

BANDINGS

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Ruling on same-sex civil marriage a positive step for human rights

Editorial
The National Catholic Reporter
February 20, 2004

The ruling by the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts allowing same-sex civil marriage is a beneficial step along the path of human understanding and human rights.

We say that with every understanding of how strongly some oppose such a notion, often out of deeply held religious conviction. And we say it understanding that civil marriage — whether between heterosexuals or homosexuals — has no effect on sacramental marriage or other religious traditions and their understandings of marriage.

Our own Catholic tradition, drawing on natural law and scripture, holds that marriage is only between a man and a woman. Official Catholic teaching says all homosexual acts are gravely sinful. Other major world religions hold similar views.

It should be noted here that advocating for civil marriage for gays and lesbians is not meant to seem a cavalier defiance of church teaching. The two, for purposes of the current debate, should be separate.

That is not to suggest that church teaching should never inform legislative activity, and that can happen in a number of ways. But there also are any number of areas where church teaching and state law or policies diverge — divorce and contraception come to mind, as do the continuing proliferation of nuclear weapons and the state's insistence on maintaining the death penalty — without harm to the church's teachings or religious practice.

The church maintains strict rules regarding divorce, for example, but does little officially to interfere with the states' rather relaxed approach to granting divorce.

And though a divorced and remarried Catholic might be prohibited from receiving Communion, the church does not seek to



Demanding the right to gay marriage

Chicago Anti-Bashing Network

Belgian cardinal differentiates moral levels of condom use

By Carol Glatz
The Catholic Messenger
January 22, 2004

Using condoms to prevent a life-threatening disease such as HIV/AIDS is not on the same moral level as using them for birth control, said a Belgian cardinal.

"Someone who is infected with the HIV virus and decides to have sex with an uninfected person has to protect his partner by using a condom," said Cardinal Godfried Danneels of Mechelen-Brussels.

Speaking on the Dutch Catholic television program "Kruispunt" Jan. 11, he said that sexual activity is confined morally to the boundaries of marriage between a man and a woman and that abstinence is morally correct and safe in offering protection against HIV infection.

But, Cardinal Danneels said, "If a person infected with HIV has decided to not respect

abstinence, then he has to protect his partner and he can do that — in this case — by using a condom."

Otherwise, he said, an HIV-positive person engaging in sexual activity outside of marriage without a condom not only breaks the Sixth Commandment, "You shall not omit adultery," but also the Fifth Commandment, "You shall not kill."

The church teaches that married couples should not use condoms and other contraceptive devices.

Some church leaders, including some French and African bishops, have said that if a condom is being used to avoid a life-threatening disease, its use is not necessarily a contraceptive action.

Cardinal Danneels said it is the duty of bishops to explain the moral issues surrounding condom use. ▀

deny that person civil benefits because his or her sexual practices might violate the church's understanding of God's law and natural law.

It should also be noted that the official church teaching on homosexuality, relying on ancient understandings of human nature and sexuality, has benefited little, as far as we can see, from new and accumulating insights in the study of such areas as sexuality, psychiatry and medicine.

In terms of scripture, too, we should not lose sight of the fact that slavery was once not only accepted but taught from our sacred texts.

Our understanding of that bit of natural law and God's order has certainly changed dramatically during the past century. Too often scripture is used to justify long-held notions and prejudices, following popular opinion as much as it might shape it.

All of that, of course, could make for good discussion some day within the church, but the church today, it is all too clear, is not receptive to discussion of many difficult issues concerning human sexuality.

Not only was slavery once written into our civil laws, so was the prohibition against racial-

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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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Sister Gramick's Journey Is Filmed

By **Barbara Rick**
May 17, 2004

After three and half years of hard work, Out of The Blue Films, Inc. is pleased to announce completion of the documentary, *In Good Conscience: Sister Jeannine Gramick's Journey of Faith*.

The film tells the story of an American nun's battle with the Vatican over her compassionate and controversial ministry to gay and lesbian Catholics.

Legendary filmmaker, Albert Maysles, who was so moved by Sister Jeannine and her story that he volunteered to film the project, called the fine cut "a masterpiece."

Barbara Kopple, Oscar-winning documentarian, agreed and added, "This is the most insightful and motivational film so far about the Catholic Church." Ms. Kopple also calls *In Good Conscience* "brilliant," "courageous," and "fabulous storytelling."

The film was showcased for film industry executives at the prestigious European Film Market in Berlin in February. It was among a handful of films chosen to be part of the 2004 Independent Feature Project Market Showcase.

On April 25, *In Good Conscience* had its world premiere at the 19th Annual Turin Lesbian/Gay Film Festival in Italy. After the world premiere, the film will screen at various international festivals.

The Canadian premiere will be on May 22nd, in Toronto, at the Inside/Out Toronto Gay & Lesbian Film Festival.

The film will be premiered in the U.S. in New York City at the Lincoln Center on Wednesday, June 9th at 6:30 pm at the Walter Reade Theatre. The event is sponsored by the Independent Feature Project, a nonprofit independent film advocacy group, and The Film Society of Lincoln Center as part of its "Independents Night" series. There will be a filmmaker questions and answers period and a reception to follow. Barbara Rick, the director-producer, Albert Maysles, and Sister Jeannine will be present.

Other screenings include: Newfest 2004, the 16th New York LGBT Film Festival, June 10, 6 pm, Lowes Cineplex 34th Street Theatre; Jacob Burns Film Center, Pleasantville, NY, June 12, 4:30pm; Silverdocs: AFI/Discovery Channel Documentary Film Festival, Silver Spring, MD, June 16, 5 pm.

Another screening will occur in Philadelphia, July 15-22 (date and time to be arranged), as part of the Philadelphia International Gay & Lesbian Film Festival.

After showings at various film festivals, the documentary will be released for theatres, television screens, church basements and high school and college classrooms around the world. The public will be alerted to screenings in local areas.



Sr. Jeannine Gramick

Photo Credit: Cynthia O'Murchu

The film received production funding from Susan Sarandon, Ellen de Generes, Trudie Styler, Agnes Gund (former president of MOMA), Deborah Santana, the Andrew Goodman Foundation, and the H. van Ameringen Foundation, and individual donations from clergy, gay and lesbian Catholics, and the families and friends who love them.

Contact Out of The Blue Films, Inc., 799 Broadway, Suite 609, New York, NY 10003, 212.477.2211 or e-mail info@outofthebluefilms.com for more information about *In Good Conscience*. ▀

Ruling on same-sex civil marriage a positive step for human rights

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ly mixed marriages. They no longer are because our understanding changes, and so do our laws and social proscriptions.

One of the primary arguments heard against gay marriage and the bestowal of benefits it would bring to gay couples is that allowing same-sex marriage will destroy heterosexual marriage.

Traditional marriage, of course, has been in trouble for some time now. Only half of new marriages last, yet among the host of reasons one could enumerate, no one has marshaled evidence showing a cause and effect between gay unions and the high divorce rate.

As of press time here, state lawmakers in Massachusetts were still debating possible amendments to the state Constitution, a process that could nullify the Supreme Judicial Court ruling, but that would also take until at least 2006 to finalize. In the meantime, under the Supreme Judicial Court ruling, same-sex

partners will begin marrying in Massachusetts on May 17.

Whether one likes it or not, gay marriage is a reality if not a legal fact. Gay couples live together, own homes together, often contribute significantly to their communities. Increasingly their children attend our schools and play on our community sports teams and participate in local arts and music events. And increasingly gay couples attend our churches, as families, as full participants, celebrating with us, even sharing our sacramental life, presenting their children for baptism.

We in the church may have a long road of discussion and discernment before us on this issue. But that seems little reason to step into the fray, actively opposing what appears a logical evolution, in the civil arena, of human understanding and a reasonable extension of benefits to members of the community who even the church says should not be unjustly discriminated against. ▀

Nuns' Group Supports Same-Sex Marriage

National Coalition of American Nuns
Board Statement
March 22, 2004

The National Coalition of American Nuns [NCAN] believes that a responsible ethic emanates from both individual conscience and theological reflection within a faith community. We further believe that all persons have a right to choose how they fulfill the divine command to love one another. We are opposed to any environment that does not allow people to follow their consciences and make informed judgments about their own lives. We welcome theological reflection from all the people of God to produce a viable sexual ethic.

There is much disagreement about gay marriage among people of good faith. Some Christian congregations have blessed same-sex unions for years, seeing no contradiction to the Bible or to the natural moral law.

NCAN believes that human consciousness has slowly evolved to accept the dignity and human rights of all people so that slavery is now generally condemned worldwide. The Christian Church's appreciation for the inviolability of religious freedom, its sexual theology, and even its understanding of the meaning of marriage have all changed over the centuries. Can we not imagine that God's Spirit is asking the human community to further examine the question "What is the nature or essence of marriage?" NCAN maintains that love, care, and commitment to another human being, not gender or procreation, form the essence or meaning of marriage.

NCAN believes that civil law, as well as theology, must respect and protect all persons. In a 1974 Board Resolution supporting civil rights for homosexual persons, NCAN stated, "It is

immoral and should be illegal to discriminate against any person because of his or her sexual preference."

In 1996, when the United States Senate considered passage of the "Defense of Marriage Act," which stated that marriage must involve a man and a woman, NCAN opposed the bill. NCAN still opposes any such measure. We believe heterosexual marriage needs no legislative act to defend it because it is no more

threatened by same-sex marriage than by celibate single persons.

While communities of faith debate the theological meaning of marriage and a viable sexual ethic, we believe the political definition of marriage must not be discriminatory. The ethic in the civil arena seems clear: If heterosexual unions or marriages are recognized by the state, a lack of similar recognition of same-sex unions or marriages is an unambiguous

discrimination based on sexual orientation. Such discrimination is politically and morally wrong.

Founded in 1969, the National Coalition of American Nuns is a group of approximately 500 women religious in the Catholic Church in the United States who are dedicated to studying, working, and speaking out on issues of human rights and social justice. ▀

Former nun preaches acceptance, provides support

By Liz Stevens

Fort Worth Star Telegram, Fort Worth, TX
June 29, 2003

The first Monday of each month, Rita Cotterly's office fills up with men. Men wearing wigs and dresses and calling themselves Cindy or Stacy. Men who no longer consider themselves men — and are happier this way. Or hoping to be.

Cotterly's lamp-lit Fort Worth office is one of the few places that many of them can feel absolutely secure and unjudged.

The Monday-night transgender support group has met once a month since 1990, the year Cotterly received her doctorate degree in human sexuality from New York University and returned to Fort Worth.

Before that, for 35 years, the sex educator was a Catholic nun. As a sister of St. Mary of Namur, she spent five years as the principal of

Holy Name Elementary School in Fort Worth and another five as the director of education for the Fort Worth Catholic Diocese.

She doesn't find her new vocation, as an outspoken advocate for the gay and transgendered communities, inconsistent with her old community. And she doesn't mince words when it comes to educating whoever will listen about transgenderism.

"Sex is between the legs, but gender is between the ears," she likes to say. "You can dress a child in pearls and pink and give them dolls, but if they are male, they are male, and they will soon find out."

The vast majority of Cotterly's support-group regulars are male-to-female (MTF) transsexuals, though occasionally the meetings will include a woman living as a man. Female-to-male (FTM) transsexuals make up



Rita Cotterly, right, has led a transgender support group out of her Fort Worth office for the past 13 years. The first Monday and third Friday of each month, anywhere from a handful to a couple dozen of Cotterly's clients show up to share their experiences. Cotterly, a former nun, is a relentless advocate for both the transgendered and gay/lesbian communities.

between one-third and one-half of the transsexual population, but have received considerably less media attention. Two of the MTF transsexuals regularly attend group meetings with their wives.

The mood of the meetings fluctuates: spontaneous laughter one minute, choked-

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Bishops Assail Gay Marriages as a Threat

By THOMAS J. LUECK

The New York Times
March 10, 2004

Cardinal Edward Egan and other senior Roman Catholic clerics traveled to Albany yesterday to meet with Gov. George E. Pataki and top lawmakers to convey their church's staunch opposition to same-sex marriage.

Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio of Brooklyn, who discussed the church's position in a radio interview, condemned same-sex marriage as something that might, by extension, be compared to the legal union of people and their pets.

"I will give you an example, O.K.?" Bishop DiMarzio said in an appearance on Fred Dicker's political talk show on WROW-AM. "You want to reduce something to the absurd, which is basically rhetorical use of an image: Why can't we have marriages between people and pets?" the bishop said. "I mean, pets really love their masters and why can't we have a marriage so they could inherit their money?"

When asked by Mr. Dicker, who is a political writer for The New York Post, if he thought same-sex marriage might be a "Pandora's Box" that would lead to other forms of legally sanctioned unions, Bishop DiMarzio said, "It certainly is."

"There is no end to it unless we really come back to some common understanding of our roots as a country," he said.

The bishop's comments drew harsh criticism from advocates of gay rights and same-sex marriage.

"This is hard to believe in this day and age," said State Senator Thomas K. Duane, a Manhattan Democrat.

