Pope says God made gay people just as we should be – Here’s why his comments matter

By Ruth Hunt
The Guardian
London, England
May 21, 2018

It is immensely powerful to hear that Pope Francis, the leader of the Roman Catholic church, reportedly told Juan Carlos Cruz, a gay man: “God made you like this and loves you like this.”

Cruz is a survivor of clerical abuse who spoke privately with the pope a few weeks ago, and has since reported his conversation to Spanish newspapers. His abuser, Fernando Karadima, was found guilty of abuse by the Vatican in 2011.

As a practising Catholic, I find it deeply moving to hear Pope Francis appear to confirm what many Catholic already know to be true: God made us just as we should be, there are no mistakes.

LGBT, gay, bi and trans people exist in every community, from every ethnic background and in every religion. However, religion can often be the area of life that people find the most difficult to reconcile with their identity. Some people will say that LGBT people can’t exist in faith communities; that faith communities don’t accept same-sex relationships or those whose gender doesn’t match the one that they were assigned at birth. Some believe that LGBT people can and should be “cured.”

As a result of these beliefs, LGBT people often need to find a way to God despite their leaders, rather than because of them. But the pope’s reported words are a striking allusion to the fact that people of faith belong in church and in religious communities.

I have never felt excluded from the church and have always been made to feel wellcome. But I have met many people who have had different experiences; people who have been damaged by being told to deny their sexuality or who feel rejected by God.

Churches can be unifying spaces. Religions teach that God is love, so it should be integral that all members of the community and their relation-hips are respected. Just as LGBT people need respect and acceptance in wider society, they also need to be included in their faith communities.

Francis’s reported words can help to build bridges between the Catholic church and LGBT people who have felt rejected and excluded from it. Many religious communities, groups and places of worship already include LGBT people. The church accepts that LGBT people exist, but I want us to get to a point where our love is recognised as being as valid as any other. While we have a way of celebrating our love through civil partnerships and same-sex marriage, we also need to keep working to allow LGBT people of faith to marry in church and declare their love in the eyes of God.

I would like to see the pope’s apparent openness mirrored by others in the Roman Catholic church. I want to live in a world where all people will be accepted – for their beliefs, their faith, their sexual orientation, their gender identity and everything else – without exception. The words of Pope Francis to Juan Carlos Cruz give me hope that we are moving in that direction.

Ruth Hunt is the chief executive of Stonewall UK, the leading LGBT equality organization, in the UK.

Youth Synod Document Shows Vatican Evolution on LGBT Topics

By Francis DeBernardo
Bondings 2.0
NewWaysMinistry.org/blog
June 20, 2018

The Vatican has reached three new milestones in its evolution toward a greater dialogue with the LGBT community.

In the Instrumentum Laboris, a preparatory document released on June 19th which lays out the direction for the synod meeting in Rome during October 2018 Synod on Youth in Rome, the Vatican for the first time used the acronym for the first time used the acronym LGBT, the Vatican for the first time used the acronym LGBT, the Vatican for the first time used the acronym LGBT, the Vatican for the first time used the acronym LGBT, the Vatican for the first time used the acronym LGBT, the Vatican for the first time used the acronym LGBT, the Vatican for the first time used the acronym LGBT, the Vatican for the first time used the acronym LGBT, the Vatican for the first time used the acronym LGBT, the Vatican for the first time used the acronym LGBT, the Vatican for the first time used the acronym LGBT, the Vatican for the first time used the acronym LGBT, the Vatican for the first time used the acronym LGBT, the Vatican for the first time used the acronym LGBT, the Vatican for the first time 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“Intrinsically Disordered”: How We Got There, Why It Matters, and What To Do About It

By Cristina Traina

Bondings 2.0
NewWaysMinistry.org/blog
May 9, 2018

Of course, there are gradations of sin-as-disorder. On this logic, sex that can produce offspring (opposite-sex vaginal fornication, for example) at least achieves procreation imperfectly, outside marriage. So it does not disjunctively destroy fertility; rather, it merely counts as sin because that by definition cannot reproduce: masturbation, contraception, bisexuality, and bisexuality-undifferentiated sexes as intrinsically disordered because they don’t aim even implicitly at procreation.

From the scholastic perspective, then, same-sex attraction is mainly a category error, a tendency that makes no sense according to God’s plan for creation. It’s not a sin, or a physical or psychological illness, but it is an intrinsic disorder, as in basic disorder, as in a self-evident misdirection. The moral disorder is pursuing this obviously mistaken desire as if it were a good. It’s an active choice against God’s objective plan.

James Martin, a Jesuit, left the Catholic Church, he said, because of its rejection of same-sex love. In 1879, when Pope Leo XIII was looking for a way to found a pro-labor theology in something besides Marx, Leo’s encyclical Aeterni Patris used Thomas Aquinas not only to start the ball rolling on what we now call Catholic social teaching but also to set the exclusive standard of orthodoxy for all of Catholic theology. In the 1920s, Leo’s successor, Pius XI, used the Thomist, scholastic, and Thomist theological language, and he could hardly be considered the final word and that we shouldn’t accept as fixed.

How we got there

Throughout early Christian history, theology—including moral theology, or ethics—was a hot mess of varied approaches, just as Europe and the Mediterranean world were shifting, no money of cultures, states, and empires. If theologians said something impossible for any person to out and gathered a following, they were likely to be unanathematized. But in general, varied respect.

