Catholic politicians to resist the legalization of same-sex unions.

In truth, however, all that was old hat. The church's position on homosexuality has long been known, as has its opposition to any redefinition of marriage as a union between a man and a woman. Insistence that Catholic politicians must vote "coherently" with their faith was at the heart of the "Doctrinal Note on Some Questions Regarding the Participation of Catholics in Public Life" issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on Jan. 16, 2003.

If there is something new in the July 31 document, it is not in the teaching or political stance of the church, but its analysis of the social situation. Whereas previous documents had called

the church to arms to fight the legalization of homosexual relationships, "Considerations" seems designed, at least in part, to prepare the church for resistance in situations in which that legalization has already taken place.

It doesn't take a political scientist to figure out that at least in the developed world, the church is losing the argument.

Twelve European nations today, for example, have laws under which gay couples enjoy at least some of the civil benefits of marriage. They are: France, Germany, Switzerland, Britain, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain and Croatia. (In Spain, there is no federal legislation, but autonomous regions are free to craft their own policies. Catalonia, for instance, recognizes same-sex unions, but not adoption rights.)

In light of this, the July 31 Vatican document appeals to all Catholics, by no means just politicians, to refuse to cooperate with these measures.

"In those situations where homosexual unions have been legally recognized or have been given the legal status and rights belonging to marriage, clear and emphatic opposition is a duty," it states.

"One must refrain from any kind of formal cooperation in the enactment or application of

such gravely unjust laws and, as far as possible, from material cooperation on the level of their application. In this area, everyone can exercise. What might that mean?

In theory, any Catholic whose work intersects with marriage issues — adoption counselors, civil registrars of marriage, even inheritance and retirement specialists — could find themselves facing a choice between the civil law and the demands of their church.

Redemptorist Fr. Brian Johnstone, a moral theologian at Rome's prestigious Alphonsian Academy, said that Catholic adoption agents would clearly face a conflict of formal cooperation if the law were to give adoption rights to gay parents. The new Vatican document comes down hard on adoption, stating that such measures "would actually mean doing violence to these children, in the sense that their condition of dependency would be used to place them in an environment that is not conducive to their full human development."

Similarly, Catholic marriage counselors would be in a difficult position if a same-sex couple were to seek their services.

A bit more complicated, Johnstone said, would be the case of a Catholic who works as a civil registrar of marriages.

"You could argue that both ways," Johnstone

said. "You could argue that this person is uniting his will with that of the same-sex couple and hence is cooperating with the marriage. Or you could take the view that he is simply willing the civil effects of that act and not the 'marriage' itself."

Still more complex, Johnstone said, would be a case in which a same-sex couple wishes to enroll their child in a Catholic school.

"It's hard to construe accepting that child as formal cooperation," Johnstone said. "But there could be a problem under the heading of scandal."

In this case, Johnstone said, he meant not the popular sense of "scandal," meaning shocking people, but the technical sense of inducing someone to commit sin against the faith or morals of the church. In that sense, he said, someone might be able to argue that by accepting the children of homosexual unions, the church was in effect legitimizing those unions and hence inducing people to accept them.

In short, Catholics who work with married couples and their children may find themselves in much the same situation as Catholic health care professionals, who have long had to negotiate matters of conscience on issues such as abortion, birth control, and artificial reproduction. ▀

This is a fight the Vatican can't win

Don't expect the faithful to obey this edict on homosexuality

By Clifford Longley
The Guardian
London, England
August 1, 2003

Is homosexuality Christianity's next Darwinism? And is it likely to come off just as badly from picking a battle it cannot win? The Vatican published a document yesterday which described any proposal for state recognition of homosexual relationships as the "legalization of evil."

arriage

That shocking and cruel language tried to commit the Catholic Church to total opposition to a social trend that increasingly looks irresistible. It is a classic example of how to embarrass your friends and motivate your enemies.

Just as poor Bishop Sam Wilberforce committed the Christianity of his day to out-and-out opposition to the new theory of evolution,

these are words that will, sooner or later, have to be eaten. As every schoolboy knows - or will be endlessly reminded by the scientist Richard Dawkins if he has forgotten - Christianity picked a fight with science in the middle of the 19th century, and lost. The rest is, well, not quite history, but a considerable ongoing problem for Christianity's credibility.

The agency issuing the document, the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), felt Catholic bishops and politicians needed fortifying as they responded to growing demands for legal recognition of homosexual relationships, usually, but not always accurately, described as homosexual marriage.

The British government is one of a growing number to have put forward proposals of this kind, although its recent consultative document explicitly stated that the legal status being suggested was not marriage. The CDF is not impressed by such assurances. Homosexual acts are condemned by scripture as a "serious depravity," and so the state cannot, and must not, recognize them in any way.

Significantly, and this is where the CDF is halfway to losing the argument before it is even started, one of its objections to such acts is that they are not compatible with Catholic teaching about the purpose of sexual activity in general. To be morally acceptable, each and every act of intercourse has to be "open to the transmission of life," to use the well-known formula.

And this, of course, is the teaching of Pope Paul VI's ill-fated encyclical *Humanae Vitae* of 1968, outlawing artificial birth control in all its forms. And few facts about the Catholic Church are better known than that this teaching is now far more honored in the breach than in the observance. Married Catholics have long got used to turning a blind eye to this ruling, and in very large numbers they have had the tacit support of their priests in so doing.

And as the Church of England has found, acceptance that not every act of sexual intercourse has to be potentially fertile opens the door to sex for relationship purposes only, sex as the expression of a loving bond, sex indeed which can deepen that bond and make it long-lasting.

Homosexual Christians have made known the discovery that sex can play that role in their lives too. They have formed committed partnerships, and they sense in their bones that what they have done is right. That is not dissimilar to the witness of Catholic married couples, who have used contraceptives and found them beneficial to their relationship. How then can they be evil?