The senator added: "It is very sad he is unable to have a substantial discussion on the issue and that he is trying to reduce the discourse to a childish, nonsensical level."

Frank DeRosa, a spokesman for the Diocese of Brooklyn, declined to elaborate on the bishop's comments. Speaking by telephone last night, he said the bishop was traveling

back to Brooklyn from Albany and could not be reached.

Kevin Cathcart, executive director of the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, said Bishop DiMarzio should "take his absurd arguments and stay home."

"The bishop used the word 'absurd,' and I'll use it again," Mr. Cathcart said. "If this is his idea of an argument against treating people fairly, and against treating us all equally under the Constitution, then I haven't heard anything as absurd all day."

The bitter response to Bishop DiMarzio came on a day when he and his fellow clerics, including bishops from across the state, made their annual lobbying trip to Albany. They made their case in a political environment that appeared to preclude changes in the marriage law.

The issue is deemed so politically sensitive that lawmakers show little inclination to amend the current law to allow same-sex marriage or forbid it in more explicit terms. Instead, lawmakers of both parties appear to be staying on

the sidelines, leaving the issue to the courts.

Cardinal Egan, who met with Governor Pataki and Senate Majority Leader Joseph L. Bruno, said same-sex marriage should be forbidden for the good of society and to sustain traditional families.

"I wouldn't be surprised if the governor understood marriage pretty much the same as all of us do," Cardinal Egan said after his meeting with Mr. Pataki. The governor has expressed strong personal opposition to same-sex marriage.

Cardinal Egan discussed other topics, including the need for better housing and health care for the poor, in his Albany meetings. But it was clearly same-sex marriage that topped the agenda.

In a homily at noon in the state convention center, Cardinal Egan told 1,000 worshipers that it was essential to "champion the rights of the family."

He added: "It is the most basic, essential and sacred component of society." ▀

Rev. Daley discloses he's gay

By KRISTA J. KARCH

The Observer-Dispatch, Utica, NY
March 26, 2004

The Rev. Fred Daley, longtime pastor at St. Francis DeSales Church on Eagle Street, trusts the community will continue to accept him after his acknowledgment that he is gay.

He made the disclosure during an interview with the *Observer-Dispatch* Thursday. The interview was in advance of Daley's "Real Hero" award, which he accepted from the United Way of the Greater Utica Area Thursday evening. The award was in recognition of his social ministry on Hospitality Row, where many of Utica's poor are served.

"I'm the same person today as I was yesterday," he said. "My expectation and prayer is that people will continue to love and respect me." Daley said he shared this information with the bishops of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Syracuse as well as a few close friends and family members.

Celibacy is a "charism," or a gift for some people, he said. "I myself am gay, and I am committed to living a celibate life," he said.

Despite a tremendous amount of fear and anxiety about coming out publicly, Daley said he feels called by God to do so and is ready to accept whatever "rejection or misunderstanding surrounding this."

Daley's decision to come out occurs at a time when both the Catholic Church and the nation are grappling with changes in society that have led gays to seek greater acceptance. As recently as 2002, Vatican officials considered barring men with "homosexual tendencies" from seminaries, *The Associated Press* reported.

In September of that year, the Rev. Andrew Baker, an American staff member of the *Congregation for Bishops*, wrote an article for *Jesuit* magazine that said gay men "should not be admitted to holy orders, and (their) presence in the seminary would not only give him false hope but it may, in fact, hinder" the therapy he

needs, the AP reported.

Danielle Cummings, spokeswoman for the Syracuse Diocese, said priests have an obligation to celibacy, whatever their sexual orientation. A priest's homosexuality does not result in dismissal from the priesthood.

Cummings said Thursday evening she was not aware of contact about this issue between Daley and the bishops. Other diocesan leaders were unavailable for comment Thursday night.

St. Francis DeSales is one of three Utica Catholic churches working on a plan to integrate and become one parish under one priest, with three campuses, by July 2006. Daley is nearing the end of a second, six-year term as pastor of St. Francis, and he hopes to stay in Utica even after completion of that obligation.

"I respect the bishops of our diocese, and I know they respect me and my ministry," Daley said. Daley said his decision to come out stems from what he views as the scapegoating of gay clergy over the sexual abuse crisis within the Catholic Church.

"There are many gay priests committed to celibacy, living a celibate life, and doing a beautiful ministry for the church," Daley said.

Daley was at the center of controversy two years ago, when he was asked to step aside as main speaker at a 9/11 memorial event because there were plans for St. Francis DeSales to host a gay and lesbian Mass. Local firefighters, who were deeply involved in the execution of the event, insisted that Daley be removed.

"All these other issues and crusades should not cloud what this one day is all about," Assistant Fire Chief Russell Brooks said at the time. "Sept. 11 is supposed to be a day of uniting and healing. I think it's very inappropriate for (Daley) to bring this to light on that day."

Utica Mayor Tim Julian said the main

speaker should not be someone who speaks out on controversial issues. "If it was Gay Pride Day, then Father Daley would be very fitting," Julian said.

Utica Common Councilman Bill Phillips attended the Mass in support of Daley. He said he would do the same thing again now.

"Whatever his sexual preference is, it really doesn't concern me," Phillips said Thursday night. "I will say he is one of the greatest humanitarians that I have ever met."

The controversy spurred a community debate that led to the publication of more than 100 letters to the editor in the *O-D*. Friends of Daley believe he may face negative reactions, but that those who truly know him will be supportive.

"Like the New Testament says, you judge a person by the fruits of their labor," said Michael Crinnin, a longtime friend of Daley's and executive director of AIDS Community

Resources. "He has nothing to show for himself but an incredible number of good works."

Sister Betty Giarrusso, C.S.J., has worked with Daley for the past 10 years at St. Francis DeSales. She said the "Real Hero" award has always been appropriate for Daley, but particularly now that he has opened up publicly about his sexual orientation.

"I think any time we live from our truth, we don't know what those consequences will be," Giarrusso said. "If others have a difficulty accepting who we are or how we're trying to live, there's a sadness to that. But to betray oneself is the greatest sadness of all."

Daley hopes his public acknowledgment will ultimately educate people about homosexuality, and help others who are struggling to come out.

"I know that some people will not understand and it may add to confusion on the part



Rev. Fred Daley

of many, but in prayer I felt that in the long run, the truth — this truth — will help many," he said, adding that homophobia is the result of ignorance. "I'm being faithful to myself and the Gospel of Jesus." ▀

Nun Receives Tom Dooley Award

By David Barber

Los Angeles
November 22, 2003

Sr. Jeannine Gramick received the 2003 Thomas Dooley III, M.D. Award of Exceptional Service for her career of 30+ years of ministry to gay and lesbian Catholics, November 22, 2003, in Hollywood, CA, from the Gay and Lesbian Alumni/ae Association of the University of Notre Dame and Saint Mary's College (GALAND/SMC)

The annual award is named for Dr. Thomas Dooley, the gay Notre Dame grad who achieved world fame in the 1950s as a doctor who set up charitable hospitals to assist the needy of Vietnam and Laos.

Dooley died of cancer at the age of 34 in 1961, but Notre Dame has made an extraordinary effort to keep his memory alive since then by building notable memorials to him around its campus, including a tribute room in the student center and a statue of Dooley at the school's famed grotto. In 1993, Randy Shilts' book "Conduct Unbecoming" revealed a secret fact about the heroic figure who was once seriously considered for Catholic saint-



Sr. Jeannine Gramick receives the Tom Dooley Award

Growing Priesthood Dissent On Vatican Anti-Gay Rhetoric

365Gay.com, Newcenter Staff
January 29, 2004

Thirty Rochester, New York area priests have signed a strongly worded letter protesting what they call the Vatican's violent language toward gays.

The priests say they hope others will join in the growing dissent to a 12 page Vatican document containing some of the most strident language the Church has ever used on the subject of homosexuality. The document was released last July but is only now being implemented in the Rochester Diocese.

It calls gays "deviant and a threat to society" and tells priests to remind Catholic politicians of their religious obligations to fight same-sex marriage.

The document, prepared by the Vatican, also says that "allowing children to be adopted by persons living in [same-sex] unions would actually mean doing violence to these children" because the environment "is not conducive to their full human development."

"Language can destroy or build up," said the Rev. Joe Marcoux, a signer of the letter. Marcoux serves Sacred Heart Cathedral, Holy Rosary and Most Blessed Blood parishes in Rochester.

Marcoux said he has a large number of gays and lesbians in his own parish. "For me, because of my experience ministering to gay and lesbian people and helping them understand the church teaching, I have to sign this document risk or no risk. It's a matter of conscience."

"These people have value in our church. They have gifts that our church needs. Every person has an inherent dignity because he or she was created in God's image."

The Rochester priests join 23 priests from the Archdiocese of Chicago who signed a similar letter in December. ▀

hood: Dooley had been ousted from the U.S. Navy for being gay.

Past recipients of The Dooley Award include Brian McNaught, a champion of workplace diversity training and corporate domestic-partner benefits; Virginia M. Apuzzo, who is the highest-ranking openly lesbian official ever to serve in the White House; Phil Donahue, a Notre Dame graduate and tireless champion of gay rights for more than two decades; and Father Mychal Judge, the gay New York City firefighter's chaplain who died ministering to the victims of the attack on the World Trade Center (award granted posthumously). ▀

Chicago Priests Revolt Against Vatican Anti-Gay Stand

By Steph Smith

365Gay.com, Chicago Bureau
December 21, 2003

Nearly two-dozen Chicago area priests in an open letter have denounced the Vatican's anti-gay rhetoric, calling it "vile and toxic."

Saying they can no longer remain silent, the priests from parishes in both the city of Chicago and the suburbs the priests said the Church is being "divisive and exclusionary" and "increasingly violent and abusive."

It is the first mass revolt in the Catholic Church by clergy over the issues of gay priests and same-sex marriage.

"As priests and pastors we are speaking out to make clear that our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters are all members of God's family, brothers and sisters in the Lord Jesus and deserving of the same dignity and respect owed any human being," the letter stated.

The priests said they were particularly disturbed by Vatican documents that called gay sex and same-sex marriage as "intrinsically disordered," "a troubling moral and social phenomenon" and "harmful to the proper development of society." Such language is driving gays from the church, the letter said.

In April a new Vatican dictionary was released saying gays have no "social value). A 12-page direction to clergy in July said same-sex marriage was "deviant and a threat to society". In October, the Vatican directed priests in AIDS ravaged Africa to tell people not to use condoms because they will not stop the disease. Earlier this month the Vatican suspended ecumenical talks with the Anglican Church over the consecration of a gay bishop in the US.

Cardinal Francis George, the bishop of Chicago, issued a response saying: "The church speaks, in moral and doctrinal issues, a philosophical and theological language in a society that understands, at best, only psychological and political terms."

"Our language is exact, but it does not help us in welcoming men and women of homosexual orientation," he wrote. "It can seem lacking in respect. This is a pastoral problem and a source of anxiety for me as it is for you. It would be good to discuss together."

But George went on to say that pastors must "mediate the tension between welcoming people and calling them to change."

If "you cannot resolve that tension between welcoming people as they are and still calling them to leave their sinfulness and become saints, or if you yourself do not accept the Church's moral teaching on the moral use of the gift of sexuality, it would be all the more important for us to talk," he wrote. ▀

December 19, 2003

An Open Letter to the Hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church Regarding the Pastoral Care of Gay and Lesbian Persons

As Catholic pastors, we have become increasingly disturbed by the tone and, in some cases, content of documents and statements from the Vatican, bishops' conferences and individual bishops on issues categorized under the heading of "homosexual" or "gay/lesbian." We respect the teaching authority of the Church. Because of this, we find particularly troubling the increase in the use of violent and abusive language directed at any human person. Such language is inappropriate. This is especially so when addressing members of the community of the faithful. These divisive and exclusionary statements from the Church are contrary to sound pastoral practice.

The life journey in faith is unique and sacred, including the personal integration of sexuality and spirituality. Condemnations leveled at sincere Catholics attempting to make sense out of their journey are inappropriate and pastorally destructive.

As priests and pastors we are speaking out to make clear that our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters are all members of God's family, brothers and sisters in the Lord Jesus and deserving of the same dignity and respect owed any human being. Recognition of the inalienable dignity of the human person is the only path toward justice and reconciliation. We affirm the goodness of all homosexual persons. We root ourselves in the U.S. Bishops' statement "Always Our Children." Additionally, we re-affirm the understanding of the goodness of the human person as put forth throughout the papacy of Pope John Paul II. Further, we want to state clearly that ministering to and with our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters is mutually beneficial, as is all ministerial activity. Pre-judging where any believer's journey will take them is inappropriate. Walking with them, as we do with our heterosexual brothers and sisters, is the appropriate Christian response.