In the late Middle Ages, however, theologians began to be interested in doing more than collecting and organizing theological debates. They wanted to systematize them too, and conform them to the rigor of philosophy. The University of Paris became a center for this project. It was also a center for the study and systematization of law, and the two disciplines—law and what became known as scholastic theology—grew up in conversation with each other. It does not take too much imagination to see how the language necessary for legal judgment of an action—object, knowledge, freedom, means, ends, etc.—could also be useful for a confessor determining the degree of a sinner’s moral culpability for an action. The Italian theologian Thomas Aquinas found the 4th century BCE Greek philosopher Aristotle very useful for this project. Thomas was excommunicated posthumously for his radical approach, but he really came around and declared him a saint. That freed scholastic moral theologians to meld Aristotelian with the philosophy of a good creation, orderly legal thinking, and traditional Western Christ-ian sexual mores, adopting the idea that all God’s creations are meant to accomplish some particular good end.

Let’s spin out the consequences of this thinking. For Thomas, it was self-evident that human beings are meant for sex with God, and their bodies are meant to contribute to this project while they are on earth. Feet are for walking, hands are for working, mouths are for the right thing, and all aspects of the body and for speaking the truth, and sexual organs are for propagating the human species in an orderly way, within marriage. At least for men, desire and pleasure (thanks to design or the fall, depending on your perspective) are almost inevitable in the process, so they are permitted, but sex for the sake of de-sire and pleasure alone is always sinful to some degree because it orders or directs the sexual organs to the wrong end, self-gratification. (The implying of women’s de-sires and pleasures to this story leads problems to we should address another time?)

We should do what, and why it matters

On one hand, if the past is any indicator, theological forecasters should take courage. Just when it seems things can’t get any worse, a change is usually around the cor ner. The revolutionary theologian Thomas Aquinas was excommunicated, then canonized, then declared the sole standard of orthodoxy, and the concept of the theologians who shaped the documents of Vatican Council II did so in so me远离 from selfish desires, as the words from th e Vatican Council II perfectly states the great and flawless achievement of the Church.

On the other hand, however, too much is at stake for us to wait for Vatican III. The Vatican’s current teaching inspires people of the faith, gets them fired, forbids them marriages, and even subjects them to violence in some places. What to do?

Paradoxically, we lay aside “intrinsic disorder.”

Thomas Aquinas is an inspiration for just the Catholic moral theology of sexuality we need. Thomas trusts our created order as gravely as sex is an objective plan. As in basic disordered, the Vatican doubled down on scholasticism, and this wording fed into both the 1986 Letter and the Catechism. When it comes to sex, the Vatican really is stuck in the 13th century.

Cristina Traina is a professor of Religious Studies at Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois. She is also a member of New Ways Ministry’s Board of Directors.

If you would like to receive emails about New Ways Ministry events, please send email to info@NewWaysMinistry.org

Let us know if you would like daily news updates or monthly announcements.
Jeanine Gramick, SL
Global Sisters Report
The Dominican Catholic Reporter
June 14, 2018

Sister Luisa DeRouen is a pioneer in the "T" of LGBT ministry. A few women religious who dare to be open about their gender identity are often marginalized by their religious communities, but Sister Luisa was the first to do so, as early as 1999, when most Catholics were still living in a world where they had to "stand and accept the L and G." On several occasions over the years, I met and interviewed Luisa, who is a Dominican Sister of Peace, and have been awed by her ministry on the gender margins. I believe that the Church needs to honor this valiant and prophetic woman who has shown us how to choose to be fully ourselves and not be stigmatized or even vilified.

Let me tell you a little about Luisa. First she grew up in a Welsh, small town in Louisiana, where her only exposure to religious life was a religious community called the Eucharistic Missionaries of St. Dominic. Her teenage years were very girl's dream, and she was grateful to God and for her family for all the blessings she felt. When she got her driver's license at fifteen, she started going to daily Mass and continued for all four years of high school.

Feeling she could love God more fully through religious life, Luisa decided to enter the seminary at the end of her senior year in 1961. Though there were some very difficult years, Luisa is clear about the simple fact that religious life is where she belongs.

Luisa served in a variety of ministries: pastoral work, led her community as a spiritual director for her community, coordinator of their motherhouse, spiritual director, retreat work and liturgical spirituality. After Hurricane Katrina forced her to leave the community, she moved to New Orleans in 2005, Luisa moved to Tucson, Arizona, where she had once been missioned.

By then Luisa had been diagnosed with a severe degenerative arthritis of the jaw and had to limit talking to alleviate the pain. Because of this condition, she retired from active ministry in 2010 and moved to St. Catherine, Kentucky. By then, her congregation had been in dialogue with seven other Dominican communities that led to the birth of a new congregation, the Dominican Sisters of Peace, in 2009.

Here is my conversation with her:

Jeanine: What led you into trans ministry and what does it consist of?
Luisa: When I was ending vocation ministry in 1998, I asked my leadership team if I could minister as a religious to gay and lesbian community as I have gay and lesbian people in my family. My leadership team readily agreed, but required that I remain under the radar. At a PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) meeting, I met Court-nay Sharp, a transgender woman who was recovering from gender affirmation surgery. I was impressed by how loved and respected she was by all in the group. She said that acknowledging and claiming their truth as transgender is a profoundly spiritual experience.