But the Vatican is not open to argument. "When legislation in favor of the recognition of homosexual unions is proposed for the first time in a legislative assembly, the Catholic lawmaker has a moral duty to express his opposition clearly and publicly, and to vote against it.

To vote in favor of a law so harmful to the common good is gravely immoral." To which many such "Catholic legislators" will only reply, at least under their breath, that to issue orders so unreasonable they are unlikely to be obeyed is, to say the least, gravely silly.

Already the Catholic bishops of England and Wales have set up a working party to decide how to respond to the British government's proposals. One Catholic churchman was heard to mutter that "we needed this Vatican document like we needed a hole in the head".

The Catholic Church is actually a warm-hearted organization. Very few priests want to pick a fight with the homosexuals in their congregations. In private many priests will not demand that they bring a sudden end to a faithful, loving relationship, but instead look for ways of deepening it. Friendship, even between homosexuals, is always good, they will say. Cardinal Hume said as much himself.

Sooner or later the Vatican will have to realize that the faithful are no longer really listening to it on this issue, as they are no longer listening to it about contraception. The change is by no means an overnight or painless process, just as the acceptance of Darwin's theory of evolution was not an overnight process. They can make it easy for themselves or they can make it difficult. The Vatican has chosen the latter way, but the church at large, I am sure, will prefer the former. ▀

Faith and Sexual Ethics

A Retreat-Workshop for Catholic Parents of Lesbian Daughters & Gay Sons and other interested Persons

May 14-16, 2004

Mother Boniface Spirituality Center
3501 Solly Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19136

The Friday and Sunday portion of the program is designed for Catholic parents of gay/lesbian children. The Saturday workshop is open to any interested person.

The retreat will involve morning and evening prayer, celebrations of the Eucharist, quiet time for personal reflection, as well as time to socialize with other parents in a supportive atmosphere.

The workshop will explore how our beliefs about God as Christians might better inform and empower us to adopt healthy and humanizing sexual lifestyles. The significance of sexual authenticity, self love, friendship, homosexuality, and fruitfulness will be explored.

The workshop (\$95) includes presentations, discussion, and luncheon on Saturday 9:45 am to 4:30 pm. The retreat and workshop (\$165) include the workshop plus overnight accommodations on Friday and Saturday, breakfast, dinner, and supper

on Saturday, and breakfast and dinner on Sunday. Scholarships are available. Contact New Ways Ministry in writing by April 15, 2004 to apply.

Workshop Leader

Patricia Beattie Jung
Associate Professor and Graduate Program Director of Theology, Loyola University Chicago

Retreat Leaders

Father Don Reilly, OSA
Prior Provincial, Augustinian Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova
Francis DeBernardo
Executive Director of New Ways Ministry

To register, send name, address, home and work phone numbers, and e-mail address, together with check to **New Ways Ministry**.

Church Music Director Fired Over Vow Refusal

Some agree with the decision to dismiss Bill Stein, who wouldn't promise chastity; others don't.

By Edith C. Webster
Rockford Register Star
Rockford, Illinois
June 24, 2003

ROCKFORD — The music director at Rockford's largest Catholic church had a choice: give up his gay partner of 10 years or lose his job.

When Bill Stein refused to take a vow of chastity Tuesday, he was fired from his position at Holy Family.

"I was honest. I walked out of the office without a job, but I had my dignity," Stein said. "This shouldn't happen to anybody. It's the year 2003, for crying out loud."

Neither Msgr. David Kagan, who is parochial administrator at Holy Family during the leave of absence of the pastor, Msgr. Thomas Bales, nor Bishop Thomas Doran was available for comment on the firing.

"We can confirm that Mr. Bill Stein is no longer an employee of Holy Family parish,"

diocese spokeswoman Penny Wiegert said, "but as a matter of practice, we can make no comment about personnel issues."

Holy Family, 4401 Highcrest Road, has 2,760 families. Stein was hired five years ago to play organ, direct choirs and plan music for all church functions. During his tenure he oversaw the purchase and installation of a \$777,000 pipe organ, organized an annual concert series and led the choir on a tour of Italy, where it performed at Pope John Paul II's canonization of a saint.

The controversy over his homosexuality began three months ago, when he and his partner decided they wanted to adopt a child. The parents of a few children in the choir complained to church officials, pressuring them to take action.

"Everybody I talked to was shocked that someone with this much talent, who did so much for the church, would be pinpointed for his personal lifestyle."

Some Catholics agree with the decision.

Continued on page 11

Canada's Push to Legalize Gay Marriages Draws Bishops' Ire

By Clifford Krauss
The New York Times
August 10, 2003

TORONTO, Aug. 9 — When Canada's political leaders decided to extend marriage rights to gays and lesbians, there was little opposition to what was taken to be a social revolution. But a resistance movement is stirring, led by the country's Roman Catholic bishops.

Controversies between church and state are unusual in this country where church attendance has been dropping, few religious leaders seek a high public profile and policy issues rarely take on a moral hue. But the rift took cen-

ter stage just as the Vatican called on Catholic politicians worldwide to oppose gay marriage, and in Canada most of the top national politicians are Catholic.

The dispute is unlikely to derail the effort to legalize same-sex marriage across Canada within the next year, especially after two high courts expanded rights in the provinces of Ontario and British Columbia. But the controversy is emerging as the sleeper issue in next year's elections.

Bishop Fred Henry of Calgary last week said that Jean Chrétien, the head of the Liberal government, could burn in hell for his stance on the issue. "I pray for the prime minister

because I think his eternal salvation is in jeopardy," he said.

Meanwhile, Bishop Jean-Louis Plouffe said he objected to the notion that the former finance minister Paul Martin, the front-runner to become the next Liberal leader and prime minister, could consider himself a good Catholic and support same-sex marriage. "I would expect that a Catholic politician would not push away his Catholic convictions because he's a politician," said Bishop Plouffe, president of the Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops, according to The Globe and Mail.