In the recent past, individual bishops, bishops' conferences and the Vatican have assumed a tone of such violence and abusiveness toward these sons and daughters of the Church, we can no longer remain silent. Has any other group of people within the Body of Christ been so assaulted and violated by such mean-spirited language? Examples from the most recent Vatican document show all too clearly the demonization of these children of God, referring to homosexuality as a "troubling moral and social phenomenon," "a serious depravity," "the spread of the phenomenon," "approval or legalization of evil," "grave detriment to the common good," "harmful to the proper development of human society," "intrinsically disordered." Does anyone consider this vile and toxic language invitational?

For many gay and lesbian Catholics, this most recent series of attacks has forced them, out of self-respect and self-love, to withdraw from active participation in the Church and question how they can remain members of a Church they experience as abusive. It is not possible to minister to and with the needs of our homosexual brothers and sisters with language of this tone as a foundation.

The Catholic Church is most catholic when it is inclusive and embracing, and least reflective of the gospel of Jesus when it is exclusive and rigid. For this reason, we also want to affirm the many pastoral and positive statements by certain bishops and bishops' conferences (e.g. "Always Our Children").

The Church's theology, including her moral teaching, is always in dialogue with the broader lived experience of her members, which shapes and rearticulates the ancient deposit of faith. We encourage a new atmosphere of openness to dialogue which includes the lived experience of many Catholic members. We recognize the blessings of countless homosexuals in a variety of relationships. We believe their experiences must be listened to respectfully.

While we do not know the reasons for the increasingly violent and abusive language, we deplore it as ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ and ask that it stop immediately. Furthermore, we request that all those in official positions of teaching authority in the Church refrain from any more statements directed AT the gay and lesbian members of the Body of Christ, and instead begin an earnest dialogue WITH those same members of the Body of Christ.

For our part, we pledge to treat all who seek to continue their faith journey with us with respect and dignity, regardless of their sexual orientation.

We join the countless men and women, heterosexual and homosexual, who seek justice, mercy and compassion in and through the Catholic Church.

We extend an invitation all who share our concern to duplicate this letter, sign it, and send it to their pastor, local bishop, National Bishop's Conference or the Vatican.

(Parish names are listed for identification purposes only.)

Rev. David Baldwin
St. Benedict the
African-East
Chicago, IL

Rev. Nicholas
Desmond
St. Aloysius
Chicago, IL

Rev. Michael
Herman
St. Sylvester
Chicago, IL

Rev. Terry Johnson
St. Francis Xavier
LaGrange, IL

Rev. Thomas Pelton
Maternity BVM
Chicago, IL

Rev. Patrick Tucker
St. Bernardine
Forest Park, IL

Rev. Daniel Cassidy
St. Mark
Chicago, IL

Rev. Brian Fischer
St. Gregory the Great
Chicago, IL

Rev. Thomas Hickey
St. Clement
Chicago, IL

Rev. Patrick Lee
Immaculate
Conception
Chicago, IL

Rev. Richard
Prendergast
St. Mary of Celle
Berwyn, IL

Rev. Daniel
Whiteside
St. Catherine of
Siena/St. Lucy
Oak Park, IL

Rev. Dennis Condon
St. Marcelline
Schaumburg, IL

Rev. Donald Headley
St. Mary of the
Woods
Chicago, IL

Rev. John Hoffman
St. Teresa of Avila
Chicago, IL

Rev. Robert
McLaughlin
Mary Seat of
Wisdom
Park Ridge, IL

Rev. Michael
Shanahan
St. Mark
Chicago, IL

Rev. Bart Winters
St. Gregory the Great
Chicago, IL

Rev. Lloyd
Cunningham, S.V.D.
Catholic Theological
Union
Chicago, IL

Rev. Robert P. Heinz
St. Alphonsus
Liguori
Prospect Heights, IL

Rev. Richard Homa
Sacred Heart
Palos Hills, IL

Rev. Dennis O'Neill
St. Martha
Morton Grove, IL

Rev. William J.
Stenzel
St. Francis Xavier
LaGrange, IL

International News Briefs

Archbishop Tutu Gives Hope for Gays and Lesbians

By **Andy Harley**
Ukgaynews.org.uk
February 6, 2004

Archbishop Desmond Tutu has said homophobia is, to him, as “totally unacceptable and unjust as Apartheid ever was.”

And the former Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, South Africa, in a sermon at Southwark Cathedral in London, fired what amounts to an ecclesiastical torpedo into the school of the Anglican Church that insists homosexuality is wrong.

“The Jesus I worship is not likely to collaborate with those who vilify and persecute an already oppressed minority,” he said. “I myself could not have opposed the injustice of penalizing people for something about which they could do nothing — their race — and then have kept quiet as women were being penalized for something they could do nothing about — their gender, and hence my support inter alia, for the ordination of women to the priesthood and the episcopate.

“And equally, I could not myself keep quiet whilst people were being penalized for something about which they could do nothing, their sexuality.

“For it is so improbable that any sane, normal person would deliberately choose a lifestyle exposing him or her to so much vilification, opprobrium and physical abuse, even death.

“To discriminate against our sisters and brothers who are lesbian or gay on grounds of their sexual orientation for me is as totally unacceptable and unjust as Apartheid ever was.”

He also saluted openly gay, but celibate, Canon Jeffrey John, Chancellor and Canon Theologian of Southwark, who last year was appointed Bishop of Reading in the UK, only to stand-down less than a month after the announcement.

“I hope so very much that you have got over the anguish of last summer and may I salute Canon Jeffrey John who acted with so much dignity and selfless generosity,” the Archbishop said.

Archbishop Tutu is perhaps the most respected living Anglican. A theologian of distinction, he was the winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984 and holds many honorary doctorates at universities in USA, Great Britain and Germany.

And what he said in Southwark Cathedral this week gives support for gays and lesbians throughout the world as they struggle for acceptance by the church, and the their politicians.

His remarks from the pulpit at Southwark were perhaps as encouraging

to gays and lesbians as his remarks were to two young Americans who interviewed the Archbishop in 1995.

“There is no one who is a nobody. ... Everybody is a VSP — a very special person,” he said. And the Archbishop concluded: “Dream! Dream. And then go for it! ... (If) this world can become a better place — go for it!”

Archbishop Tutu had an equally poignant ending for his Southwark sermon.

“How incredibly, wonderfully, it is that God says to you, to me: ‘There is nothing you can do to make me love you less. I take you, I take you very seriously, I take you — you — body and soul, you the visible and the invisible of you, I love you, I love you, I love you.’”

Priest backs same-sex marriage

The National Catholic Reporter
March 5, 2004

TORONTO — Fr. Timothy Ryan, 67, has filed an affidavit with the Supreme Court of Canada in support of same-sex marriages and in direct opposition to a recent document from the Vatican condemning homosexual unions. The definition of marriage should include same-sex couples, said Ryan, who has worked for 30 years with the gay and lesbian community. “As with various issues touching on matters of sex and sexuality, many Canadian Catholics do not share the views of the hierarchy, including myself,” he said.

Canada’s federal government has asked the Supreme Court to consider including same-sex couples in the definition of marriage. The court is to deal with the question by fall.

In an intervention with the court, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops has argued that marriage is only between a man and a woman and a draft bill supporting same-sex unions breaches constitutional freedoms of conscience and religion. Ryan is a member of the Scarborough Foreign Missions Society, but society officials said his ministry to homosexuals was personal, not an assignment.

English Bishops warn of consequences of same-sex partnerships in Britain

Catholic News Service
October 1, 2003

MANCHESTER, England (CNS) — Catholic bishops in England and Wales warned that government proposals to recognize same-sex partnerships could have seri-

ous long-term consequences. The bishops’ conference submitted an eight-page response to the government’s consultation on the proposals Oct. 1. The bishops argued that the government’s proposals would undermine marriage because the institution would no longer hold a privileged place. “The signal the law would send to rising generations is that marriage as husband and wife and a same-sex relationship are equally valid options and an equally valid context for the upbringing of children,” they said. “By publicly elevating same-sex relationships to a legal status virtually equivalent to civil marriage, the signal given to society would be that these two states of life are equally deserving of public protection and respect, when in fact they are not,” they said.

Belgian Cardinal: Up to 95 percent of homosexuals are ‘sexual perverts’

By **Robert Wielard**
The Associated Press
January 21, 2004

BRUSSELS, Belgium (AP) — Belgian Archbishop Godfried Danneels distanced himself Wednesday from comments by a Belgian cardinal who said in an interview that up to 95 percent of lesbians and gays were ‘sexual perverts.’

Danneels, who is seen as a possible successor to Pope John Paul II, said through a spokesman that Cardinal Gustaaf Joos’ denunciation of lesbians and gays does not reflect the views of Belgian bishops but “is a personal comment.”

Joos, 80, made his remarks in an interview with P-Magazine, a news and entertainment weekly that appeared on news stands Wednesday.

“I am prepared to sign here in my blood that of all those who say they are lesbian or gay, at most 5 to 10 percent are effectively lesbian or gay. All the rest are simply sexual perverts.

“Don’t hesitate to write that down. I demand you write it down. If they (homosexuals) come to protest on my doorstep, I don’t care. I will not open the door.”

Joos — who studied with Pope John Paul II and who was appointed cardinal last year — was unapologetic. “I simply say what thousands of people think,” he told the VRT television network on Wednesday.

Joos made his comments in an interview on the state of Roman Catholicism in overwhelmingly Catholic Belgium, whose legislature legalized gay marriages last year and may soon allow same-sex couples to adopt children.

“Real homosexuals don’t walk the streets in colorful suits,” Joos said in the magazine interview. “They are people with a serious

problem and have to learn to live with it. And if they err, they will be forgiven. We must help those people, not condemn them.”

He added that his church “rejects homosexuality, not homosexuals.”

In the interview, Joos was equally frank in questioning the merits of democracy.

“Politics, democracy. Don’t make me laugh,” he said.

“The right to vote, what is that all about? I think it is curious a snot-nosed, 18-year-old has the same vote as a father of seven. One has no responsibilities whatsoever, the other provides tomorrow’s citizens.”

Toon Onsaer, Danneels’ spokesman, said Joos “does not speak in (the) name of Belgian bishops” and that Danneels’ support for democratic principles was well known. He added that Danneels cannot reprimand Joos “because he comes under the authority of the Vatican.”

Danneels is considered a candidate to succeed John Paul II, whose failing health has fueled speculation he might step down, since he is no longer able to walk or to complete many of his speeches.

Scots Cardinal Uses Christmas For Gay Attack

By **Peter Moore**
365Gay.com, London
December 22, 2003

(Edinburgh) When Keith O’Brien was named Scotland’s new Roman Catholic cardinal this summer there were gasps from both the right and left. Dubbed a “leftie” by conservatives and “a breath of fresh air” by liberals, O’Brien was expected to do nothing less than shake up the church.

But, as he donned his red hat, O’Brien shed his liberal stand on issues like homosexuality and civil unions. After a few scant months as cardinal he seems a cutout of his princely peers.

On the weekend he gave a Christmastime interview with the Scotsman newspaper attacking the state of immorality in contemporary society, saying people are “getting away with murder” with their stance on moral matters.

“It is not Christ’s teaching that if you happen to be homosexual then you can have a partner,” he said. “It is not Christ’s teaching that if your marriage breaks up, you can go and live with somebody else.

“Gay unions and these sort of things are becoming commonplace. Where is society going at all? Is there nobody going to take a stand?”

“We’ve had Christianity here for more than 1,500 years and our standards have plummeted in recent years. I think people in general do realize there has been a dramatic fall in standards.”

He added: “What are we going to do? Are

Cardinal's decision shocks nun

Sister granted doctor of ministry degree, but Ambrozic refused to confer the PhD

By MARY NERSESSIAN
Toronto Globe and Mail
March 8, 2004

When the archbishop of Toronto refused to confer her doctoral degree, a Roman Catholic nun called the church homophobic — because her thesis was about lesbians.

“This is a story of life rejected, of research rejected, and of homophobia manifest in the high reaches of the Roman Catholic church,” Sister Christina Cathro wrote in the most recent edition of the Catholic New Times.

“It is a distressing story, one I tell here in CNT as a way of claiming visibility for myself, and visibility for the ongoing life and struggle of all lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered persons.”

Sister Cathro's thesis was called Listening for the Echo: Contribution of Lesbians' Journeys to Spiritual Direction and Theological Reflection.

Her research looked at the contribution lesbians make to spiritual life and included gay-lesbian theories, theological texts and feminist theory.

She received her doctorate last November. However, St. Michael's College president Richard Alway asked Senator Vivienne Poy, University of Toronto Chancellor, to confer Sister Cathro's degree when Cardinal Aloisius Ambrozic told him he “was concerned about whether it was appropriate for him to personally confer the degree.”

Sister Cathro, who celebrated 25 years in religious life last year, moved from New Zealand to Canada in 1998 to enroll in the

doctor of ministry program with the Toronto School of Theology, conjoint with St. Michael's College at the University of Toronto. It took her five years to complete.

A year into her degree in 1999, she heard that the Vatican had ordered Catholic authors Father Robert Nugent and Sister Jeannine Gramick to end their pastoral work with homosexual people. Sister Cathro decided then to focus her doctoral research on the topic of homosexuality and the church.