Jeanine: How do trans persons recognize the "thirness" and gender dysphoria?
Transgender people who contact me already know and love God, but there is that strong societal and religious message telling them they cannot be transgender and faithful to God. They are told to choose one or the other. For example, Dawn was traumatized by two experiences of being harshly judged by priests insisting she was dooming herself by acknowledging that she was a boy and not a girl. Her therapist did not recognize that at the core of Dawn's struggle was the chasm between accepting who she was and believing that she was transgender and believing that God still loved her as she was.

Jeanine: What comfort do you provide to your community members when they are excluded even by their family?
Luisa: Sandi and her spouse went to Mass and prayed the rosary together every day. For many years he fought against a persistent knowledge from within himself that he wasn't a "man." Finally he could no longer pretend to be who he wasn't. Because his family had a very difficult time with his transition, he thought that perhaps he should do as Jesus did—choose to die for the sake of those he loved. He was overwhelmed with guilt for their pain and thought it was his fault. He spent many hours with God. He finally came to understand that Jesus didn't choose to take his own life. Jesus loved us to the point of dying and really meant it when he said, "I have come that you may have life, and have it to the full." It is our false self that must die, never our true self.

Jeanine: What comfort do you provide to your community members when they are excluded even by their family?
Sandi and her wife live on the West Coast and are in their mid-forties. They have five children, ranging in age from twenty-one to four, and have always been active in their parish community. As they were transitioning, Sandi has totally accepted at her job and even travels internationally with her professional peers. However, her spouse and children largely rejected her even though Sandi has shown incredible patience, compassion, forgiveness and boundless love for them. She has been an inspiration to me of what holiness looks like.

Jeanine: What comfort do you provide to your community members when they are excluded even by their family?
Dawn, Brian and Sandi were able to reconcile their faith and their gender identity. Many others cannot and need spiritual companioning. Transgender people have struggled to be honest with themselves, those they love, and with God far more than most people. I'm often struck by the signature line of one of my trans friends, who says, "I'd rather be hate than a "person of faith" who is not happy with God!" Dawn and Brian have said that "in the truth" is as important as it is for transgender people.

Jeanine: What comfort do you provide to your community members when they are excluded even by their family?
What has been the response of your community leaders and members to you and your ministry?
My community leaders have always recognized that my ministry is in response to God's call and is consistent with our charism and mission statements. I began this ministry with the approval of the Eucharistic Missionaries of St. Dominic and each year following the approval of the Dominican Sisters of Peace.

Jeanine: What comfort do you provide to your community members when they are excluded even by their family?
By Sarah McDonald
The Independent
Dublin, Ireland
April 16, 2018

Former TV3 political correspondent Ursula Halligan has said that, as a Catholic gay person, she wants the Church to provide exclusive sacramental marriage for same-sex couples.

Ms. Halligan was speaking to the Irish Independent at a conference for Catholic reform groups at the weekend ahead of the World Meeting of Families (WMOF) in Dublin in August.

She said the Church's teaching on same-sex relationships was "deeply insulting and offensive."

As a gay person, I don't want pastoral care from the Church. Parish priests only bring comfort to the Church, she said.

I reject the Church's teaching that gay people are 'objectively disorder-ed' and that our love is 'intrinsically evil.'

Ms. Halligan, who attended the conference as a delegate, described herself as "a person of faith and a committed Catholic."

However, she added: "As a woman and a gay person, I'm not putting up with it any longer. I'm not sitting at the back of the bus any more. The institutional Church has to change on this."

She said the Church's teaching on same-sex relationships is "deeply insulting and offensive", not only to the dignity of every gay person, but it is deeply insulting to God whose image and likeness we are made in.

I believe my love is as good as any other's love and as a Catholic, I'm looking for full sacramental marriage for same-sex couples," she said.

She added: "The recent removal of imagery of gay people from the WMOF event brochure is disturbing and alarming."

"It sends out a disturbing message."

On the second last day of the WMOF 2018, a Festival of Families will take place on the banks of Liffey. We have five selected families from around the world will be invited to witness to the church's 'faith'. We do not have one original Irish family, but living in Ireland."

Ms. Halligan criticised the Church's "demonisation" of divorced and sep- arate families and warned that "the Eucharist is being used as a weapon rather than nourishment against the gay community."

Two mothers, who are practicing Catholics and whose sons are gay, addressed the conference. Other speakers included Denis O'Brien, of the National Youth Council, and Padraic Fallon, of Unmarried and Separated Families Ireland.

Ms. Halligan was expressing to participants that conservative American funders were "calling the shots" over the line-up of speakers at the event.

"I'm not saying that Pope Francis is an ally," she said. "What's happening to transgender people is the reason I'm coming out now. I think Pope Francis would commend you. In the first year of his papacy, a transgender woman was found murdered in Rome. Her funeral was held at the Gesu, which is considered the Pope's church. I think Pope Francis is urging Catholics to have mercy and also to speak out. So do you consider Pope Francis an ally? Yes, I do. I'm aware that some people have said that Pope Francis hasn't changed church teaching about sexual and gender matters. I don't expect any change. I'll maybe change in the future, because of his posture toward truth."

"What's most important for Pope Francis is the real change. We're familiar with some of his favorite meta- phors for a culture of encounter—the church as a field hospital and the shep- herd."