Prime Minister Chrétien and his cabinet decided in June not to appeal a decision by the

Ontario Court of Appeal to allow same-sex marriages in Ontario, Canada's most populous province. In opposition the bishops have tried to organize leaders of the Muslim, Greek Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox and Maronite communities into a united front.

Cardinal Aloysius Matthew Ambrozic, the archbishop of Toronto, has sent a letter to city congregations and urged priests to speak out on the issue. Some 13 million of the 32 million Canadians are Catholic, making it the nation's biggest religion.

"I don't think Canadians would appreciate if the Canadian government was acting on directives that come from different religions,"

Continued on page 9

International News Briefs

Gay scolding for church

By Ellen Whinnett
The Mercury, Australia
August 5, 2003

The Catholic Church risks breaching Tasmania's anti-discrimination laws if it distributes the Pope's statement denouncing gay relationships, says a leading gay activist.

Tasmanian Gay and Lesbian Rights Group spokesman Rodney Croome said the statements by the Vatican last week were a breach of the Anti-Discrimination Act.

Pope John Paul II last week criticized the global move towards legal recognition of same-sex relationships and said Catholic lawmakers were morally obliged to oppose the moves.

"The Catholic Church is clearly in breach of Tasmanian law by referring to homosexuality as 'deviant behavior', gay marriage as 'evil' and gay parenting as 'violence to children,'" Mr. Croome said.

He said distributing the material could result in a fine of up to \$20,000.

The Archbishop of Hobart, the Most Rev Adrian Doyle, was not available for comment yesterday but a spokeswoman said she did not see any reason why the church would distribute the material.

Mr. Croome welcomed this response but said he was skeptical because the Vatican had asked Catholics to oppose the moves.

"It was a very explicit call to action for politicians and the general public and it's a fair assumption that the church will therefore distribute it," he said.

Mr. Croome said sections of the statement were in breach of the Anti-Discrimination Act, which prohibited the incitement of seri-

ous contempt on the grounds of sexual orientation and lawful sexual activity.

"This is not about stifling free speech -- many churches have expressed their doctrinal disapproval of homosexuality without using that kind of inflammatory language that divides communities, can easily lead to physical violence, and which saturates the Vatican's statement," he said.

"With the right to free speech comes a responsibility not to abuse that right to harm others."

Mr. Croome said the laws applied to anyone who quoted the document, handed it out or sent it to politicians or other citizens. ▀

Poland Demolishes Gay Awareness Campaign

By Jon ben Asher
365Gay.com, European Bureau
May 27, 2003

Warsaw, Poland - A campaign to promote acceptance of gays and lesbians has been pulled after complaints by the Roman Catholic Church.

The campaign featured posters and billboards in Polish cities and was inspired by a 24-year old photographer.

Karolina Bregula returned to Poland after spending three years in Sweden and said she was astonished at the plight of Polish gays.

With a grant from the governments of Sweden and Denmark, Bregula created the campaign using pictures of gay couples in affectionate poses. "Let them see us," was

the campaign's slogan. Some of the posters showed couples holding hands. In others couples looked affectionately into each others' eyes.

The billboards began going up in Polish cities last month and were to remain in place for 90 days.

This week, they were torn down or painted over by officials after complaints from the Catholic Church.

Polish gays had expected that with the fall of Communism the country's attitudes towards gays would become more liberal. But Robert Biedron, chair of the Campaign Against Homophobia in Warsaw, said the Catholic church has opposed all attempts at reform.

Although the European Union opposes discrimination against gays and lesbians, there is no uniform policy on gay relationships.

Even though the billboards were up for only a few weeks, Biedron says the campaign has had a positive effect. "For the first time, homosexuals were shown as ordinary people, not as pedophiles from a railway station or freaks from a gay parade," said Biedron.

There are an estimated 2 million gays in Poland. ▀

Church clash on gay choir

By Jessica Lawrence
The Australian
Brisbane, Australia
June 8, 2003

The Brisbane Catholic community is embroiled in a bitter row over a performance by homosexual choristers. Catholic Archbishop John Bathersby has said he is

offended by the use of a Brisbane church for a gay pride event.

Father Peter Kennedy and Father Terry Fitzpatrick of St. Mary's Catholic Church, in South Brisbane, have agreed to host a concert by the Lesbian and Gay Pride Choir as part of the Brisbane Pride Festival.

The 45-member ensemble is due to perform at the church on Friday night, with songs ranging from Madonna to Monteverdi.

Fr. Fitzpatrick has defended the decision to host the event, saying it is the role of the church to be "inclusive."

Archbishop Bathersby was in London yesterday, but in a letter published in The Courier-Mail he said the local priests had agreed to host the gay concert despite his strenuous objections.

Labelling the use of the church as "offensive", the archbishop said Father Fitzpatrick was "not going about it the right way" if he was attempting to promote inclusivity in the church.

He also slammed an advertisement promoting the event in the festival's program.

The advertisement appears near that for the play Corpus Christi, which parallels the life of Jesus Christ with that of a homosexual Texan man, and which the archbishop dubbed "enormously offensive".

"The event was advertised in a Pride Festival program . . . in the midst of other advertising that many people would find totally unacceptable," Archbishop Bathersby wrote.

But Fr. Fitzpatrick said the church needed to make up for its past role of fostering homophobia.

"Most Catholics and most people are really accepting," he said.

"It's just that really small minority who are quite vocal because they are scandalised by the event." ▀

Canada's push to legalize gay marriages

Continued from page 8

said Heritage Minister Sheila Copps, a dark-horse Liberal hopeful for prime minister and a Catholic.

The Ontario court ruled in June that the federal definition of marriage violated the "equality of rights" of same-sex couples under Canada's version of the Bill of Rights. The British Columbia appeals court issued a similar decision. Mr. Chrétien's government last month drafted a bill that redefines marriage as "the lawful union of two persons to the exclusion of all others" but lets religious institutions refuse to marry same-sex couples.