In a recent interview from Edmonton, she said she was disheartened that the controversy that had inspired her research four years ago still exists today.

“I'd have to say that I was absolutely shocked,” Sister Cathro said. “I couldn't believe that somebody could do that.”

Sister Cathro, a member of the Sisters of our Lady of the Missions, was unable to fly from her current Edmonton home to Toronto for the November, 2003, convocation at St. Basil's Church and only heard about the incident secondhand.

She said she was upset that the school did not tell her of the archbishop's decision.

“I did not hear about this incident from the official channels of the University of St. Michael's College by call, letter or e-mail. Since the incident was about me and my work, this is both disrespectful and troubling. A message explaining the controversy and inviting my response would have been welcome.”

She chose to respond to the incident by writing the first-person article for Catholic New Times, a subscription-based, left-lean-

ing newspaper that has been published for 27 years.

“Personally, the incident has left me feeling shaken and vulnerable,” she wrote. “It has also called me to deeper reserves of courage and strength.”

She said in the interview that the issue of her own sexuality was not relevant.

Mr. Alway told *The Globe and Mail* that he did not want to speculate on what Cardinal Ambrozic may have been thinking, but he said it was understood when they spoke that the cardinal's decision was specifically because of Sister Cathro.

Ms. Poy said Mr. Alway had called her to step in one to two weeks before the convocation.

It has traditionally been Cardinal Ambrozic's duty to confer all conjoint degrees with the Toronto School of Theology as well as degrees from St. Michael's College.

When asked to comment, the cardinal's communications director, Suzanne Scorsone, said, “The archdiocese is not going to comment on any individual.”

“The cardinal does what is appropriate as Roman Catholic archbishop of Toronto,” she added.

Although she would not comment on the reason for the cardinal's decision, Ms. Scorsone said, “Everyone knows what the teaching of the church is.”

“It's just a question of what was appropriate to the roles of the two chancellors,” she said.

The original convocation program listed Cardinal Ambrozic, St. Michael's College

Chancellor, as the person conferring all degrees. But soon after, a new batch of programs was printed, replacing his title with Ms. Poy's in the case of Sister Cathro and nine other absent conjoint degree candidates.

“I really think the main reason is because the cardinal had a problem with this one graduate,” Ms. Poy said, explaining that she was called in quite suddenly.

She said she was disappointed not to meet Sister Cathro, especially because “her case stood out because she was doing something obviously the Catholic Church is not comfortable with . . . it was because of her case that I was asked to be there.”

“There is absolutely no possibility that her degree would not be granted,” Christopher Lind, director of the Toronto School of Theology, said. Students were free to research whatever subject they wanted, he said, adding “the title of her thesis might have been provocative from the point of view of some.”

In her *New Catholic Times* article, published Feb. 29, Sister Cathro also wrote about the Vatican's decision in 1999 to restrict research into homosexuality.

“I was shaken to the core of my person, and my feminist sensibilities awakened at new depths as I considered the injustice of the Vatican decision.”

She also wrote, “I am keenly aware of the pain, violence, and struggle that are involved in being lesbian. To deepen one's spiritual life in this context is to affirm the struggle for justice as God's yearning for justice, where struggle becomes a name for hope and hope is testimony to the divine spirit.” ■

International News Briefs (continued)

we just going to progressively decline into a Bacchanalian state where everyone is just concerned with their own pleasures and to sleep with whoever they want? The future at times does look quite bleak on this.”

O'Brien's comments were greeted with dismay by LGBT rights groups.

“It's a very historic and outdated attitude to believe that sex is only for reproduction and that no-one should enjoy it,” said David Allison, a spokesperson for Outrage.

“It's ridiculous for the cardinal to come out with comments about sex at a time like this, ignoring the greed and rampant spending over Christmas.”

“The Catholic Church has lost much of its credibility as people lose faith in its obsession with birth control and issues such as homosexuality,” Allison said.

In a statement Stonewall said: “This attitude is totally outdated and very disappointing.”

Pope: GLBT marriage stems from ‘misunderstood rights’

By Christopher Curtis
PlanetOut.com
December 29, 2003

In his weekly comments from St. Peter's Square, Pope John Paul II attacked same-sex marriage Sunday, claiming “a misunderstood sense of rights” was fueling the efforts of GLBT activists.

The pope asserted this “misunderstanding” has “sometimes disturbed the nature of the family institution and conjugal bond itself.” He also made an appeal to anyone opposed to same-sex marriage, saying, “It is necessary that at every level, the efforts of

those who believe in the importance of the family based on matrimony unite.”

GLBT organizations immediately criticized the statements.

“Well, it's not surprising, given the news of this year that the Vatican has stepped up its rhetoric and is campaigning against same-sex marriage,” said Francis DeBernardo, the executive director of New Ways Ministry, a national Catholic ministry for gays and lesbians.

The pontiff's statements come after significant gains this year for same-sex marriage. In June, an appeals court in Ontario cleared the way in Canada by ruling in favor of gay and lesbian couples. In November, the highest court in Massachusetts ruled it unconstitutional to prevent same-sex marriage, giving the state legislature 180 days to rewrite the state's marriage laws.

Even before these rulings, the Vatican frequently spoke out about the increasing legal recognition for gay couples in Europe.

The Netherlands and Belgium have extended marriage rights to all citizens regardless of gender; Germany, France, Sweden and Denmark have “civil union” laws benefiting same-sex couples.

This July, the Vatican launched a global campaign against same-sex marriage in a document saying that Roman Catholic politicians had a “moral duty” to oppose laws granting legal rights to same-sex couples.

DeBernardo described the Vatican's actions as “shameful,” remarking to the *Gay.com/PlanetOut.com* network that “for Vatican leaders to speak authoritatively, they need to speak to lesbian and gay people about their lives and their loves.”

Matthew Gallagher, the executive director of Dignity USA, a GLBT Catholic group, had similar feelings, claiming that the Vatican attacks what they do not understand:

“The pope made the statement on the feast of the holy family. But he has a very limited sense of what family is.” ■

Church sets voter drive to fight gay marriage

By Yvonne Abraham
The Boston Globe
March 26, 2004

The Massachusetts Catholic Conference is beginning its first statewide voter registration drive, in hope of ousting lawmakers who favor gay marriage or otherwise fail to follow the church's moral teaching in the State House.

The drive is designed partly to send thousands of new Catholic voters to the polls this fall to vote for or against state legislators who have been grappling with the gay marriage issue. The new strategy, announced in *The Pilot*, the official newspaper of the Boston Archdiocese, is surfacing just as lawmakers prepare for another set of votes on Monday when the Constitutional Convention resumes to consider a proposed amendment banning gay marriage.

"A lot of people are frustrated; they felt they wanted to have a say in this," said Maria Parker, associate director for public policy at the Massachusetts Catholic Conference, the advocacy arm of the church in this state. "The feeling is mushrooming throughout the state, and some feel politically homeless because they feel neither party reflects their views and values. They are not being listened to, and this frustration has led people to say, 'You know what, I need to participate more in the political process.' And of course that's fine with us, because in the Catholic tradition, participation in the political process is a moral obligation."

About 67 percent of the Legislature is Catholic, but lawmakers do not appear to be following the church's repeated calls to both ban gay marriage and block civil unions for gay couples. The most popular measure in two sessions of the constitutional convention has been an amendment to ban gay marriage and allow civil unions. The church opposes both gay marriage and civil unions, calling civil unions the equivalent of marriage.

"Legislators who decide to vote to harm the institution of marriage — either by allowing same-sex marriage to stand unchallenged or by creating civil unions — will feel a backlash in November," *The Pilot* said in an editorial yesterday.

The voter registration drive would be the first effort on a statewide scale, said Gerald D'Avolio, executive director of the Massachusetts Catholic Conference. The controversy has sparked intense interest in politics, he said, priming Catholics for a registration push.

"It hasn't happened on a large scale, where we ask each of the dioceses to do voter registration," he said. "I think we have many more Catholics interested in issues that are of a public policy nature. Laws are going to be made, and they want to participate in it."

The local effort will be buttressed by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, which encourages voter registration drives in churches across the country each year.

Catholic legislators welcomed news of the drive yesterday, but Senator Mark Montigny, who is Catholic and supports gay marriage,

said he would like to see Catholic voters galvanized over other important issues.

"Everyone ought to be registered to vote," said the *New Bedford Democrat*. "But what has been troubling for me is that the first real effort I've seen in years has been a reactionary one, the first time in history they're trying to change the constitution and create a second-class citizenry. I would love to have seen that kind of activity help me pass a bill on [requiring] the church report child abuse. I think that energy should be used to lobby for human service and poverty programs."

Another lawmaker treaded carefully when he heard about the registration drive.

"I think it's great that more people will be involved in the democratic process," said Representative Martin J. Walsh, a *Dorchester Democrat*. "I just hope they register Democrats. I don't think any politician should be viewed on one issue. I feel comfortable that I do an awful lot of work in my district to ensure the voters continue to send me back to the State House. I know not everyone agrees with me on this issue, but I will get enough votes."

The effort is aimed at making Catholic voices heard not only on gay marriage, but on other issues also important to the church, said D'Avolio, including abortion, capital punishment, stem cell research, and casino gambling. But gay marriage is the most important issue right now, he said.

"Our intention is to have them become responsible citizens on all issues of interest to church and society, and we have a right to do that," he said. "It just so happens this issue is at the forefront, and in our view it is the most important one of the day, and we had to respond to it."

The drives will be made through parishes, said Dan Avila, associate director for policy and research at the Catholic Conference, in hope of reaching the recent immigrants who attend in large numbers and young parishioners who may not yet have registered to vote.

"Churches typically serve the most under-represented populations in terms of the rate of voter registration," Avila said. "Parishes are among the few institutions that can reach groups that are notably under-registered, racial and ethnic minorities, new citizens, youth."

The registration drive is the latest in a series of attempts by the church to sway legislators on gay marriage. Last year, the bishops directed priests to urge Catholic legislators to comply with the church's teachings on the issue, and to encourage parishioners to lobby those legislators.

In January, a *Globe* survey found that 67 percent of the 199 lawmakers are Catholics, a disproportionate share in a state where roughly 50 percent of the population is Catholic. As the gay marriage debate approached, legisla-

tive leaders told the *Globe* in January that the Catholic Church's clout had weakened because of the clergy sex abuse scandal.

Fifty-one percent of the Catholic lawmakers supported an amendment by Representative Philip Travis that would ban gay marriage, an analysis by the *Globe* has found. By contrast, 56 percent of lawmakers of other Christian faiths supported it. The Travis amendment failed 103-94.

Sixty-six percent of the Catholic lawmakers backed an amendment by Senate President Robert E. Travaglini and House Speaker Thomas M. Finneran that would ban gay marriage and allow civil unions, the analysis found.

Boston

That amendment won preliminary passage at the end of the last Constitutional Convention, 121-77.

Globe correspondent Bill Dedman contributed to this report. ▀

Gay Catholics struggle to maintain faith in church

By Yvonne Abraham
The Boston Globe
October 13, 2003

Grace Kelemanik, Catholic and lesbian, has worshiped with her partner at a suburban Boston parish for more than seven years. Their baby daughter was baptized there. Kelemanik has served on church committees, taught religious education classes to parish children.

But it's not easy being both gay and Catholic lately.

Not with the newly installed archbishop telling the faithful that gay marriage tears at the family. Not with the Vatican declaring that same-sex marriages "go against natural moral law," and objecting to adoption by gays and lesbians because it does "violence" to the adopted children. Not with other gays and lesbians turning their backs on the Catholic Church.

And yet, Kelemanik has stayed put. She remains Catholic, not merely because she hopes to change the enormous institution from within, though that is part of it: Kelemanik stays Catholic because she was born into this church, and believes her Catholicism is as immutable as her lesbianism.

"I was raised Catholic," said Kelemanik,

41. "It's my faith. And I know it might sound ridiculous — I feel like it's almost getting more ridiculous these days — but I believe God made me as I am, and that's not a bad thing. . . . It's not like I could just go and pick another religion: 'Oh, I'll be Episcopalian.' It's what I believe and who I am. And [other Catholics] get to see me and my family, and know we're not all crazy sexual deviants."

The competing tugs of faith and sexual identity have been felt keenly in Massachusetts, home to large, thriving communities of gays and Catholics. The conflict is made more intense because the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court is currently considering whether to grant marriage licenses to gays and lesbians, making the state a major battleground in the war over same-sex marriage.

While Kelemanik doesn't think she has to choose between her sexual preference and her church right now, other gay and lesbian Catholics have been plunged into turmoil.

"I am very seriously considering how much longer I can stay in a faith tradition that is so hostile to me," said Chuck Colbert, a gay Catholic journalist. "With the hindsight of history you see this, too, shall pass.