(Continued on page 8)
LGBT-friendly Catholic Parishes & Communities

Below is a list of known LGBT-friendly Catholic parishes and intentional Eucharistic communities. Thank you for helping us add to this growing list. If you are aware of a parish or community that welcomes LGBT Catholics, please let us know. Tell us if this welcome is because of a support program, spirituality group, mission statement, participation in LGBT community events, or involvement with parents. To add your faith community to the list, please contact New Ways Ministry at info@newwaysministry.org or call 301-277-5674. Parishes are listed first and intentional Eucharistic communities follow. For links to many of these parishes’ websites, go to www.NewWaysMinistry.org
After All These Years, Still Coming Out . . . As Catholic

By Sarah Gregory

New Ways Ministry.org/blog
June 10, 2018

“So, you’re still Catholic? I don’t think I’ve heard from the inquisition in his voice—was it a statement or a question? I suspect it might’ve been intentionally ambiguous, allowing me the choice of deciding how to reply. I replied without replying, not answering his question at all.

“Are you?”

Nothing really unusual about that reply, except, I suppose, the Church is in the midst of an identity crisis, and many people who think, who question, who see faith and religion through what Vatican II called “reading the signs of the times”—they’ve grown restless from their sandals and left the Catholic Church. Some have found their “Home Away from Home” in the Episcopal Church, others in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) or other denominations. Many others live in communities, or in the Episcopal Church, trying to understand the Catholic agnosticism, or trying to police the lives of those who see the damage wrought by a narrow definition of what it means ALL, y

Catholic means that

I know and believe as well

that our religious identity. Or, to put it another way, if our identity is central to how we engage with our sisters and brothers, it might be that the time is ripe to discern where, whether, how, and to whom we disclose our use of that label—the big “C.” Catholic.

Becovered: Sacred Sacrament
St. Mary (Downer’s), St. Monica
Suratoga Springs: St. Peter
Syracuse: St. Lucy, All Saints
Utica: Our Lady of the Assumption
Historic Old St. John’s
Wading River: St. John the Baptist
Wantagh: St. Frances de Chantal
West Islip: Our Lady of Lourdes
Westbury: St. Brigid

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

Ohio
Akron: St. Bernard
Cincinnati: St. George-St. Monica, St. Robert Bellarmine
Cleveland: Blessed Trinity, St. Malachi, St. Martha
Columbus: St. Thomas More
Newman Center
Fairlawn: St. Hilary
Mentor: St. John Vianney
University Heights: Church of Gesu Westlake: St. Ladislas
Wooster: St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception

Oregon
Beaverton: Spirit of Grace
Portland: St. Andrew, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Philip Neri, Down Town Chapel (St. Vincent de Paul)

Pennsylvania
Danville: St. Joseph
Philadelphia: Old St. Joseph, Old St. Mary
Elverson, Evangelist, St. Vincent DePaul
Wilkinsburg: St. James

Rhode Island
Providence: St. Raymond Wickford: St. Bernard

Tennessee
Aloha: Our Lady of Fatima
Memphis: Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception

Texas
Colleyville: Good Shepherd Dallas: Holy Trinity El Paso: All Saints Houston: St. Anne, St. Teresa Odessa: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

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

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

Wisconsin

Arizona
Scottsdale: Franciscan Renewal Center

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

District of Columbia
Communists

Florida
Tampa: Franciscan Center

Iowa
Corvallis: Full Circle Small Faith Community

Low: Catholic

INTENTIONAL EUCHARISTIC COMMUNITIES

Michigan
Grand Rapids: Marywood Kalamazoo: Lambda Catholics

Minnesota
Minneapolis: Spirit of St. Stephen’s Community

Ohio
Dayton: Living Beatitude Communities

Oregon
Portland: Journey and Koinonia Catholic Community

Pennsylvania
Pittsburgh: Dignity/Pittsburgh

Virginia
Arlington: NOVA Catholic Community

Washington
Lacey: Holy City

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

Summer 2018

BONDINGS Page 5

Regarding his practice of weekly Lenten reflections. Might I be interested in contributing a piece to the series?

I’ve followed New Ways Ministry for a number of years, attended the Symposium in Minneapolis in 2007, and well, I fit the bill for the types of writers they were looking for: I’m queer and Catholic and a theology student GTU. All boxes checked. Even so, I had some hard-core discerning to do. For a number of years, I wrote regularly for Street Prophets, a non-defunct faith and politics website, but I did so behind a screen name. Only a select group of participants there knew my true identity. My child was in Catholic school, we were involved in parish life, and I didn’t want to bring the wrath of conservative Catholics down on either my beloved son or the communities and priests who invariably welcomed us with open arms.

I didn’t really have that excuse in 2017. The kid was off at college, and we have different last names, giving him plausible deniability about anything his mom might write up on the internet. My secular employer flies low in front of its offices in June. I live in San Francisco. The risk to me of having my name associated with something queer is precisely zero. But then, it call Catholic guilt or being taught by the Jesuits, I spent some uncomfortable time in an Excommunication of Conscience. Something didn’t quite feel comfortable about writing under my own name, rather than the pseudonym I’d used for years elsewhere.