Stephen Harper, the leading contender

of the opposition conservative party, the Canadian Alliance, plans to introduce a motion in the House of Commons to declare that marriage is strictly the union between the opposite sexes. Such a motion passed in 1999 with much Liberal support.

A poll of 2,018 Canadians published in The National Post this week found that 53 percent supported same-sex marriage while 43 percent were opposed. Three percent were undecided according to the survey, which has a margin of error of 3 percent. Several surveys have found that the strongest opposition comes from elderly and rural voters. ▀

Priest strikes a nerve

Church challenged on gay marriage

Bishop tight-lipped about repercussions but public reaction has been overwhelming

By Elisabeth Kalbfuss

The Gazette

August 7, 2003

The Catholic priest who urged his church to stop bashing gay and lesbian marriages and start blessing them instead said he expected both the outrage and support his words provoked. It was the sheer volume of calls that surprised him.

"I never thought it would take on this magnitude," said Raymond Gravel, after a second day listening to callers tell him either that he should be defrocked and thrown out on his ear or that they'd like to hear his words echoed in pulpits everywhere.

In an open letter on the opinion page of La Presse this week, Gravel, a priest in St. Joachim de La Plaine parish and the chaplain for the Laval police brotherhood, risked the wrath of his church by taking a stand in favour of gay marriage - directly in opposition to the position emphasized last week by the Vatican.

That stand "is discriminatory, hurtful and offensive, not only for homosexuals," he wrote. "Marriage is the official recognition of the union of two people who love each other and want to share that," he wrote, and who share that love in a spirit of fidelity and fertility. Fertility isn't limited to conceiving children, he said, it's about sharing that spirit of love.

Yesterday, Gravel said the majority of callers have supported him, including parishioners, university professors - even other priests too cautious to speak publicly.

"They might want to become bishop one day," he said of their silence. "I don't."

Gilles Lussier, bishop of Joliette diocese and Gravel's superior, said the priest is entitled to express his opinions.

"Like all institutions, there is a professional code," Lussier said. "I will meet with him and if I have reflections to communicate, I will express them to him, not communicate them through the media."

He wouldn't discuss whether he knows of other priests who share Gravel's view. If Gravel is rapped on the knuckles, it won't be the first time. He has spoken out in favour of the ordination of women and against the church's denunciation of Bosnian rape victims for having abortions. Both earned him reprimands.

There was no comment from the archdiocese of Montreal. A spokesperson said Cardinal Jean-Claude Turcotte is at a conference outside Canada and couldn't be reached.

The Vatican's statement, signed by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, urged Catholics to oppose same-sex unions. It said Catholic legislators have a duty to express their opposition and vote against such marriages.

This summer, in a letter to Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, the Canadian Conference of Bishops said: "Marriage understood as the lasting union of a man and woman to the exclusion of others pre-exists the State. Because it pre-exists the State and because it is fundamental for society, the institution of marriage cannot be modified, whether by the Charter of Rights, the State or a court of law."

Gravel said the church should stop issuing denunciations, and find positive, compassionate ways to bring people into the church. Instead, church leaders "just remind you that you're depraved and condemned. It's unacceptable," he said yesterday.

Imagine having been a priest in a parish that has a substantial number of homosexuals on the Sunday after the Vatican statement, he said. "How can he say mass, when there are homosexuals in front of him and the Vatican says these people are deviants? I wouldn't have wanted to be in that parish." He felt so strongly, he said, that he "picked up my pen and I wrote."

He said he's not considering leaving the church because he disagrees with its position. "This is how you build a church--by debating, not by leaving because you disagree." ▀

Catholics Reject Vatican, 57% Support Gay Marriage

By Ben Thompson

365Gay.com Newscenter

Ottawa, Canada

August 6, 2003

(Ottawa) The Vatican's condemnation of gay marriage has fallen on deaf ears in Canada according to a new poll. 57 percent of Roman Catholics surveyed said they would support the right of same-sex couples to marry, a figure higher than for Protestants.

The poll, by Environics Research shows that only 38 per cent of those people who identified as Protestant support gay marriage with 58 per cent opposed.

Among all Canadians, the poll found a slim majority, 53 per cent, support same-sex marriage, while 43 per cent are opposed and three per cent are undecided.

Although the survey was taken prior to the reading of the Vatican pronouncement in churches across the country Sunday, Environics pollster Derek Leebosh said support for same-sex marriage among Catholics appears to be solid.

Environics surveyed of 2,018 Canadians between June 12 and July 6. It shows that women are more likely than men to be supportive, with 58 per cent in favor, compared with only 49 per cent of men.

It also shows a split along age lines, with 65 per cent of 18- to 29-year-olds in favor and 33 per cent opposed. Among people over 60, the numbers are reversed, with only 33 per cent in favor and 64 per cent opposed.

Canadians with larger household incomes and higher education are more likely to support gay marriage.

Leebosh said the numbers show that the ruling Liberals could actually benefit from the Vatican's position by directly appealing to Canadians' widely held support for a separation between church and state.

He also said that Liberal MPs should ignore pressure to backtrack on the government's support of same-sex marriage legislation, calling anti-gay marriage groups a 'minority'.

Some Liberal backbenchers have said they have been deluged with complaints from constituents opposed to giving gays the right to marry.

Leebosh predicted that opponents of the impending gay marriage bill now face an uphill battle.

"Their reaction would probably be that when the Vatican intervenes, with friends like these who needs enemies, because a lot of Canadians would get their back up at the idea of the church sort of interfering in Canadian domestic politics," he told the Ottawa Citizen.

A draft bill to legalize gay marriage will be examined by the Supreme Court of Canada this winter and will be presented to the House of Commons for a vote early next year.

