

# BONDINGS

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## 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 have Pope Francis appear to confirm what many Catholics already know to be true: God

made us just as we should be, there are no mistakes.

Lesbian, 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 affirmation that LGBT 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 welcome. 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 relationships 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



Ruth Hunt



Juan Carlos Cruz

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 19<sup>th</sup> which lays out the direction for the

have a desire to be part of the church. In one section, the document states: "some LGBT youth ... wish to benefit from greater closeness and experience greater care from the Church."

This acknowledgement is a welcome change from the hierarchy's traditional rhetoric that suggests LGBT people are opposed to religion. As New Ways Ministry knows from over 40 years of pastoral work with the LGBT community, LGBT Catholics have a deep

known to the Vatican online. In the *Instrumentum Laboris*, the Vatican acknowledges that many youth expressed disagreement with the church's teaching on a range of sexuality topics, including homosexuality. This acknowledgement indicates a realistic perspective on the Vatican's part, unlike at the 2015 Synod on the Family where only people who agreed with church teaching were invited to address the bishops.

New Ways Ministry welcomes these developments and prays that the Vatican will make real its intriguing acknowledgements of youth and LGBT reality by having an open and free discussion of these issues at the synod.

While these three developments are welcome changes in the church's style of discourse, it must be noted that there is nothing in the new document which indicates that the Vatican is, as yet, willing to entertain changes in church policy on LGBT issues. The furthest they have gone is to indicate a willingness to work towards being a "community open and welcoming towards all." This pastoral approach is important, but the Church's outreach cannot end there.

The proof of the Vatican's openness to LGBT issues will be how these topics are addressed at the Synod itself: Will LGBT youths be represented as speakers to the assembly? Will voices expressing dissent on LGBT issues be allowed by speakers who address the bishops? If the Vatican does not enact such changes at the upcoming synod, the language of the *Instrumentum Laboris* will go down in history as lip-service—which youth are keenly adept at recognizing.

*The National Catholic Reporter* has noted that at the press conference releasing the *Instrumentum Laboris*, Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri "said his office decided to make the Vatican's first use of the LGBT acronym to refer to gay people because the March pre-synodal meeting of young people used the term and his office was 'diligent' about respecting the young people's work."

Yet, we also have to wonder if this development may possibly be traced to the effect that Fr. James Martin's book *Building a Bridge: How the Catholic Church and the LGBT Community Can Enter into a Relationship of Respect, Compassion, and Sensitivity* has had on church discussions. In that text, which is based on a talk Fr. Martin gave at a New Ways Ministry event, the Jesuit priest asks church leaders, as a sign of respect, to use the LGBT community's vocabulary for self-identification:

"... [R]espect means calling a group what it asks to be called. ... Names are important. Thus, church leaders are invited to be attentive to how they name the L.G.B.T. community and lay to rest phrases like 'afflicted with same-sex attraction,' which no L.G.B.T. person I know uses, and even 'homosexual person,' which seems overly clinical to many. I'm not prescribing what names to use, though 'gay and lesbian,' 'L.G.B.T.' and 'L.G.B.T.Q.' are the most common. I'm saying that people have a right to name themselves. Using those names is part of respect."

Martin's book has been praised by church leaders around the globe, including Cardinal Kevin Farrell, the head of the Vatican's Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life which plays a significant role in the Synod on Youth. In fact, Farrell wrote a blurb for the book's jacket cover. ✦



October 2018 Synod on Youth in Rome, the Vatican for the first time used the acronym "LGBT" to describe individuals with diverse sexualities and gender identities. Similar to 2013 when Pope Francis became the first pope to use the word "gay," this change in language signals that church officials are beginning to understand that they have to treat LGBT people with simple respect by referring to them with more accurate terms.

Another significant development is the acknowledgement that LGBT people

spirituality, often forged by remarkable journeys overcoming rejection, alienation, and marginalization. LGBT Catholics have stayed a part of the church, despite statements and actions which have offended and hurt them.

A third development is that the document shows that Vatican officials paid attention to concerns about LGBT issues which were raised by youth at a pre-synod meeting in Rome during March of this year, and also from youth around the world who made their views

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

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

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

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## "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

**Geek alert: theological history ahead!**

A while ago, I wrote about an English translation problem in the 1986 *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons* that changed the meaning of a significant passage. A number of readers pointed out that correcting this little error would not come close to undoing the document's dominant language (and thinking) of intrinsic, objective, moral disorder.