My examined conscience responded with a sharp kick to my backbone. I didn’t feel comfortable coming out— as Catholic. Many of the people to whom I’m closest in the world are ex-Catholics, Catholics-in-exile, “recovering Catholics” – they were here, and now they’re gone. Some who remain in the Church take “Mass holidays” from time to time, giving themselves a break from the cognitive dissonance between what they know to be true and what they hear from the pulpit. Then there are the friends who were never Catholic or Christian, and who see the damage wrought by a hierarchy that plays politics over piety or pastoral care. They simply cannot comprehend why a church leadership that seems so irrational, so ungrounded, and so hostile to LGBTQ identity, so biased against women, and in the US, so tightly tied with one political party, has any business trying to police the lives of those who aren’t even its adherents.

I don’t argue with them. I frankly don’t believe I have much of a case to make there, and also find too much of

(Continued from page 4)

Missouri

Montana
Billings: Holy Rosary, St. Pius X

Nebraska
Omaha: Holy Family, Sacred Heart

New Hampshire
Merrimack: St. John Neumann Pelham: St. Patrick

New Jersey

New Mexico
Albuquerque: Holy Family, Shrine of St. Bernadette Española: Sacred Heart of Jesus

New York
Albany: St. Vincent DePaul Baldwinsville: St. Augustine Bellmore: St. Barnabas the Apostle Belfort: Mary Immaculate Binghamton: St. Francis of Assisi Brooklyn: St. Andrew the Apostle, St. Boniface, St. Athanasius, St. Augustine, Immacul Heart of Mary Deer Park: St. Cyril and Methodius East Islip: St. Mary Elmiria: St. Mary Fairport: Church of the Assumption Henrietta: Gentle Shepherd Manhattan: Ascension, Blessed Sacra ment, Holy Name of Jesus, St. Francis de Sales, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Francis Xavier, St. Ignatius Loyola, St. Paul the Apostle Pittsford, Church of Transfiguration

(Continued on page 8)
Two Italian Bishops Lead Prayer Vigils Against LGBT Discrimination

By Robert Shine

Bondings 2.0

NewWaysMinistry.org/blog

June 29, 2018

At least two Italian bishops participated in vigils marking the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) this past May.

Archbishop Corrado Lorefice of Palermo composed a prayer for an ecumenical vigil in that city which he helped lead, and he encouraged Catholic parishes to recite it at Mass. A La Repubblica article quoted the archbishop: “While we firmly deplore that homophobia and discrimination are still so widespread among religious institutions, we must also challenge those who use the phrase ‘gender ideology’ to blame persons.”

Bishop Massimo Camisasca of Reggio Emilia and Guastalla led a Mass in his city. Crux reported that several gay people offered testimonies during the homily, after which the bishop told those gathered: “I am not here for an acronym, LGBT, which doesn’t belong to me. Nor for an adjective, gay. I am here for a noun, persons. You are persons. Every person has equal dignity, regardless of their sexual orientation and deserves everyone’s respect. This has not always been the case. It’s right therefore for society and faithful to apologize to those that have felt deified or put in a corner.”

Fr. Gianluca Carrega, who heads the Diocese of Turin’s outreach to lesbian and gay people, told La Repubblica: “It is important...that these days of vigil are not just a declaration of what is happening around us, but also an opportunity to better know ourselves and make us enlightened by the truth of the Gospel.”

Such public stances by church leaders are important, and especially so in Italy, which remains behind in LGBT equality initiatives compared to other Western countries. Bishop Lorefice acknowledged that society and the Church needed to apologize to LGBT people who have been harmed in particular notably, and follows-up on Pope Francis’ call for such apologies two years ago. Despite some Italian Catholic groups’ protests against IDAHOBIT and Pride events this year, there is a marked shift in public attitudes. Crux reported that during World Pride Day in 2000, which was held in Rome, then-Pope John Paul II said before his address that he supported the event because Pride was an “offense to the Christian values.” Today, the three Italian bishops need to continue the growing ranks of Catholic officials worldwide who recognize IDAHOBIT events and the goodness of Pride celebrations. As June ends, these episcopal prayers are worth celebrating, and they serve as an impetus to spread the coming year advocating so that more church leaders raise their voices publicly in defense of LGBT people’s dignity and well-being. +

France’s Dioceses Adjust to Marriage Equality By Welcoming LGBT People

By Lindsay Hueston

Bondings 2.0

NewWaysMinistry.org/blog

July 2, 2018

Since France legalized same-sex marriage (“mariage pour tous” or “marriage for all”) in 2013, support for LGBT persons in the French Catholic Church has grown immensely. Already 35 French dioceses have “missioned” people to begin to close the wide gap between the LGBT community and the Church.

Many of these dioceses have opened the conversation surrounding LGBT issues and how they intersect with Christian beliefs by establishing dialogue groups. For example, the diocese of Cote-d’Azur created an Ecumenical Forum for Family and support groups called “Se parler,” “meaning ‘to talk with each other’;” noted the French Catholic news outlet La Croix, which recently published a major article about the phenomenon. Bishop Michel Sanier, the group seeks to create a space for church members whose lives have been affected by the Church’s often harsh stance on LGBT issues, and treatment of LGBT persons.

Speaking with group participants, Bishop Sanier told them that they were all “part of the body of Christ.” Additionally, Bishop Sanier, who heads the diocese of Saint-Etienne, said, “Welcoming all Christians is an absolute necessity.”

A strong welcome is needed because for too long, the Church has only provided lip service. “Gay people and their families have the impression that the Church welcomes them all, but actually places people at a distance,” said Fabienne Dauil, a member of Cadors (“Christians’s accueillant dans leurs differences d’orientations sexuelles,” or “Christians welcoming each other in their different sexual orientations”) in Nimes.