Last week, in a strongly worded letter the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Ottawa warned Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien that if he continues to support same-sex marriage he could be denied the sacrament. ▀

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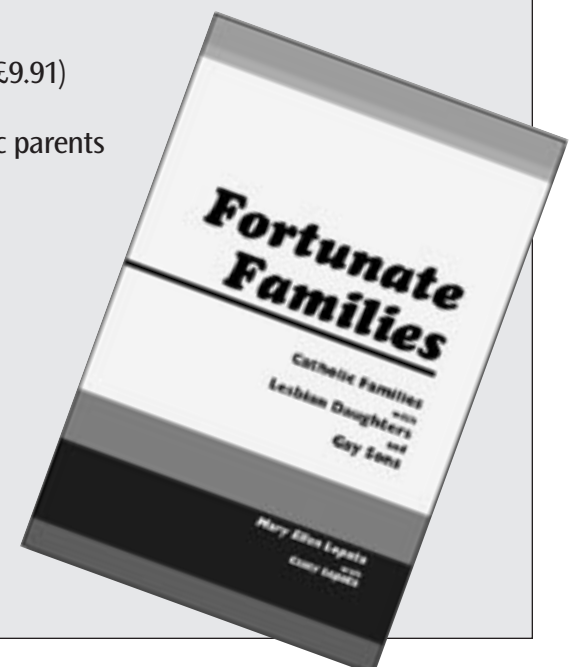
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Gay Catholic group speaks out against pope

By Steve Freiss
PlanetOut.com
August 8, 2003

A week after the Vatican condemned same-sex marriages and homosexuality in general, dozens of gay Catholic couples plan to affirm their commitments in Las Vegas Sunday. The group ceremony will cap the 16th convention of Dignity/USA.

The event has become one part of the national gay Catholic organization's answer to those and other papal attacks as the group convenes for the first time since the church's sex-abuse scandal last year. The Vatican blamed the scandal largely on the existence of gay priests.

Both controversies loomed large over the conference as it opened Thursday night with a fiery admonition from Dignity President Patrick McArron, who called the Vatican's actions forms of "spiritual terrorism."

"We have come under vicious attack from within our own church," he told the 300 attendees. "I would be lying to you if I did not say that I have been very angry with the elite old-boys club, and it is time to say, 'No more.' Enough is enough."

On July 31, the Vatican issued "Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons," a 12-page edict that branded gay relationships as "against the natural moral law" and warned Catholic politicians around

the world that supporting legislation recognizing same-sex couples would be "gravely immoral."

Sunday's ceremony, the first of its kind for a national Dignity conference, will not be a full-fledged Catholic wedding but rather a group affirmation of the couples and their commitments, as some have already had more formal ceremonies. Nonetheless, the long-planned event is taking on a new significance amid the current furor.

"Because the Vatican threw down the gauntlet on this issue of same-sex marriage, the fact that a week later we're doing this blessing will be seen by some as an act of defiance," Dignity Executive Director Marianne Duddy said. "In some ways, it is. We should be allowed — like all other couples — to define our own relationships, and to have them honored and celebrated. Making a commitment to another person is a sacred act. It is no less sacred if it's two women or two men than if it's a man and a woman."

Dignity will also issue a new statement on gay marriage, expected to be approved

by members on Saturday, that insists there's nothing inconsistent about being gay and Catholic, despite the Vatican's claims. "The love that brings and binds two people of the same, or opposite, sex together has a divine source," the position paper concludes. "It is therefore sacramental in nature, and should be celebrated as such by our church."

That view was backed up Friday by a keynote address from Richard Sipe, a psychotherapist and former Benedictine monk who for decades has studied the problems created by the requirement that Catholic clergy remain celibate.

In his speech, Sipe insisted that the pope misleads the flock by not taking science into account when interpreting the scriptures, and that the Vatican's inappropriate approach to sex fostered an atmosphere that resulted in widespread sexual abuse by priests.

"I do not hesitate to say that the church's teaching on human sexuality is not correct," Sipe said. "Its basis of biblical revelation and interpretation is insufficient to account for the realities we already know." ▀

Gay rights leader warns of backlash in Las Vegas talk

By Christina Almeida
Associated Press
August 9, 2003

LAS VEGAS — Amid celebratory comments about Canada's decision to legalize same-sex marriages, a national gay-rights leader on Saturday warned of a major fight ahead over the issue in the United States and a backlash that could erode the community's hard-fought rights.

Matthew Foreman, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, struck a somber tone during a speech at the Dignity USA national convention in Las Vegas.

"We've had this extraordinary, unprecedented and in my mind, terrifying, confluence of events in the past nine weeks — something of the likes our community has never seen," Foreman said.

Foreman's comments followed last month's high-profile opposition to same-sex unions from President Bush and the Vatican. Bush said he believes in the "sanctity of marriage" between a man and a woman. The next day the Vatican launched a global campaign against gay marriages, warning Roman Catholics that same-sex unions are "gravely immoral."

"We all have to admit we're at a time of crisis and peril," Foreman said. "We are seeing a backlash, the likes of which we've never seen before."

Foreman spoke about 20 minutes to the crowd from Dignity USA, which is the nation's

largest group of gay Catholics with 3,000 members. He expressed hope that an upcoming decision from the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court would legalize same-sex unions. But he warned the ruling could worsen a current backlash against gay marriage, prompting right-wing opponents to aggressively pursue a federal amendment defining marriage as between a man and a woman.

"This is armageddon for them," he said. "They see marriage as the ultimate gay right, and they are going to stop it with everything they have."

On the Vatican's declaration, Foreman said it prompted feelings of anger and hurt. "The wording of that was so hateful, so hurtful and so, frankly, evil," Foreman said. "It's still hard for me to talk about it."

Marianne Duddy, executive director of Dignity USA and a lifelong Catholic, struggled to speak about the Vatican's stance on gay and lesbian parents. Duddy, who lives in Boston, is in the process of adopting a girl with her partner.

"For the Vatican to say that's an act of violence against children, it was devastating and hurtful," Duddy said. "The Vatican never came to talk to me or my partner. They have no business generalizing."