But I'm 48, and I don't have the rest of my life to wait till somebody in Rome has a transformative epiphany, and the goodness and graciousness of gay life becomes apparent. "Charles Martel, a psychotherapist who worships at the Jesuit Urban Center, a South End church that has welcomed gays, knows plenty of gay Catholics whose membership in the church has not survived this year.

"It certainly is a struggle, and there are times when it's very easy to see how it wears people down," he said. "People question you and wonder, 'How do you do this?' They shake their heads in disbelief, and at times I think that myself: 'Is it a healthy thing to be part of the church and be gay?'"

But Martel, 49, has decided that the only way to change attitudes in the Catholic church is to remain visible within it. "It is our church, and so the idea of leaving it has this whole, being pushed out [feeling]," he said. "I think that's why it's so important to stay, but to be visible and vocal. If you remain silent, that's how you integrate the sense of shame and self-hatred, so you have to take an active role. I know in time, as other things have changed, the church will come to understand [it was wrong about same-sex mar-

Catholic Mass disturbed after anti-gay marriage video shown

By Mark Pratt
Associated Press
March 28, 2004

BOSTON (AP) A gay Catholic man interrupted Mass at a Canton church to protest an eight-minute anti-gay marriage video shown during the Sunday morning service.

The man "chose to disrupt" the service at the conclusion of the video supplied to the par-

Update

ish by the Massachusetts Catholic Conference which defends traditional marriage, said the Rev. Michael Doyle of St. John the Evangelist church.

The video "showed the need to preserve marriage as a union between one man and one woman," Doyle said, one day before the

Legislature renews debate on a proposed constitutional amendment that would ban same-sex marriage.

"I just found it to be such a scurrilous, scandalous piece of misinformation," Chuck Colbert, the man who protested, told *The Associated Press*. "For me to sit there and take it is out of the question."

Doyle said he called police to "maintain order," but Colbert was not arrested or detained.

Colbert is a freelance writer who regularly contributes stories published in the *National Catholic Reporter*, an independent weekly paper that has endorsed same-sex marriage.

He said the video, available on the Web site www.preservemarriage.org, was played just after Doyle's homily. Colbert said he stood up, introduced himself as a gay Catholic, and protested what he heard and saw.

"I said 'I mean you no harm, I have to bear true witness,'" said Colbert, who was shouted down by several parishioners.

The Archdiocese of Boston has been politically active in the gay marriage debate. Archbishop Sean P. O'Malley has spoken at anti-gay marriage rallies, and the church has urged Catholics to write to their



Chuck Colbert

state legislators.

Archdiocese spokesman the Rev. Christopher Coyne said Sunday the Massachusetts Catholic Conference regularly distributes information, including videos, to parishes across the state, and doesn't need to vet material through the archdiocese.

"For the most part, they are people who know what they're doing," Coyne said of the conservative group.

Coyne said he had not heard of other dis-

turbances Sunday and said he doesn't know if other parishes showed the video.

"It was made available by the Massachusetts Catholic Conference to any parish that wanted it," Coyne said.

In the video, a female voice, played over various images, urges listeners to contact lawmakers to urge them to vote against both gay marriage and civil unions. It says civil unions "discriminate against the poor and needy," and will hurt the economy by paying out social security survivor benefits.

The only other Catholic church in Canton, St. Gerard, did not receive a copy of the video, according to the Rev. Bernard McLaughlin.

At St. John's, the video was shown during the 9 a.m. Mass. Doyle decided to not show it during the 11:30 a.m. service, Coyne said.

Coyne said it was appropriate to show the video, noting that only Colbert objected. "He's not even a member of that parish," Coyne said. "He doesn't even worship in Canton. He was obviously alerted and decided to disrupt that Mass."

Colbert acknowledged he was alerted about the video, but that he's free to attend any Mass. "I wanted to see how it was presented," he said. "I've never seen anything like that." ▀

riage]. Some future pope will have to realize this was an error."

While the messages from the Vatican on same-sex marriage anger gays and lesbians, many of them find the church a far more welcoming place once they're sitting in their own parishes on Sundays.

"The reality is that every Sunday, lesbian and gay singles and couples and families gather for worship. They may be more or less out, they may be more or less comfortable sitting

in those pews, but they're there. They sing in the choir, teach Sunday school, distribute Communion, work in church offices, they do all the things other parishioners do," said Marianne Duddy, a member of DignityUSA, a national gay and lesbian group that has been critical of the church's official statements on marriage and adoption.

Though the church has been clear about its stance on same-sex marriage, and about teaching that "sexual activity between gay

people is not approved, it has also been clear that gay people have a place in the church and the church itself should do outreach to gay people and the families of gay people, and protect their rights," said the Rev. Walter Cuenin, pastor of Our Lady Help of Christians parish in Newton. Cuenin's church is known in the area as one that welcomes gays and lesbians, and hosts a gay and lesbian faith sharing group.

He said he had seen many Catholics, including heterosexuals, struggling to stay in the church over the last couple of years, not just because of its stand on social issues, but also because of the clergy sex abuse scandal.

"It has been a huge test of their faith, and some people have walked away," Cuenin said. "Right now the big task for the church is to find ways to go after these people and bring them back."

Even without that outreach, Kelemanik and other gays and lesbians feel mostly comfortable in mainstream parishes across Massachusetts, just as divorcees and abortion rights supporters whose beliefs diverge from church teachings do. They share an abiding belief that what happens on Sundays in some Catholic parishes has little to do with edicts from on high. Some priests chose not to read to their congregations a May letter from bishops urging all Catholics to oppose same-sex marriage and back a constitutional amendment defining marriage only as the union of a man and a woman.

"I answer to a higher person than the Vatican," said John F. Kelly, also a member of the Jesuit Urban Center.

Kelly's partner will not step foot in a Catholic church, he said. Kelly and other gay Catholics said they are sometimes challenged by their friends, who don't understand why they remain in a church that opposes gay causes.

"But I found a place to go and worship, I found wonderful people, and I am answering to one person, and that's God," he said.

Besides, said Kelly, 60, it's not as if he has much choice. The heavy ritual in which he was raised, now inextricable from his spirituality, has been impossible to match in other churches.

"I walked into one church, and I didn't feel like I was in a church," he said. "And I went to an Episcopal church, it was almost as good but not quite the same. I was brought up Catholic, and it's hard to leave it."

But even Kelemanik acknowledges her Catholicism, which seems indelible now, may yet prove untenable as the war over same-sex marriage intensifies. "My partner and I talk frequently about what life will be like," she said. "We're looking ahead a couple of years and can imagine the gay issue is going to become the focus for the Catholic church that the abortion issue had been, and it could potentially get uncomfortable for us, and we may bail. But for now, we feel we do more good by staying." ▀

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Losing a Church, Keeping the Faith

By Andrew Sullivan

New York Times
October 19, 2003

Last week, something quite banal happened at St. Benedict's Church in the Bronx. A gay couple were told they could no longer sing in the choir. Their sin was to have gotten a civil marriage license in Canada. One man had sung in the choir for 32 years; the other had joined the church 25 years ago. Both had received certificates from the church commending them for "noteworthy participation." But their marriage had gained publicity; it was even announced in *The New York Times*. This "scandal" led to their expulsion. The archbishop's spokesman explained that the priest had "an obligation" to exclude them.

In the grand scheme of things, this is a very small event. But it is a vivid example of why this last year has made the once difficult lives of gay Catholics close to impossible. The church has gone beyond its doctrinal opposition to emotional or sexual relationships between gay men and lesbians to an outspoken and increasingly shrill campaign against them. Gay relationships were described by the Vatican earlier this year as "evil." Gay couples who bring up children were described as committing the equivalent of "violence" against their own offspring. Gay men are being deterred from applying to seminaries and may soon be declared unfit for the priesthood, even though they commit to celibacy. The American Catholic church has endorsed a constitutional amendment that would strip gay couples of any civil benefits of any kind in the United States.

For the first time in my own life, I find myself unable to go to Mass. During the most heated bouts of rhetoric coming from the Vatican this summer, I felt tears of grief and anger welling up where once I had been able to contain them. Faith beyond resentment began to seem unreachable.

For some, the answer is as easy as it always has been. Leave, they say. The gay world looks at gay Catholics with a mixture of contempt and pity. The Catholic world looks at us as if we want to destroy an institution we simply want to belong to. So why not leave? In some ways, I suppose, I have. What was for almost 40 years a weekly church habit dried up this past year to close to nothing. Every time I walked into a church or close to one, the anger and hurt overwhelmed me. It was as if a dam of intellectual resistance to emotional distress finally burst.

But there was no comfort in this, no relief, no resolution. There is no ultimate meaning for me outside the Gospels, however hard I try

to imagine it; no true solace but the Eucharist; no divine love outside of Christ and the church he guides. In that sense, I have not left the church because I cannot leave the church, no more than I can leave my family. Like many other gay Catholics, I love this church; for me, there is and never will be any other. But I realize I cannot participate in it any longer either. It would be an act of dishonesty to enable an institution that is now a major force for the obliteration of gay lives and loves; that covered up for so long the sexual abuse of children but uses the word "evil" for two gay people wanting to commit to each other for life.

I know what I am inside. I do not believe that my orientation is on a par with others' lapses into lust when they also have an option for sexual and emotional life that is blessed and celebrated by the church. I do not believe I am intrinsically sick or disordered, as the hierarchy teaches, although I am a sinner in many, many ways. I do not believe that the gift of human sexuality is always and everywhere evil outside of procreation. (Many heterosexual Catholics, of course, agree with me, but they can hide and



Andrew Sullivan

pass in ways that gay Catholics cannot.) I believe that denying gay people any outlet for their deepest emotional needs is wrong. I think it slowly destroys people, hollows them out, alienates them finally from their very selves.

But I must also finally concede that this will not change as a matter of doctrine. That doctrine — never elaborated by Jesus — was constructed when gay people as we understand them today were not known to exist; but its authority will not change just because gay people now have the courage to explain who they are and how they feel. In fact, it seems as if the emergence of gay people into the light of the world has only intensified the church's resistance. That shift in the last few years from passive silence to active hostility is what makes the Vatican's current stance so distressing. Terrified of their own knowledge of the wide presence of closeted gay men in the priesthood, concerned that the sexual doctrines required of heterosexuals are under threat, the hierarchy has decided to draw the line at homosexuals. We have become the unwilling instruments of their need to reassert control.

In an appeal to the growing fundamentalism of the developing world, this is a shrewd strategy. In the global context, gays are easily expendable. But it is also a strikingly inhumane one. The current pope is obviously a deep and holy man; but that makes his hostility even more painful. He will send emissaries to terrorists, he will meet with a man who

tried to assassinate him. But he has not and will not meet with openly gay Catholics. They are, to him, beneath dialogue. His message is unmistakable. Gay people are the last of the untouchables. We can exist in the church only by silence, by bearing false witness to who we are.

I was once more hopeful. I saw within the church's doctrines room for a humane view of homosexuality, a genuinely Catholic approach to including all nonprocreative people — the old, the infertile, the gay — in God's church. But I can see now that the dialogue is finally shutting down.

Perhaps a new pope will change things. But

the odds are that hostility will get even worse. I revere those who can keep up the struggle within the channels of the church. I respect those who have left. But I am somewhere in between now.

There are moments in a spiritual life when the heart simply breaks. Some time in the last year, mine did. I can only pray that in some distant future, some other gay people not yet born will be able to come back to the church, to sing in the choir, and know that the only true scandal in the world is the scandal of God's love for his creation, all of it, all of us, in a church that may one day, finally, become home to us all. ▀

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Confronting the Bishops From Within the Church

Gay Catholics Act Up

By Patrick Giles

Village Voice, New York City
November 12-18, 2003

Just a few weeks before the consecration of Gene Robinson as the first openly gay bishop of any mainline Christian denomination, the Roman Catholic Church reminded gays that old hatreds die hard. Michael Sabatino Jr. and Robert Voorheis, a couple who sang for years in the choir of St. Benedict's Church in Throgs Neck, were married in Canada on October 4 and then promptly turned out of the choir by their pastor. By wedding, the couple took a swipe at the church's loathing of anything openly gay, sexual, and unashamed. In the face of such an abomination, says Joseph Zwilling, spokesman for the Archdiocese of New York, "a pastor has not only the right but the obligation to act."

But now gay Catholics are acting up in ways that not only question church teachings, but the authority it has bludgeoned them with. This new development emerged at a sacred event on Monday: the mass at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. celebrating the annual gathering of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Still staggering from revelations of sexual abuse by Catholic priests, the bishops donned their finest vestments. But lining up in the cathedral's center aisle was another group wearing sashes identifying them as openly gay Catholics.

These are members of the Rainbow Sash Movement, which began several years ago in Australia and is now catching on in the States. By wearing the sash in church, its members were performing an act of disobedience at least as shocking as storming down the aisle shouting slogans of resistance. Within a Church culture that has exploited the labors of gay priests and nuns for centuries—demanding absolute secrecy about their sexuality—receiving the body and blood of Christ through a mouth that openly welcomes others of the same sex is perhaps the most insurrectionary act American gays have attempted in years. At last year's mass for the bishops, Rainbow Sash members were refused Communion. As Joe Murray, spokesman for the U.S. movement, remembers it, "A lay spokesperson said from the podium, 'There are those in this congregation who will be using the host as a sign of disunity; consequently they will be denied it.'" Says Murray, "We'll be back this year, anyway."