Isabelle Parmentier is one of the French Catholics spearheading such initiatives in her diocese. Appointed by Bishop Pascal Wintzer of Poitiers, she accompanies LGBT people, parents of LGBT children, LGBT couples, and Christian or not – to rebuilding the broken ties between the Church and the LGBT community. Homophobia, she says, is still present in French society, and “remains one of the major causes of suicide in teenagers.”

In certain Catholic families, the suffering that LGBT people go through is aggravated by the idea that a gay child is “inherently evil.” The movement in the French Church toward inclusion of LGBT persons and a “pioneer of welcoming gay groups in his diocese.” As he noted in an interview with La Croix, Besson commented: “Of course, certain people would have these changes to come more quickly, or slowly, but I’ve been doing this for ten years, and I never would have thought we’d be where we are today.”

These groups and conversations in France are a hopeful sign that the LGBT community can be integrated without scorn or shame that has so often come from Catholic Church leaders. Similar groups can gain popularity, and the much-needed reparation between the Church and the LGBT community can spread worldwide. +

Ministry on the Gender Margins: Interview With Sr. Luisa DeRouen

(Continued from page 3)

herd having the smell of the sheep. Repeatedly he returns to the theme of seeing people as they are, listening to them, having compassion and empathy. This should come before any litmus test of doctrinal orthodoxy if we are to know how to be the presence of Christ for them.

However, Pope Francis, like many people, returns to the prophetic approach in instances when he has not had enough experience with people who challenge general beliefs. His experience with transgender people is a good example. He knows Sister Monica Astorga Cremanta, the Brazilian shepherd in Argentina, and supports her ministry to transgender women who are trying to end drug use and prostitution. He was sensitive in meeting with a transgender man at the Vatican. But these experiences are not significant enough to withstand the pressure he gets from those who use the phrase “gender ideology” to stir up culture wars. That said, he is willing to learn and to admit when he is wrong. He’s a deeply holy man and open to God’s Spirit.

Polls and research show that Catholics overwhelmingly support civil rights for lesbian and gay people. In the recent public debate on same-sex marriage, nearly three-quarters of U.S. Catholics were supportive of some type of legal recognition. Do you think Catholic parishioners are open to welcoming transgender people as they are and with whom they are? 

Do you think the recent changes are getting harder or easier to deal with in our church?

As in most other areas of parish life, how parishioners relate to transgender people often depends on how the pastor relates to transgender people. If he preaches negatively about, and treats people in a disrespectful and violent manner, we pray that Christ will take away from this conversation? Do you believe Catholic parishioners are accepting of transgender people as they are and with whom they are? Do you think the recent changes are getting harder or easier to deal with in our church?

As the much-needed change in Catholic attitudes toward LGBT people continues, we must be aware that there is a need for reparation between the Church and the LGBT community, to spread worldwide. +

New Ways Ministry’s Bondings 2.0

The best way to keep up on the latest Catholic LGBT news, opinion, and spirituality

An online resource updated daily

Share your ideas with others
By Rev. Fred Daley
America
March 3, 2018

March 25, 2004, the Feast of the Annunciation, felt like the longest day of my life. That evening, I was being honored by the United Way for my parish’s ministries to the poor and marginalized in the community. Shortly before the ceremony, a young reporter from the local newspaper interviewed me. She noted that I had been outspoken on many social issues and particularly supportive of the L.G.B.T. community, and I knew that the moment to come out publicly as a gay, Roman Catholic priest.

The journey to that moment was a long and often painful one. I knew I wanted to be a priest since I was in junior high school. Because priests are called to celibacy, I must have repressed my sexuality from an early age. I thought it had become a part of who I was. My capacity for friendship and empathy deepened profoundly. Will I be able to share my story in a way that could benefit others? I wanted to accompany and minister to the poor, the excluded and those marginalized in church and in society, to provide this ministry to the L.G.B.T. community.

After a few years, however, I began to notice an ache within me. This aching became dread. As I began to admit to myself my same-sex attractions, that dread became horror. While on a retreat, I shared the truth about my sexuality for the first time with the priest assigned as my spiritual director. I prayed that he would help me get back on track. I wanted to learn how to repress these impure thoughts. Instead, Father Paul explained that my sexual orientation is part of who God created me to be. I waited, and was wholly loved by God. Little by little, with the help of some counseling and spiritual direction, I began to accept myself—and, eventually, love myself as a gay man. I finally understood the true sacrifice of celibacy. Although I never acted on any of my desires, I needed to consciously reconnect myself to this way of life in order to live as a priest with integrity. Gradually, I told a few close friends and family that I was gay. But for the most part, I remained in the closet.

This inner journey to self-acceptance dramatically changed my relationship with God. I experienced the unconditional love of God in my soul, in my gut and in my head. This love for God poured into my heart for my parishioners. My capacity for friendship and empathy deepened profoundly. Will I be able to share my story in a way that could benefit others? I wanted to accompany and minister to the poor, the excluded and those marginalized in church and in society, to provide this ministry to the L.G.B.T. community.

Then, in 2002, the sexual abuse scandal broke in the United States, and a number of church leaders began scapegoating gay priests as the cause of the crisis. I knew this was not true. I concluded that if I were to live with integrity and preach the Gospel without compromise, I needed to publicly come out of the closet. It was not an impulsive decision. It was preceded by prayer and strengthened by consultation with my spiritual director and the auxiliary bishop. I trusted in the Holy Spirit to show me the right moment to come out. The interview on the Feast of the Annunciation turned out to be that moment.