Duddy also expressed anger over the comments considering the sex abuse scandal that rocked the church last year. "How dare they accuse anyone else of doing violence to children," she said. ▀



Matthew Foreman

Interview with Sr. Gramick

By John L. Allen, Jr.
National Catholic Reporter
The Word From Rome
June 27, 2003

Sr. Jeannine Gramick, whose pastoral ministry to homosexuals in partnership with Fr. Robert Nugent was the object of a 1999 Vatican censure, was in Rome this week.

The purpose was to publicize the Italian edition of her book (co-written with Nugent), *Building Bridges: Gay & Lesbian Reality & the Catholic Church* (Twenty-Third Publications/Bayard). The Italian title is *Anime Gay: Gli omosessuali e la chiesa cattolica*, published by Editori Riuniti.

I hoped to have a quiet chat, but a documentary crew was following Gramick, and they wanted me to ask some tough questions to add spice to their film. Hence we spent an hour and a half on a hot Roman afternoon walking up and down the streets of Prati, trying to look natural while a camera trailed us.

I asked Gramick about the split in the Anglican Communion over the ordination of a gay bishop, and if she worried about pushing the Catholic church, at least in the United States, towards a similar rupture. She replied that unity based on injustice is false.

I then asked if Gramick had read Philip



Sr. Jeannine Gramick

Jenkins' book *The Next Christendom*, in which he argues that the demographic shift in Christianity towards Africa, Latin America, and Asia will push the church in a conservative direction. What if the global church is not prepared to adopt Gramick's view of homosexuality?

Gramick said this is a dilemma for her. Do you want democracy in the church if you lose the vote? But deep down, she doesn't believe this is how things will shake out. She is convinced that her positive stance towards gays and lesbians will carry the day.

I pressed Gramick on her rejection of a silencing from her former religious community. Other reformers (Cardinal Yves Congar, Jesuit Fr. John Courtney Murray, Dominican Fr. Marie-Dominique Chenu) faced orders they believed were unjust, but submitted out of loyalty to the church. Gramick said they had a different concept of authority, and she does not believe in blind obedience.

One can disagree with Gramick's theology or her tactics, but one cannot help but admire her tenacity. I'll look forward to seeing the documentary. ▀

Church music director fired over vow refusal

Continued from page 7

"He should not be in such a position," said Marjorie Coleman of St. Edward parish on 11th Street, who calls herself "a strong old Catholic — 77 years."

Church officials did not announce news about the firing, but word spread quickly. Stein received more than 100 calls, letters and e-mails of support in the days after he was dismissed.

On Sunday, a previously scheduled choir picnic turned into an appreciation and rally, with choir members offering farewells, toasts, hugs and tears.

"I'm very disappointed and saddened with the dismissal and the lack of information coming from the church regarding it," choir member David Mason said.

Mary Parry, who has been singing in church choirs for 30 years, said Stein taught members how to make spiritual contact with God.

"The most important part of singing in the choir was the sacredness of liturgy, and Bill made sure we knew that," Parry said.

"Those kinds of lessons were taught to kids, too," said Kathleen Prohaska, a senior at Boylan who plays flute with Holy Family's contemporary choir.

"He treats them just like he would adults," Prohaska said. "He helps them grow with music."

Some of Stein's supporters expressed outrage at the choir gathering, shouting out suggestions for protest, but Stein told them to keep the faith and discouraged them from responding with anger.

"The saddest thing is not that I lost a job. I'll get a job somewhere doing something," Stein said. "The saddest thing is the people who have told me that this has shaken their faith."

The incident is shameful, said Mary Zuba, a member of St. James Church on Second Street in Rockford and half of the first same-sex couple to adopt a nonrelated child in Illinois.

"Bill and his partner want to share their love with a child. They also want to have their church family share their anticipated joy, and what happens?"

The leaders of their church family reject them," Zuba said. "I would hate to think of what it would be like to be without our church family. I hope I never see the day, but events such as these make me feel less secure."

Rockford publisher John Gile, who attends Cathedral of St. Peter on Church Street, said the issue is not about the character of Stein, whom he does not know.

"Anyone working in a Catholic institution, whether it be a high school or a parish, is required to live in a chaste manner," Gile said. "If we're going to be in a leadership position, the organization sets the rules. The standard cannot be tossed aside." ■

Gay Friendly Parishes

Below is a partial list of known "gay-friendly" Catholic parishes and faith communities. Thank you for helping us add to this growing list! If you are aware of such a parish that is known as welcoming lesbian and 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, involvement with parents, or simply the friendliness of pastoral staff.

Alabama

Montgomery: St. Bede

Arizona

Mesa: Christ the King

Scottsdale: Franciscan Renewal Center

Tucson: Ss. Peter and Paul, St. Pius X, Our Mother of Sorrows, St. Odilia

California

Berkeley: Holy Spirit Parish

Claremont: Our Lady of the Assumption

Eagle Rock: St. Dominic's

Goleta: St. Mark's University Parish

Hawthorne: St. Joseph's

LaPuente: St. Martha

Long Beach: St. Matthew's

Los Angeles: Blessed Sacrament,

Christ the King, Loyola-Marymount University, Mother of Good Counsel, St. Camillus de Lellis, St. Paul the Apostle

North Hollywood: St. Jane

Frances de Chantal,

Sacramento: St. Francis of Assisi

San Diego: Christ the King, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, St. Didicus

San Francisco: Most Holy Redeemer, Old St. Mary's Cathedral

San Rafael: Church of San Rafael & Mission San Rafael Archangel

Santa Cruz: Holy Cross

Santa Monica: St. Monica's

Spring Valley: Santa Sophia

Valinda: St. Martha's

West Hollywood: St. Ambrose, St. Victor's

Whittier: St. Mary of the Assumption

Colorado

Boulder: St. Thomas Aquinas

Denver: St. Dominic's

Connecticut

Hartford: St. Patrick-St. Anthony

District of Columbia

Dahlgren Chapel-Georgetown: University, Holy Trinity, St. Aloysius, St. Matthew Cathedral