Being a gay Catholic activist is not like being a member of ACT UP. "You're not just protesting government policy—you're challenging the people you believe represent you to God," a former AIDS activist explains. But anger and impulses to fight back were inadvertently encouraged thanks to attempts by church officials and right-wing laity (such as the Catholic League) to blame the debacle on the mere existence of gay priests. The conference of bishops' leader, Wilton Gregory, notoriously announced at a Vatican press conference that the real dilemma at hand was to "end the

domination of the priesthood by homosexuals." And this summer the Vatican published "Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons," a document that not only reiterated the Holy See's revulsion to gayness but stated that the practice of gay adoption means "doing violence to these children."

In the past, such a statement would have elicited angry silence from gays trained to believe that Silence = Faith. But silence has really equaled death for gays in the Church, and this truth is finally causing many gay Catholics to erupt. "How dare they?" hollered a gay friend, the kind of Catholic who normally doesn't stand up to his mother (let alone the pope), after reading the "Considerations." "How dare they accuse us of hurting children when . . . " He didn't have to finish the sentence.

"We are getting hundreds of new members all over the country," says Jeff Stone, who is an active member of the New York chapter of DignityUSA, the largest American gay Catholic organization, which has more than 50 chapters for at least 3,000 gay Catholics in 30 states. Dignity has long walked a tremulous line between religious acquiescence and gay pride. But at its national convention in Las Vegas, held by chance right after "Considerations" was released, nobody preached patience and submission. "We all found the document's timing very interesting," says Stone. "It was clearly intended as a response to [the Canadian and U.S. developments] and to frighten people." DignityUSA immediately drafted and voted on a rebuttal. And this week, its members are in Washington, too.

"When the bishops convene, we will attempt to meet with them—as many as possible—to continue dialogue," says Matthew Gallagher, the new executive director of Dignity. "Bishop Gregory has said there should be no discussion with 'dissenting organizations.' That's why this has to be done privately." But there is no shame in Dignity's tactics, which reflect an understanding of how to make progress within a church that seems to fear public exposure ("giving scandal," as Zwilling puts it) even more than damnation.

Other ways of helping gay Catholics find a proud place in the pew are appearing all over the country. In numerous dioceses, small outreach efforts are being made to know, listen to, and respect the increasing numbers of gay men and women coming to mass on Sunday with their

lovers and children. These efforts are changing minds ready for a new direction. Spurred in part by the church's equally ridiculous condemnations of birth control and a greater role

for women, a culture of dissent has gained authority in American parishes. Distrust of church leaders has caused rank-and-file Catholics to lean heavily on their local priests (usually more in touch with reality than the hierarchy) and turn to each other, in the process recognizing, and in many cases welcoming, gay congregants. "I have friends in my [Illinois] parish," Murray says matter-of-factly. "My lover and I are always invited to houses of fellow Catholics as a couple. There are welcoming parishes all over the country."

One well-known group is New Ways Ministry, whose executive director, Francis DeBernardo, was teaching a workshop for Catholic gays and their families and ministers when "Considerations" appeared. "People said they felt 'slapped in the face' by the document," DeBernardo recalls. But he also notes a new "resilience, a truer sense of identity," sloughing off the insult.

A frequent response to church homophobia has been to simply walk out to another faith, usually Episcopal. But even that church's recent ordination of an openly gay bishop doesn't seem to be spurring mass defections

among gay Catholics (although Sabatino and Voorheis, the banished choir members, are said to be exploring other denominations). "Gay Catholics who couldn't handle things like this [document] have made up their minds and left the church," a New York City priest explains. "A lot of others are staying, and are determined to stay."

Challenges to the church's authority are making it harder for Catholic homophobes to operate. "Look," continues the New York priest, who counsels gay parishioners, "everybody has a gay cousin or nephew or grandson now. Nobody in the church can afford to say 'Just fuck 'em' to gays anymore!"

Does all this mean a gay liberation of the faithful is on the way? Probably not. "If anyone has the expectation that Catholic teaching on homosexuality is likely to change sometime soon—say, under a new pope—they are likely to be disappointed," cautions John L. Allen Jr., Vatican correspondent for the National Catholic Reporter. And not everyone is speaking truth to power. "People are still being hit hard," by church homophobia, insists Brendan Fay, one of the first Catholic gays from New York to marry in Canada and the first to wear the Rainbow Sash at St. Patrick's Cathedral. "There's still lots of blood and tears to be shed over this."

Catholic radicals like Dorothy Day and the Berrigan brothers taught a generation that activism is an instrument of (and a saving) grace. And so the convergence of religious devotion and social activism that is as much a part of American Catholicism as St. Patrick's Day parades continues, led by a part of that church emerging and acting for the first time. "This is going to take a long time," Murray admits, "but like other people, I see the workings of the Holy Spirit in this, and seeing that makes it easier to stand up for what I believe." ▸



Joe Murray

Maryland religious leaders rally to support gay marriage

By Joe Crea
The Washington Blade
March 26, 2004

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — A group of 40 religious leaders told state lawmakers on Monday that gay couples should receive civil marriage licenses and many expressed their support for two pro-gay measures in the waning weeks of the 2004 legislative session. Equality Maryland, a gay rights lobbying group that sponsored the event, held its "first ever clergy lobby day" on Monday with officials from various Unitarian, Presbyterian and Episcopal churches, including the Franciscan Friars of Divine Providence and Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist Synagogues. "If hetero-

sexual unions or marriage are recognized by the state, a lack of similar recognition of same-sex unions or marriage is an unambiguous discrimination based on sexual orientation," said Sister Jeannine Gramick, co-founder of New Ways Ministry and member of the National Coalition of American Nuns, at Monday's news conference. "Such discrimination is politically and morally wrong." Some of the officials urged lawmakers to support the Hate Crimes Penalties Act, which would add gays and transgendered people as protected groups under the state's 1988 hate crimes statute and the Medical Decision Making Act of 2004, which would offer gay couples hospital visitation and medical decision making rights. ▸

At Notre Dame, gay film fest a first

Some students call this week's event a breakthrough for a religious school that officially brands homosexual behavior a sin.

By Ron Grossman
Chicago Tribune
February 11, 2004

South Bend, Ind.—Last year the Princeton Review's annual survey of American colleges ranked the University of Notre Dame as the most unfriendly to homosexuals. This week, the school's Hesburgh Library is the site of the first ND Queer Film Festival.

"You have to understand what a breakthrough this is," said Richard Friedman, a fifth-year student participating in the event. "The university's administration had even barred gay groups from advertising in the student newspaper."

On many campuses, eyebrows wouldn't be raised by a gay film series featuring titles such as "Jim in Bold," which kicks off the series Wednesday.

During freshman orientation at state schools and secular colleges, it is commonplace to see the information booth of a gay and lesbian group.

But that is not the case at universities affiliated with a religious denomination that considers homosexuality sinful.

Yet even at some such schools, things are changing quickly, given society's increasing acceptance of alternative lifestyles. Deans and presidents are feeling the pressure of gay and lesbian students, newly determined to have an accepted place on campus.

"The landscape has changed," said Nicholas Sakurai, an official of the United States Student Association, which is preparing a guide to forming homosexual campus organizations. "Young people have been coming out in droves in high schools since the 90's. They're now in college and challenging administrators who would deny them a place in campus life."

For instance, Boston College, a Catholic College run by the Jesuits priests, extended official recognition to a gay group last May after many years of denying previous requests.

"This film fest is our way of forcing people to recognize that there is an active gay community here," said Liam Dacey, a Notre Dame senior. There's been a fear on this campus to come out."

Films in the series include "The Opposite of Sex," a gay-straight love triangle, and "Hedwig and the Angry Inch," the story of a transgender rock star.

Dacey hardly expects everyone on campus, let alone old grads, to rejoice in their alma mater hosting a gay-film series.

Christopher Trophy, a Greek major and publisher of the Irish Rover, a conservative stu-

dent newspaper, said the film festival crosses what should be a hard and fast line.

"We support tolerance of homosexuals," Brophy said, "We don't find it appropriate at a Catholic school to promote viewing of movies that show inappropriate behavior."

Sean Vinck, a third-year law student, is also unhappy with the prospect of the ND Queer Film Festival.

"The fact that Notre Dame would allow it to take place on campus points to an institutional confusion," Vinck said. "The university claims to adhere to the teachings of the church about homosexual life-style, but at the same time it bends to modern culture's acceptance of it."

But even though the festival is groundbreaking, its Byzantine format reflects the hoops a Catholic university has to go through when dealing with homosexual students.

The festival was the brainchild of Dacey, who has been active in gay and lesbian groups on campus. But because those groups are not officially recognized student organizations, they couldn't sponsor the film series.



Richard Friedman (left) and Liam Dacey are involved in the first gay film festival at the University of Notre Dame. "There's been a fear on this campus to come out," Dacey said.

"Because of Roman Catholic teaching, the administration feels we can't have an organized gay student group at Notre Dame," said Sister Mary Louise Gude, assistant vice-president for student affairs.

But because the university distinguishes between homosexual activity — forbidden by church law — and people who happen to be homosexual — whose humanity it recognizes — Gude chairs a Committee on Gay and Lesbian Needs.

According to its mission statement, the committee brings faculty administrators and students together "to assist in the implementation of campus-wide educational programming on gay and lesbian issues." But because those educational efforts are limited to reducing anti-gay discrimination and homophobic behavior, it also couldn't sponsor the festival.

That left it to the Department of Film,

Television and Theatre to give the festival its imprimatur. By ivory-tower tradition, academic departments have the autonomy to bring to campus any extracurricular event they judge intellectually worthy despite what the administration might think of it.

"Once Film and Theatre signed on as a sponsor, we could put posters up advertising the festival," Dacey said. "Up to now, we didn't have access to bulletin boards. For that, you have to be in an officially recognized group."

Former nun preaches acceptance, provides support

Continued from page 3

back emotion the next. Generally, the atmosphere remains relaxed and congenial. "Group Rules" are posted on a wall near the door: "No judging or gossiping," for instance, and "Self-responsibility." Confidentiality is a must.

Cotterly says her goal is to give group members the space to discover who they are and the confidence to live with their decision, which can mean losing everything: job, family and friends.

"I tell people, 'You can wear the wigs, you can wear the makeup, you can wear the clothes,' " she says. "But you have to go inside much further than you go outside" to discover the truth that will bring you peace, she says.

At the February meeting, the group hosts a speaker from the Fort Worth chapter of PFLAG, Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, which Cotterly founded. Toward the end of the hour, Laura, a former high-school football player, walks in with her mother and aunt. Only days before, she had returned from Montreal, where she had undergone sexual-reassignment surgery.

"I memorized a phrase in French," she tells the group, beaming. "Je suis une nouvelle femme. I am a new woman."

The following month, Jenni, an MTF transsexual and retired police officer, reports to the group her success in getting her driver's license photograph taken as a woman. Jenni, formerly known as Jim, has two sons, 9 and 14, who now call her Mom instead of Dad. She was married twice before deciding to act on a lifelong desire to be a woman.

"By the time I was 12 or 13," she tells the group, "I knew something was wrong."

"Different," interrupts Cotterly, pointing a finger at Jenni.

"Different," Jenni repeats. "I knew something was different."

Science has a long way to go before concluding what makes a person transgendered. Most of the research has concentrated on transsexuals and suggests that the condition results from a fetus's abnormal exposure to male or female hormones.

The cost of the ND Queer Film Festival — \$12,000 to \$15,000 — is being born by GALA ND/SMC, an organization of gay and lesbian alumni of Notre Dame and its sister school, St. Mary's College. GALA has more than 850 members.

Some gay grads look back on their Notre Dame experience with anger and memories of pain — among them Don Roos, the festival's featured speaker. He went on to a Hollywood career, writing and directing films. ▀

"What we think happens is they're basically born with a birth defect, and this is difficult for a lot of people to understand," says Dr. Collier Cole, a clinical psychologist and director of the Gender Treatment Program at the Rosenberg Clinic in Galveston. "Something goes awry inside the uterus while that fetus is developing where the person is born with the anatomy of one sex but the brain of the other."

There's no definitive test to determine whether someone is transsexual, he says. But Cole's research shows that on at least one sophisticated personality test, transsexuals scored more like the gender they wanted to be rather than their anatomical gender.

The force propelling them toward a different gender, he says, "reflects a biological imperative that they need to get themselves right."

Cotterly agrees. "Why [else] would you put yourself through the rejection — by your family, by your friends, by your employer, by your church? Why would you permit yourself to be humiliated and called names: freak, gay, fag, sick, illegal, sinner?"

And why would you potentially make yourself more susceptible to violence, she adds. Though the streets are safer for transgendered people today than a decade ago, hate crimes against them are not unheard of.