I shared with the reporter that in my years accompanying members of the L.G.B.T. community, I recognized in their deep pain my own struggle of self-acceptance as a gay man.

I waited for the newspaper the next morning with a bit of fear and trembling. Would the writer report what I said accurately? Would I be suspended by the bishop? Would my parishioners reject me? Would I be hurting people who do not understand? The headline on the front page read: “Father Daley Reveals That He Is Gay.” Meanwhile, “Father Daley Receives National Gay Hero Award for His Work with the Poor” was relegated to an inner section of the paper.

That weekend I shared my story at the parish liturgies. I was met with standing ovations. One of my concerns in discerning whether I should come out or not was a fear that I would be hurting or confusing parishioners who might not understand. An elderly, very traditional Irish parishioner—their name was John—hugged me and said, “Don’t worry, Father, I like you!”

I received hundreds of letters from around the country offering support. A few parishioners showed concern for my homosexual soul going to hell—but even they assured me of my prayers. My bishop at the time and his successor have respected me and supported my ministry. The journey to that moment was a long and often painful one. I knew I wanted to be a priest since I was in junior high school. Because priests are called to celibacy, I must have repressed my sexuality from an early age. I thought it had become a part of who I was. My capacity for friendship and empathy deepened profoundly. Will I be able to share my story in a way that could benefit others? I wanted to accompany and minister to the poor, the excluded and those marginalized in church and in society, to provide this ministry to the L.G.B.T. community.

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

LGBT-friendly Catholic Colleges and Universities

Alabama
Mobile: Spring Hill College
California
Belmont: Notre Dame de Namur University
Goleta: St. Mark’s University
Los Angeles: Marymount University,
Mount St. Mary’s College
Moraga: St. Mary’s College
Oakland: Holy Names University
Rancho Palos Verde: Marymount College
San Diego: University of San Diego
San Francisco: University of San Francisco
Santa Clara: Santa Clara University
Colorado
Denver: Regis University
Connecticut
Fairfield: Fairfield University, Sacred Heart University
New Haven: Albertus Magnus College
West Haven: Saint Joseph College
District of Columbia
Georgetown University, Trinity University
Florida
Miami Gardens: St. Thomas University
Miami Shores: Barry University
Hawaii
Honolulu: Chaminade University
Illinois
Chicago: DePaul University, Loyola University
Joliet: University of St. Francis
River Forest: Dominican University in Illinois
Romeoville: Lewis University
Indiana
Notre Dame: Holy Cross College, St. Mary’s College, Univ. of Notre Dame
Iowa
Davenport: St. Ambrose University
Dubuque: Loras College, Clarke University
Kentucky
Louisville: Spalding University, Bellarmine University
Louisiana
New Orleans: Loyola University
Maryland
Baltimore: Notre Dame of Maryland University, Loyola University of Maryland
Massachusetts
Boston: Emmanuel College, Chestnut Hill: Boston College
Chicopee: Elms College
Easton: Stonehill College
North Andover: Merrimack College
West: Regis College
Norwich: Averill Pierson College, College of the Holy Cross
Michigan
Detroit: University of Detroit Mercy,
Grand Rapids: Aquinas College
Minnesota
Collegeville: St. John’s University
Duluth: College of St. Scholastica
Mankato: St. Mary’s University
St. Joseph: College of Saint Benedict
St. Paul: St. Thomas University
Winona: St. Mary’s University of Minnesota
Missouri
Kansas City: Avila University, Rockhurst University
St. Louis: Fontbonne University, St. Louis University
Montana
Helena: Carroll College
Nebraska
Omaha: Creighton University
New Hampshire
Manchester: St. Anselm College
Nashua: Rivier College
New Jersey
Caldwell: Caldwell College
Jersey City: St. Peter’s College
South Orange: Seton Hall
New York
Albany: College of Saint Rose
Brooklyn and Patchogue: St. Joseph’s College
Brooklyn: Fordham University, Manhattan College
Buffalo: Canisius College
Loudonville: Siena College
New Rochelle: College of New Rochelle, Iona College
Poughkeepsie: Mariot College
Rochester: St. John Fisher College
St. Bonaventure: St. Bonaventure University
Sparkill: St. Thomas Aquinas College
Syracuse: Le Moyne College
Queens: St. John’s University
Ohio
Cincinnati: Xavier University
Cleveland Heights: John Carroll University
Dayton: University of Dayton
Pepper Pike: Ursuline College
South Euclid: Notre Dame College
Sylvania: Lourdes College
Oregon
Marinette: Maryhurst University
Portland: University of Portland
Pennsylvania
Cresson: Mount Aloysius College
Dallas: Alvernia University
Erie: Mercyhurst College
Greensburg: Seton Hill University
Johnstown: Immaculata University
Philadelphia: Chestnut Hill College, LaSalle University, St. Joseph’s University
Pittsburgh: Carlow University, Duquesne University
Radnor: Cabrini College
Reading: Alvernia University
Scranton: Marywood University
Villanova: Villanova University
Rhode Island
Newport: Salve Regina University
Providence: Providence College
Texas
Austin: St. Edward’s University
San Antonio: University of the Incarnate Word, Our Lady of the Lake University
Vermont
Colchester: Saint Michael’s College
Washington
Lacey: St. Martin’s College
Seattle: Seattle University
Spokane: Gonzaga University
West Virginia
Wheeling: Wheeling Jesuit University
Wisconsin
De Pere: St. Norbert College
Madison: Edgewood College
Milwaukee: Alverno College, Cardinal Stritch University, Marquette University
Canada
Toronto: Regis College

(Continued on page 8)
Grandfather’s Struggle with Church & State for Transgender Grandchild

By Francis Morgan

BONDINGS 2.0
NewWaysMinistry.org/blogs
June 17, 2021

The author is the grandfather of a transgender child. Because of the identity of his family, he is using the pseudonym "Marsha." The other names in this post have also been changed for the same reason.