Florida

Cassellberry: St. Augustine

Ft. Lauderdale: St. Anthony, St. Maurice

Melbourne: Ascension Parish

Naples: St. John the Evangelist

Winter Haven: St. Matthew

Georgia

Atlanta: Shrine of the Immaculate Conception

Illinois

Berwyn: St. Mary of the Celle

Chicago: St. Clement

Country Club Hills: St. Emeric

Morton Grove: St. Martha

Indiana

Evansville: St. Mary

Iowa

Iowa City: St. Thomas More

Kentucky

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

Massachusetts

Boston: Boston College, Jesuit Urban Center/Immaculate Conception, Paulist Center

Provincetown: St. Peter the Apostle

Worcester: Holy Cross College

Maine

Saco: Most Holy Trinity

Maryland

Baltimore: Corpus Christi, Loyola College, St. Francis of

Assisi, St. Philip and James

Columbia: St. John the

Evangelist

Gaithersburg: St. Rose of Lima

Hagerstown: St. Ann

Severn: St. Bernadette

Michigan

St. Ignace: St. Ignatius Loyola

Missouri

Kansas City: Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, St. Francis Xavier

St. Louis: Holy Family, Holy Innocents, St. Cronan, St. Margaret of Scotland, St. Pius V

Minnesota

Minneapolis: St. Frances

Cabrini, St. Joan of Arc, St. Stephen

St. Paul: College of

St. Catherine, University of St. Thomas

New Jersey

Clifton: St. Brendan

Wayside: St. Anselm's

New Mexico

Espanola: Sacred Heart of Jesus

New York

Brooklyn: St. Andrew the Apostle, St. Boniface

East Islip: St. Mary

Long Island: St. Bridget's, Westbury; St. Elizabeth, Melville

Manhattan: Holy Name of Jesus, St. Joseph (Greenwich Village), St. Francis Xavier, St. Paul the Apostle

Rochester: Emmanuel Church of the Deaf, St. Augustine, St. John the Evangelist (Humboldt St.), St. Mary's, St. Monica

Syracuse: St. Andrew the Apostle

North Carolina

Charlotte: St. Peter

Durham: Immaculate Conception

Fayetteville: St. Patrick

Raleigh: St. Francis of Assisi

Ohio

Akron: St. Martha

Cincinnati: Lesbian/Gay Ministry, Xavier University; St. Monica-St. George

Newman Center, University of Cincinnati

Cleveland: Ascension of Our Lord, St. Malachi

Columbus: St. Thomas More Newman Center, Ohio State University

Dayton: University of Dayton Campus Ministry



Oregon

Central Point: Shepherd of the Valley

Portland: Koinonia Catholic Community, St. Andrew, St. Phillip Neri, St. Vincent de Paul

Pennsylvania

Philadelphia: Old St. Joseph's, Old St. Mary's, St. John the Evangelist, St. Vincent de Paul

York: St. Joseph

Texas

Austin: University Catholic Center-University of Texas

Dallas: Holy Trinity

San Antonio: University of the Incarnate Word

Virginia

Arlington: Our Lady Queen of Peace

Richmond: Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Sacred Heart Parish

Roanoke: St. Gerard's

Virginia Beach: St. Nicholas

Washington

Seattle: St. Benedict

West Virginia

Shepherdstown: St. Agnes

Wisconsin

Madison: St. Benedict Center Sunday Assumbly

Milwaukee: Prince of Peace, Trinity-Guadalupe

Wauwatosa: St. Pius X

The Vatican, Theologians, and Same-Sex Marriage

By Francis DeBernardo

The American Catholic
Farmington, Connecticut
April 2003

"A union between a man and woman is the only true one in God's eyes," Pope John Paul II said during his message to the Pontifical conference on Families held in the Philippines in January this year. A family, he added, is "certainly not that inauthentic one based on individual egoism. Experience has shown that such a 'caricature' has no future and cannot give future to any society."

These most recent remarks from the pontiff are the latest example of several statements condemning same-sex marriage that have issued from the Vatican and from the mouth of the pope himself over the past few years. Opposition from the Catholic hierarchy has grown more vocal as the worldwide movement for gay and lesbian rights has made some strides in gaining recognition for same-sex couples. Most recently Belgium has granted equal recognition for lesbian/gay couples, and the European Union has urged its members to enact similar legislation. In the U.S., Vermont is the only state in the union that does so, yet many other local governments have been granting some benefits for domestic partnerships—a "lite" version of same-sex marriages.

It would be a mistake, however, to view this clash as simply a battle between Catholics and gay rights political groups. While the pope holds up the heterosexual standard of marriage as the only acceptable norm, theologians within the Church have been challenging many of the assumptions upon which this standard is based. Support for the approval of same-sex marriage is not simply a position of the secular gay-rights movement, but of a growing group of moral theologians in the U.S.

The Church hierarchy's opposition to same-sex marriage is based more on its marriage teaching than on its teaching about lesbian/gay people, though the two areas are intimately related. The definition of marriage is found both in canon law and the Catechism: "The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of the offspring" (#1601). The Catechism goes on to state, "the vocation to marriage is written in the very nature of man and woman as they came from the hand of the Creator. Marriage is not a purely human institution despite the many variations it may have undergone through the centuries in different cultures, social structures, and spiritual attitudes" (#1603).

Relevant themes that emerge from these quotations are that procreation is an essential part of marriage and that gender complementarity is the only natural combination of partners. Both of these principles would eliminate same-sex couples from the definition of marriage. In fact, the Catechism's review of Church teaching on homosexuality states that homosexual acts "...are contrary to the natural law.

They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved." The Catechism doesn't state a policy about same-sex marriage. A negative policy automatically follows because of a disapproval of sexual activity between people of the same sex. This disapproval flows from the elements of complementarity and procreation.