Last October's killing of a transgendered teen-ager in California received national attention. The trial of the three men charged with Eddie "Gwen" Araujo's death will begin in the next year.

Locally, some support groups still rent nearby motel rooms where clients can change into their male or female clothing, says Cotterly. But times are changing for the better, she says. Since the mid-'90s, when the Internet "exploded with reliable sources," the transgendered movement has flourished.

"I just am very hopeful that because of the knowledge explosion — from television, from magazines, from books, from the Internet," she says, "that more and more people will be coming out." ▀

Homosexual community deserves equality

Editorial

The Observer

March 19, 2004

They made their point. Now, will the University take action?

Approximately 1,700 Notre Dame students and scattered faculty members joined together and wore blaze orange T-shirts Thursday that boldly stated "Gay? Fine by me."

Regardless of the individual decisions behind wearing the shirts, the collective message of support for homosexuals was unmistakable. The members of the Gay/Straight Alliance — also known as United in Diversity, an organization that was denied official University club status on March 4 — should be commended for their efforts to bring approximately 20 percent of the University together in a show of solidarity for a group whose place in the community has not always been clear.

No administrative stance in recent Notre Dame history has elicited such overwhelming numbers to contest it. The alcohol policy changes couldn't do it. Parietals couldn't do it. But injustice towards Notre Dame's homosexual community has.

The avenues currently provided by Notre Dame emphasize individual counseling, which serves to only further classify homosexual students as outcasts in the community.

Yes, the University appointed a Standing Committee on Gay and Lesbian Student Needs. Yes, the University provides homosexuals with Campus Ministry resources. But concerning both the official recognition of a student organization and the inclusion of homosexuality in the University's legal non-discrimination clause, the answer has been a firm no.

Now is the time for the administration to take notice of both of these issues, and deliver a long overdue yes.

The Princeton Review's recent distinction of Notre Dame as the most homophobic campus in the United States, therefore, seems to apply more to the administration that perpetuates this mentality on campus than to the actual students who try to curtail it and speak out against it.

The show of support Thursday began to dispel this sense of homophobia, but both recognizing a gay student organization and expanding the nondiscrimination clause are necessary to extending acceptance on that essential group level. After turning down United in Diversity, Vice President of Student Affairs Father Mark Poorman wrote that while he welcomes the opportunity to talk to students who proposed the club, he does "not want to create unrealistic expectations about the likelihood of a change in the decision about recognition."

Talk and good intentions will only take the University so far.

Notre Dame aims to be the national leader among both Catholic and academic peer institutions. However, Boston College approved its first gay/straight alliance, Allies, on April 15. Duke University, the Princeton Review's

last campus before Notre Dame to hold the "alternative lifestyles are not an alternative" distinction, initiated the T-shirt campaign. In a dialogue critical to the Catholic Church and the intellectual climate of the future, Notre Dame is falling behind.

The first step towards true progress lies in changing the non-discrimination clause. The Spirit of Inclusion statement that currently stands in its place walks a fine line — on the surface, it values gay and lesbian members of the community, but still reserves the legal right to discriminate based on sexual orientation. The Board of Trustees voted down the expansion of the clause in 1997 and



Notre Dame Campus

again in 1999 at a time when members of the community supported the expansion. Since then, Notre Dame's homosexual and support

community have advanced even further, with Thursday being evidence that this marginalized group is gaining followers — and that students do not accept blatant exclusion, perceived excuses or silent ignorance.

Notre Dame's Catholic identity has been cited as the crux of University policy towards homosexuals. While Notre Dame's Catholic identity is central to its purpose, the University must also realize that it would not exist if it was not an academic institution first. And academic institutions at their foundation are

open to free expression, intellectual growth and equality.

The arguably successful Notre Dame Queer Film Festival occurred in part because several departments courageously supported it in the name of intellectual expression and academic freedom. As the Festival proved, discussion of homosexuality is not limited to Church teaching. Notre Dame's administrative policies concerning it shouldn't either.

To further its Catholic purpose, Notre Dame aspires to promote peace, justice and reconciliation. But as long as it fails to promote acceptance, equality and recognition, the real ideals of Catholicism and intellectualism cannot be achieved. Gestures such as the Spirit of Inclusion statement reveal respectful intentions, but stop just short of a true justice and a true embrace.

Thursday, a sea of orange reached out with open arms.

The University should follow suit by accepting this diverse student group and giving them club status. ▀

Gay Student Group Fights for Seton Hall Standing

By Patricia Alex

The Record, Bergen, NJ

January 16, 2004

Anthony Romeo says he only wants the camaraderie and recognition that other students at Seton Hall have.

After all, he argues, there are more than 100 students groups and clubs recognized on campus in which students sort themselves based on everything from ethnicity to hobbies.

But Romeo's TRUTH organization — a support group for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and homosexual student — has had a tougher time of it at the Catholic university.

The group's application for university recognition was denied last month because administrators found it at odds with the school's Catholic mission.

"The most compelling guidance from the church directs us to care for the human person whose fundamental identity is as a "child of God" — not a "heterosexual" or "homosexual," wrote Dr. Laura Wankel, vice president for student affairs. "No organization based solely upon sexual orientation may receive formal university recognition."

Though it denied the group official recognition, the university said TRUTH may operate on campus, apply for funds from the office of student affairs, and host education events, meetings, and programs. The group cannot, however, host social events or sponsor religious services or activities.

The half-a-loaf approach is part of a balancing act that has played itself out at Catholic colleges and universities across the country — Catholic academe's version of "don't ask,

don't tell." Official church teaching condemns homosexual acts.

"With public colleges, it's pretty straightforward — they have to recognize these groups," said Nick Sakurai, director of the US Student Association's Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, and Transgender Empowerment Project. "With private ones it's a little more gray. I've seen Catholic colleges that do recognize LGBT student groups, but it seems to vary from diocese to diocese."

At Loyola University in New Orleans, the school's LGBT group, which started in the early 1990s, has formal recognition and is funded by the student government, said Tyler Douglas, the co-president. He said the group, called Etcetera, encountered some resistance early on but now is fully accepted and very active on campus.

"The nickname for Loyola is Gayola," said Douglas. "It's a very, very gay school and it's become a very open campus."

At Boston College, the school's LGBT group has been around for 30 years and has been denied several applications for college recognition. Closer to home, a group at Fordham University in the Bronx was denied recognition while another at the university's law school at Lincoln Center is recognized.

The Seton Hall compromise seems to be modeled after a similar setup at Georgetown University following a lawsuit in 1987 by students denied recognition. The courts found that a private university is not required to recognize a group but cannot withhold "tangible benefits" available to all groups, including funding.

At Seton Hall, Romeo said he will discuss the university's offer of a "special standing" with some of the other 20 members of his

group. He admits the offer is a place to start but says the special standing funding smacks of "hush money."

"We just want a place at the table," said Romeo, a junior from upstate New York. "We're not asking for more or less than other groups."

Romeo said his group's application for recognition didn't follow regular channels and instead was bumped up to the archdiocese before coming back down as a denial. Jim Goodness, spokesman for the archdiocese, said he was unaware of the issue.

TRUTH's faculty adviser did not return calls for comment and Wankel's office referred questions to a university spokeswoman.

Natalie Thigpen, a spokeswoman for the university, said, "We acknowledge the need to work with students in this area through an ongoing dialogue. ... We want to work with them to meet their goals but in a way that we're sure will be consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church."

But Romeo feels the university has inconsistently applied the "Catholic mission" rationale. He argues, for instance, that the spouses of divorced employees receive health benefits through the university even though Catholic teaching is opposed to divorce.

Romeo said the group is needed since there have been a half-dozen incidents of anti-gay graffiti in campus dormitories in recent months.

He, too, was a victim, when epithets were scrawled on his door in Aquinas Hall in October.

"We need a forum for discourse and discussion," he said. "I didn't have then when it happened to me." ▀

Sturbridge convenes on gay marriage

By Mac McEntire

Southbridge Evening News, Sturbridge, MA
February 19, 2004

STURBRIDGE — It was a room divided. Residents spoke out both for and against gay marriage at a public forum last night. Some shared personal stories about being separated from a loved one, while others said the marriages could have a damaging impact on the entire nation.

The forum was presented by the St. Anne Men's Group of St. Anne's/St. Patrick's Parish.

Sturbridge resident Robert Briere, an experienced Town Meeting moderator, led last night's forum.

"This discussion is important to our state, the nation, people across the seas, and all humanity," he said.

Briere said he looked up "marriage" in the newest edition of a dictionary. The first definition was "the state of being united to a person of the opposite sex as husband or wife in a consensual and contractual relationship recognized by law." The second, he said, was "the state of being united to a person of the same sex in a relationship like that of a traditional marriage."

"That doesn't mean you have to agree with it," he said.

David Lewcom of Webster said he has been in two serious gay relationships, one that lasted 15 years, and another that lasted five years. "We had to constantly jump through hoops to protect ourselves from each others' families," he said.

When his second partner was diagnosed HIV positive, Lewcom said, they ended up being separated by his partner's family.

"He got sicker and sicker, and his family prevailed," Lewcom said. "He went off to live with them in another state."

Lewcom argued that the issue centers on changing the definition of the word "marriage."

"It's just a word. Words change," he said. "We're privileged to be part of the change."

Lewcom said area residents often have what he called "a mill town mentality," with the majority of people afraid of change.

"If there was a pill to make me straight, I would kill for it," he said. "But we play the cards we're dealt."

Not everyone agreed.

Dennis Bousquet of Southbridge cited the Bible, saying God created man and woman, commanding them to be fruitful.

"How does a man be fruitful with another man?" he said.

Bousquet said he feels that legalizing gay marriage would have a damaging effect on the nation.

"It's going to happen," he said. "They'll get the right to marry, and the world will get worse. You'll see it happen."

Pauline Sey of Sturbridge said she watched most of the constitutional convention last week, and she found it riveting.

"The legislators put their hearts and souls into that debate," she said. "But most of us have made up our minds. It boils down to people's personal values."

Sey quoted from the state constitution, saying all people are born equal, and are free to seek and obtain happiness. She argued that choosing a partner for life is a basic human right that should not be denied to anyone.

"If I see a gay couple in public I'm uncomfortable, and I might cover my children's eyes," she said. "But that's my problem."

Sey compared gay marriage debates to the 1920 decision that gave women the right to vote.

"Who am I to deny anyone their full rights under the law?" she said.

Sey further argued that homosexuality is not a person's choice, but that it is a natural occurrence.

"It is inherent and innate," she said. "It's in their nature. They are a minority, and they deserve protection as a minority."

Finally, Sey said that although marriage has historically been between a man and a woman, this does not mean it should not change.

"Slavery was accepted for a millennia, and it's been abolished," she said. "Just because something has been accepted for a millennia, that doesn't make it right."

Norman Meiklejohn of Sturbridge said he feels the issue is not about civil rights, but about human rights and human dignity.

"If a young man realizes he's gay, he has nothing to look forward to," Meiklejohn said. "He'll have to repress, or end up in a dangerous relationship."

By offering marriage to gay people, Meiklejohn said, it could give them hope to lead normal lives.

"My contention is if society gives them dignity, gays can aspire to stable, worthwhile relationships, and not be dying of AIDS," he said.

Joining 43 area residents at the meeting were state Reps. Mark J. Carron, D-Southbridge, and Reed V. Hillman, R-Sturbridge, and state Sens. Stephen M. Brewer, D-Barre, and Guy W. Glodis, D-Auburn.

Last week, state lawmakers debated the issue during a two-day constitutional convention, with emphasis on an amendment that would have defined marriage as a union between a man and a woman, leaving an option open for civil unions as an alternative for gay couples.

The convention was an effort to circum-

vent a 4-3 ruling in November by the Supreme Judicial Court (SJC) to legalize gay marriage in the state.

Proponents of gay marriage have argued that gay and lesbian couples should be entitled to the 1,400-plus benefits that married heterosexual couples receive. Civil unions would only entitle them to fewer than 400 benefits.

The Legislature will take up the debate again on March 11, Carron said. The legislators at the meeting all spoke out in favor of letting the voters decide. Carron said that the debate is not a civil rights issue.

"What constitutional amenities are not offered to you?" he said. "You can go to school, you can own property, you can vote, and on and on."

Carron compared gay couples seeking benefits to other groups with similar requests, such as veterans, senior citizens, and those with mental or physical illnesses.

Hillman disagreed, saying that it is a civil rights issue.

"You deserve a say," he said to voters. "Civil rights are guaranteed to all of you."

Hillman said the SJC's decision should not stand, because the people do not elect its members. The governor appoints the judges.

"You elect and hold your representatives responsible, and every two years you pass judgement," he said. "The Supreme Court is not accountable to anyone."

Brewer also said he was in favor of putting the issue in the hands of the voters.

"All of us can learn from you," he said. "We want to give you a voice. You guide us as well."

Brewer described what it was like to be a part of last week's constitutional convention.