My daughter, Marsha, is the mother of identical twins. Both were born with the bodies of girls. As I often react to his body by being defiant and actually hates his body. It breaks our hearts when we see him struggling in this way.

Marsha, her husband, and their child traveled to a children’s hospital in Baltimore to meet with psychologists who specialize in transgender issues. After talking at great length with the parents and child, the psychologists confirmed that Joseph actually identifies as male.

Professionals say that gender identity begins in the womb and occurs in the brain prior to the development of the child’s sex. Proof of the transgender identity does not change. The child is persistent, consistent, and insistent concerning who they are.

It was a teachable moment, perhaps one of the most important ones in my 12-year career as a Catholic school mom. He knew one of the men as “Father” – and excellent catechist in school, church, and home taught him the significance of that role. But he was also receiving even more important catechism in honesty, integrity, and courage. Perhaps above all else, I wanted him to know that no matter what the Church or his dear old mom might ever say, he had to follow his own conscience, his own heart’s desire.

I knew that in a few short years he’d have to shed the Church’s teachings on homosexuality from people other than me, and while his conscience was to be formed to his own, he needed to know that no – I did not, have not, and cannot receive those teachings as they stood then or now. My conscience is strong on this one, and my understanding of science, of biology, and of humanity is in pretty decent shape, too. So, too, is my comfort in least that part of my identity. “Queer as something” as my byline read in the late 1980s. I still claim it as my own.

And yes, I also claim Catholic.” I claim it for the Sisters of Mercy who taught me as a child to stand up when I see injustice. Our school even had a club ‘Catholics In Action’ – CIA (No, not creepy at all. I mean, love you dearly, Sisters, but really? CIA?!) I claim it for the work of Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker movement, and Thom- as Merton’s “Seven Storey Mountain.” I also claim it in the name of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence who have served the people of San Francisco and beyond for generations, caring for “the least among these” – people dying from AIDS sitting on the streets. Jesus said, “Whoever is not against us is for you” (Luke 9:50) when someone was driving out demons from those suffering terribly. So all of my Sisters – I claim you, even if you don’t or can’t claim Catholicism right now.

Labels? Labels are messy. I think – no, I know – that the priest who inno- cen tly asked me, “So you’re still Cath- olic?” gets that. He exudes peace and compassion, but probably is neither a counter to people who expect judgment anyway. That’s what seems to be the Church’s specialty nowadays.

But that’s not all we are. So yeah. I’m still Catholic. I’m saying here that it appears that we are writing here from time to time, under my own name, as long as they’ll have me. Life, Love, Day Jobs™ but my time is true, too. I’m hoping to offer you a little bread for the journey, to receive some as well. Be Church and show that “church” doesn’t mean fear, rejection, or damnation. We can say it for our Stück, too. Catholic. Still Catholic. We’ve got this. Thanks to be god. +

**After All These Years, Still Coming Out . . As Catholic**

(Continued from page 3)

the church teachings around sexuality and gender to be regressive and repressive. To use my fiancée’s theological education, those teachings simply haven’t been received by the faithful. Church teachings aren’t authoritarian just because centrist and well-meaning in its beliefs on civil society. How shameful that the leaders of my Catholic Church are so harshly critical and heaped with hostility.

My Church needs to broaden its perspective and to communicate with LGBT people in a human way. The leaders of my Catholic Church become complicit in such deaths by its positions on LGBT persons and religious freedom. I know that no, I know that no, I know that I have had personal relationships with God, my neighbors and my self. Often, with gratitude I reflect on the words: “We are as sick as our secrets.” +

Gay Priest Comes Out

(Continued from page 7)

ask my brother gay priests to pray for me. I began to place to reflect deeply on the question. I can say that, for me, coming out was and continues to be a blessing. Folks who are facing personal struggles perceive me as more approachable because they know I have had personal experience. Not too. An important fact on a clerical pedestal has thankfully melted away.

Being a public person, I have many opportunities to counter the homophobic prejudices that still exist in our church and society. One of my favorite spiritual themes comes from the writings and teachings of the Rev. Henri Nouwen, who said, “We tend to be compassionate to the extent that we have suffered the Passion in our own lives.” As I look back on those days when I was in the closet, I am so grateful that, through the gift of the Spirit, that closet door was broken open. Though I believe you are born with your sexual orientation or gender identity. For my own grandchild who could be led to such an end of his life because of the pain that society and my own Church would place on him.

Gay Priest Comes Out

I was flabbergasted and couldn’t counter quickly enough to say that I have personal relationships with God, my neighbors and myself. Often, with gratitude I reflect on the words: “We are as sick as our secrets.” +

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