It is exactly these two elements in the Church's teaching on marriage, however, which theologians have been finding problematic. Complementarity is based on the idea that men and women have distinct "essences" and that they need each other for completion. Complementarity is at the basis of much of Catholic thinking about the sexes and also about the Church. The bride and bridegroom metaphor for the Church governs some important policy in Catholicism, including the ban on women's ordination. If men and women have different essences given to them by nature, then they have different social roles that they need to fulfill. More importantly, only the proper gender can perform each one's distinct roles.

The Catechism explains complementarity this way: "Man and woman were made 'for each other'—not that God left them half-made and incomplete: he created them to be a community of persons, in which each can be 'helpmate' to the other, for they are equal as persons...and complementary as masculine and feminine (#372)...Physical, moral, and spiritual difference and complementarity are oriented toward the goods of marriage and the flourishing of family life" (#2333). The Catechism uses Scriptural references to support this view of complementarity, most notably the Genesis story—"male and female he created them."

Since the 1970s, theologians influenced by feminist thought have challenged complementarity because of its sexist bias. Rosemary Radford Ruether explained that complementarity "demands the continued dependency and underdevelopment of women in order to validate the thesis that two kinds of personalities exist by nature in males and females and which are each partial expressions of some larger whole. Such a view can allow neither men nor women to be whole persons who can develop both their active and their affective sides."

More recently, Susan Ross, a theologian at Loyola University, Chicago, has pointed out that much of John Paul II's view of women, marriage, Mary, and the Church, are deeply rooted in the idea of gender complementarity. She points out that this view is based on a narrow interpretation of Scriptures, and has not taken into account the advances made in historical criticism or the natural and social sciences. She argues that the concept of complementarity does not allow for the myriad

possibilities of relationships of love which fill the world: parents and children share love, friends share love with other friends, and siblings share love with siblings. She argues that a more familial model of love is needed.

Mutuality in relationships, instead of complementarity, is the antidote that feminist theologians have offered as a model for love. Mutuality stresses equality between partners, each one sharing the gifts they have received as individuals. These theologians argue that the change in gender roles that has taken place in society and in the Church, and the resultant awareness of gender oppression, call for a more just conception of partnership than the one that gender complementarity offers.



By Francis DeBernardo

Intimately connected to the idea of gender complementarity in Catholic teaching is the role of procreation in marriage. For obvious biological reasons, it is probably the largest obstacle to Catholic approval of same-sex marriage. The Catechism states: "The spouses' union achieves the twofold end of marriage: the good of the spouses themselves and the transmission of life. These

two meanings or values of marriage cannot be separated without altering the couple's spiritual life and compromising the good of marriage and the future of the family" (#2363).

Yet, according to Yale theologian Sister Margaret Farley, RSM, the procreative element of marriage has been eroded by Church teaching itself. She points out that with the allowance of natural family planning methods in *Humanae Vitae*, the Church has not kept procreation as an indispensable requirement of all sexual activity. By allowing heterosexual couples to regulate their sexual activity with their fertility cycles, Catholic teaching, in fact, has acknowledged that the reproductive element is not as important as it once was. Why, she asks, does the hierarchy hold out the procreative norm as a reason to ban homosexual marriage when it doesn't require that all heterosexual marital acts be open to procreation?

Historically, the place of reproduction in marriage has changed dramatically over the centuries. In the early Christian days, heavily under the influence of Stoic philosophical values, reproduction was seen as the only moral justification for sexual union. The unitive factor, i.e., bringing the couple closer to each other, was later accepted as an important factor in marriage, but seen as a secondary purpose. The Second Vatican Council elevated the unitive factor to an equal status with the procreative element. Some theologians saw this as an important development in understanding marriage, emphasizing that the unitive function may be more important than the procreative element.

Sister Farley is one theologian who has argued that the important guidepost for developing an ethic for marriage is the quality of the

relationship. Principles such as free-consent of the partners, equality between partners, a sense of commitment, and permanency, she argues, provide a better basis for evaluating the good in a partnership than the Church's current teaching with its heavy biological emphasis. For example, one of the principles she argues for is that a couple's relationship does not have to be procreative, but should be generative. In other words, the issue is not whether the couple's marriage results in procreation, but that their relationship produce integration in the partners so that they can be creative in their lives for the good of the larger community.

Finally, another area of theological discussion is the need to affirm gay/lesbian relationships. John McNeill, a psychotherapist and moral theologian, was the first Catholic scholar to raise this issue in his landmark treatise, *The Church and the Homosexual*, originally published in 1976. Through scriptural interpretation, a re-evaluation of the moral tradition on sexuality, and psychological insights and evidence, McNeill showed that, in justice, the Church needed to abandon its traditional opposition to committed, sexually active lesbian or gay relationships.

McNeill proposed that "The same moral norms should be applied in judging the sexual behavior of a true homosexual as we ordinarily apply to heterosexual activity." Additionally, he made the perhaps more challenging proposal that "there is the possibility of morally good homosexual relationships and that the love which unites the partners in such a relationship, rather than alienating them from God, can be judged as uniting them more closely." In 1976, discussion of same-sex marriage was non-existent, yet though that vocabulary was not used, in effect, McNeill was proposing a theology of marriage for lesbian/gay people.

Since that time, other theologians have followed suit. They argue that since the Church has developed a new understanding of homosexuality as a God-given state, then the Church needs to make accommodations for this type of love. Often they will use evidence and testimony from lesbian/gay people about their experience of the goodness of their committed relationships to support their view.

More importantly, lesbian/gay theologians themselves have contributed to the dialogue about marriage and sexuality which has been flourishing in the Church. These contributions have emphasized that assumptions about lesbian/gay people as promiscuous, unstable, immature, and selfish are not true.

Like many lesbian/gay issues, the issue of same-sex marriage is connected to other issues in the Church. Whether or not to allow same-sex marriage is connected not only to issues of justice and equality for lesbian/gay people, but also, more fundamentally, to questions of the definition of marriage itself, the role of the family, and the definition of sexuality. Continued discussion of this topic will certainly be a growing pain for the Church, but one that will help us examine some of our biggest fears, our greatest joys, and our most intimate needs for connection. ▀