"We were escorted into the building under armed guard," he said. "The energy, tension, and drama were unlike anything I've ever experienced."

Glodis said he supports the traditional role of marriage being between a man and a woman, but also that he respects other people's opinions. "I believe in traditional family values," he said.

Glodis said he would prefer the issue to be resolved with a ballot vote.

"This is a strong and emotional issue," he said. "Massachusetts is the cradle of liberty and democracy in the U.S. We should let democracy reign."

At the end of the evening, Briere read results from a poll taken from everyone at the meeting. Out of the 43 people present, 19 said they wanted to define marriage as between a man and a woman with civil unions for others, 12 said they wanted it to be marriage between a man and a woman with no civil unions, and 12 said they wanted marriage defined as between two loving people.

"I'd say we're almost equally divided," Briere said. ▀



Pat DeBenedictis, of Sturbridge, bows his head in frustration at last night's gay marriage forum held at St. Anne's Parish, Pauline Sey, of Sturbridge. Shawn Kelley photo

New Ways Ministry Financial Statement

July 1, 2002 to June 30, 2003

Statement of Revenue and Expenses

| Revenue | Total | % of Total |
|--|----------------------|--------------|
| Contributions | \$ 64,173.15 | 36.8 |
| Grants | 51,500.00 | 29.6 |
| Investments | 25,075.04 | 14.4 |
| Programs | 29,290.50 | 16.8 |
| Publications | 3,698.51 | 2.1 |
| Other | 439.96 | .3 |
| Total Revenue | \$ 174,177.16 | 100% |
| Expenses | Total | % of Total |
| Contributions | \$ 2,822.00 | 1.7 |
| Salaries and benefits | 100,470.65 | 60.8 |
| Telephone, equipment, supplies | 3,078.91 | 1.9 |
| Postage and printing | 18,848.77 | 11.4 |
| Occupancy | 6,361.75 | 3.8 |
| Travel and conferences | 16,694.48 | 10.1 |
| Depreciation | 5,327.00 | 3.2 |
| Fees and payroll taxes | 7,717.12 | 4.7 |
| Staff Dev., library, PR, consultation | 3,923.50 | 2.4 |
| Total expenses | \$ 165,244.18 | 100.0 |
| Fund balance, beginning of year | 299,973.28 | |
| Excess for year | 8,932.98 | |
| Other changes in net assets | 37.38 | |
| Fund balance, end of year | 308,943.64 | |

* Approximately \$209,000 of the current fund balance represents a reserve for thirteen months operational expenses. The fund balance also includes land, building, and equipment assets of approximately \$100,000.

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

Tempe: All Saints Catholic Newman Center

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

California

Berkeley: Holy Spirit Parish

Claremont: Mother of Good Counsel, Our Lady of the Assumption

Eagle Rock: St. Dominic's

Goleta: St. Mark's University Parish

Hawthorne: St. Joseph's (Spanish)

LaPuente: St. Martha

Long Beach: St. Matthew's

Los Angeles: Blessed Sacrament, Christ the King, Loyola-Marymount University, Mother of Good Counsel, St. Camillus Center-LA USC Medical Center (Spanish), St. Paul the Apostle

North Hollywood: St. Jane

Frances de Chantal, St. Patrick's

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 Clara: GALA, Santa Clara University

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: Loyola University Chicago, St. Clement

Country Club Hills: St. Emeric

Morton Grove: St. Martha

Indiana

Evansville: St. Mary

Notre Dame: GALA Notre Dame/St. Mary's College

Iowa

Iowa City: St. Thomas More

Kentucky

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

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

Massachusetts

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

Newton: Our Lady Help of Christians

Provincetown: St. Peter the Apostle

Sharon: Our Lady of Sorrows

Worcester: Holy Cross College

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: SS. Cyril and

Methodius, Deer Park;

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

Utica: St. Francis DeSales

North Carolina

Charlotte: St. Peter

Durham: Immaculate

Conception

Fayetteville: St. Patrick

Raleigh: St. Francis of Assisi

Ohio

Akron: St. Bernard, St. Martha

Cincinnati: Lesbian/Gay

Ministry, Xavier University;

St. Monica-St. George

Newman Center, University

of Cincinnati



Cleveland: Ascension of

Our Lord,, Gesu Parish

(University Heights),

St. Ladislav (Westlake),

St. Malachi, St. JohnVianny

(Mentor), St. Mary of the

Immaculate Conception

(Wooster)

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

Plano: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

San Antonio: University of the

Incarinate 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

Australian Brother joins New Ways staff

Australian Brother, Terence Cant has joined New Ways Ministry as Staff Associate. Hailing from Fremantle, Western Australia, Terry is a member of the Congregation of Christian Brothers.

He taught English and History predominately in Upper School in several Australian states and was involved in administration for many years. For six years, he served as principal of a high school in Kalgoorlie, a country town



Br. Terence Cant

and gold-mining center in Western Australia.

For approximately three years, Terry worked as campus minister at the newly founded University of Notre Dame Australia in Fremantle.

After receiving a BA, Brother Cant completed a Diploma in Religious Education at Dundalk, Ireland in 1980-81. In 1995-96, he trained as a spiritual director at Mercy Center, in Burlingame, California. Terry is presently completing a Doctor of Ministry degree at San Francisco Theological Seminary in San Anselmo, California.

During his tenure in California, Terry felt privileged to volunteer at San Quentin for nearly two years, assisting in conducting a prayer group. He has a keen interest in social justice, particularly within the Catholic Church, and especially as it affects the poor and marginalized in our society. ▀

New Administrative Staff Member at New Ways Ministry

Erin McClure has joined New Ways Ministry as a Staff Associate, helping with various office management duties with databases and financial records. Erin, an upstate New York native, graduated in May 2003 from SUNY Geneseo, near Rochester, with a Bachelor's degree in



Erin McClure

English with Secondary Education certification. She is currently working for Notre Dame Mission Volunteers - AmeriCorps as a young adult GED instructor in Washington, DC. With any spare time she

loves to play sports or read. Next year, Erin plans to attend graduate school to work toward her Masters of Education in special education or English education. ▀

Pell cousin takes issue on gay stance

By Barney Zwartz
The Age
Melbourne, Australia
January 12, 2004

A lesbian former nun who is a second cousin of Cardinal George Pell has publicly challenged him over the Catholic Church's hardline stance against homosexuality.

Monica Hingston, who says she knows the former archbishop of Melbourne well, wrote to him last August after the Vatican reaffirmed the Catholic teaching that practising homosexuals are "seriously depraved".

In the letter Ms Hingston challenged Dr Pell to look her in the eye and call her "corrupt, debased, vicious, vile, wicked, degenerate" — words she says are synonyms for depraved.

"To read that the Vatican has declared us to be 'seriously depraved persons' has appalled and angered me," she wrote.

Ms Hingston said she wrote to Cardinal Pell again last month, and tried three times to ring him, after which she decided to make her letter an open one. It is published in *The Age* today.

Dr Pell, now Archbishop of Sydney, yesterday gave *The Age* a short statement. It said: "The Church's views are well known and will not change. I support them. In these situations the first 11 verses of Chapter 8 of St John's Gospel give food for thought. I wish Monica well and acknowledge the contribution she has made. I continue to regret the path she has chosen."

(The passage referred to by Cardinal Pell is the account of the woman taken in adultery, where Jesus said "let him who is without sin cast the first stone", but also tells the woman, "go and sin no more".)

Ms Hingston, 63, has been with her partner, Peg Moran, for 19 years. She said yesterday she was not surprised at Cardinal Pell's response, because he had to follow the Vatican line, but it saddened her. "I wanted him to make some statement about who I am as a person to him," she said. "It's very disappointing that I got no response other than scripture." She found the official Catholic teaching insulting and degrading.

Her father is Cardinal Pell's cousin, making her second cousin once removed. "George probably wishes I was much further removed," she joked.

In her article, Ms Hingston said her partner spent 35 years as a Franciscan nun, 27 of them with oppressed slum-

dwellers in Chile. Ms Hingston was a Mercy nun for 26 years, including 10 in Chile and the rest working for the marginalised in Australia.

"Even had we not chosen a life of commitment and dedication to others in religious community, our general attitude to people is compassionate,

generous, open, accepting, deeply empathetic," she wrote. "However, it is our relationship, not who we are or what we do for others, that is of prime concern to the Vatican prelates." ▀

The Catholic Church's stance against same-sex couples ignores so much that we can offer

By Monica Hingston
Sydney Morning Herald
January 12, 2004

The following letter was sent to Cardinal George Pell last August, and some weeks later when no reply was forthcoming, a copy was sent with a covering letter expressing con-

cern that he had not received the first one. In December, I then attempted three times, unsuccessfully, to make contact with him by phone.

I decided to make this an open letter to the Cardinal in the hope that by making it public, it may highlight the difficulties same-

sex couples have even being heard, let alone granted access to the same level of justice as heterosexual couples.

I look forward to George's reply.

I encourage other people to contact their Catholic clergy family members for similar discussions. ▀

Dear George,

The recent pronouncement from the Vatican re same-sex relationships has prompted me to write. I want to put my concerns to you, George, as one who is family (albeit somewhat removed) and as one who, given your vocation, has chosen to commit yourself to the wellbeing of others.

My partner and I have just celebrated 19 years together. To read that the Vatican has declared us to be "seriously depraved persons" has appalled and angered me. Synonyms for depraved are "corrupt", "debased", "vicious", "vile", "wicked", "degenerate". You will be expected to reinforce these sentiments in the hearts and minds of your Catholic brethren, and when occasions permit, to the wider society. It is hard to imagine that you would actually be able to look me in the eye and tell me any of those adjectives could truthfully describe me. And surely you wouldn't insult my intelligence by prefacing it with "it's the sin, not the sinner" stuff.

My partner has given more than half her life, 35 years, to the service of others as a Franciscan nun, 27 of those years living with people suffering extreme hardship and oppression in the slums of Chile, and 17 under a brutal, tyrannical regime. I spent 26 years as a Mercy nun, 10 of those under the same dictatorship in Chile, and the rest working for the rights of the oppressed and marginalised in Australia. Even had we not chosen a life of commitment and dedication to others in a religious community, our general attitude to people is compassionate, generous, open, accepting, deeply empathic, and the work we have taken on has always been in the context of advocacy, human rights, elimination of oppressive systems, and empowerment of the individual.

However, it is our relationship, not who we are or what we do for others, that is of prime concern to the Vatican prelates. So let me briefly describe for you, George, that relationship of 19 years. It is a rare and precious gift. A partnership of sensitivity and selflessness, of warmth and humour, of wonder and beauty. It is fundamental to personal growth, it has enabled me to face my own formidable challenges with courage, it daily enriches me, it empowers me to work for the well-being of others, to accept, appreciate and value the richness and diversity of individuals. In short, it is life-giving. Numerous people who know us as a couple have wanted to know the secret of what makes our relationship so special. Many of those who ask are heterosexual couples whose own relationships are sadly lacking what we two experience.

The gifts we have received from each other, and consequently are able to give to others, would be values and ethics the Vatican portrays as intrinsic to basic Christian life. Still, that is not the crux of the matter. All these aspects are ignored, because the Vatican is wholly focused on what we do in bed. These prelates are obsessed with how we physically show our love for each other. On what does the Vatican base its dictate that it would be gravely immoral for Catholics to recognise our union? If it is that our expression of love for each other will not produce children, then logically it would follow that no post-menopausal woman should marry, nor those who have had a hysterectomy, nor infertile couples. The Vatican prelates have the audacity to condemn the rearing of children by homosexual couples, and to add insult to injury, make the preposterous pronouncement that this would, in effect, be doing violence to these children.

Have any of these men ever spoken with these couples, ever observed the children? The Vatican document also says that recognition of homosexual unions would "obscure basic values which belong to the common inheritance of humanity". In terms of my relationship with my partner, what could that possibly mean? The society at large would consider our lives to be grounded in basic Christian values. No, we are not reproducing ourselves, but is that the prime reason for our existence? If so, then you and I, George, should have been quietly disposed of a long time ago.

An astonishing aspect of the recent proclamation from Rome is the sheer arrogance of these men to presume to dictate to elected governments of the world, and Catholic politicians in particular, that they act to prevent our unions being recognised, or if unable to do so, to repeal as far as possible any existing laws already acknowledging our rights to be who we are. It defies belief, but this is not the issue I am asking you to respond to here.

What I am really wanting from you, George, is a response that is personal, that comes from the heart, that is based on your knowledge of who I am, simply a response of one human being to another striving to live life as it should be lived. Please don't quote the scriptures at me — as we both know, "the devil" can quote it for his own evil purposes, and many throughout history have done so.

To sum up, George, I am concerned that in your role, you are required to reinforce and promulgate these vicious condemnations from Rome.

All I ask is that you consider what you are actually saying to thousands like us, that you actually hear and reflect on what we tell you of our life experience, that we are people who live ethical, highly principled, moral lives, an asset to any society striving to engender loving, committed relationships among its citizens.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Regards,
Your cousin Monica