Surprisingly, people from across the theological spectrum agree. Even some who energetically support Vatican teaching and take a strong tone against same-sex relationships oppose the term (for instance blogger Aaron Taylor). James Martin, S.J. decries it. More recently, Bob Shine reported that Irish journalist Ursula Halligan had called such language "vile."

Why is this the one thing on which Catholics who agree about little else can find common ground? Possibly because we agree on one other thing: the label of intrinsic, objective moral disorder doesn't fit anyone who gets up every morning committed to inhabiting God's love, justice, and wisdom. We are all flawed, we all fall short, but intrinsically disordered? That's a hard one to take. So how did the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith arrive at this destructive language, why is it still employed, and what should we do about it? The main point of the tale is that we're here because of some odd twists of history that can hardly be considered the final word and that we shouldn't accept as fixed.

**How we got here**

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 a shifting, hot mess of cultures, states, and empires. If theologians said something impossibly far out and gathered a following, they were likely to be anathematized. But in general, variety reigned.

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, intention, means, end, 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 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE Greek philosopher Aristotle very useful for this project. Thomas was excommunicated posthumously for his radical approach, but eventually Rome came around and declared him a saint. That freed scholastic moral theologians to meld Aristotle with the philosophy of a good creation, orderly legal thinking, and traditional Western Christian 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 union 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 eating the right sorts and amounts of food to nourish the body and for speaking the truth, and sexual organs are for propagating the 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 desire and pleasure alone is always sinful to some degree because it orders or directs the sexual organs to the wrong end: self-gratification. (The irrelevance of women's desires and pleasures to this story leads to problems we should address another time!)

Of course, there are gradations of sin-as-disorder. On this logic, sex that *can* produce offspring (opposite-sex vaginal fornication, adultery, rape, etc.) may at least achieve procreation imperfectly, outside marriage. So it does not disrespect God's created order as gravely as sex that by definition cannot reproduce: masturbation, contraceptive sex, bestiality, and same-sex unions. Scholastic moral theology sees these acts and desires 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 dis-order, as in a self-evident mis-direction. 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.

This mode of thinking about sex became Church policy 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 process Leo swept all other approaches to theology off the table. The upshot was that Thomas's description of persons, ends, acts, and objects was now the only game in town. Moral theology had to be expressed in Thomistic, scholastic analytical concepts, like "well-ordered" and "disordered" acts and desires.

But when Vatican Council II finally broke the Thomistic theological logjam (for instance, replacing Thomas's ideal of monarchy with democracy), individual moral theology was

only slightly affected. With the promulgation of *Humanae vitae* (the birth control encyclical) in 1968, it became clear that the fresh air of *aggiornamento* had had the least effect of all on the Vatican's moral teaching on sexuality. The result is that, despite *Humanae Vitae's* addition of the "unitive" dimension of sex, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith still views sex as being first and foremost about procreation. With the 1975 *Persona humana* and its language of "intrinsically 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 13<sup>th</sup> century.

**What we should do, 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 corner. The revolutionary theologian Thomas Aquinas was excommunicated, then canonized, then declared the sole standard of orthodoxy. Many of the theologians who shaped the documents of Vatican Council II did so in semi-secrecy from sidelines because, as dissenters from orthodox Thomism, they were suspected of heterodoxy or were actually under censure. Thus it's likely that the moral theologians now laboring under a cloud will be embraced in the near future, and that all the LGTBQ Catholics stinging from the blows inflicted by current moral theology will see it replaced.

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

Paradoxically, if we lay aside "intrinsic disorder," Thomas Aquinas is an inspiration for just the Catholic moral theology of sexuality we need. Thomas trusts our embodied experience of the world, and he assumes that a sure sign of a genuinely holy person is a life of true fruitfulness and flourishing. I'm betting you know at least one partnered LGTBQ person who fits this description. Let's get started! †

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



Cristina Traina

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

Jeannine Gramick, SL

Global Sisters Report

The National Catholic Reporter

June 14, 2018

Sr. Luisa DeRouen is a pioneer in the "T" of LGBT ministry. A few women religious are ministering among transgender people today, but Sister Luisa was the first to do so, as early as 1999, when most Catholics were just coming to understand and accept the "L" and "G."

On several occasions over the years, I met and emailed with Luisa, who is a Dominican Sister of Peace, and have been awed by her ministry on the gender margins. I believe our church needs to honor this valiant and prophetic woman who has shown us how to minister to those who are mostly shunned or even vilified.

Let me tell you a little about Luisa first. She grew up in Welsh, a 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 every girl's dream, and she was grateful to God and to 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 small, diocesan congregation at the end of her senior year in 1961. Though there were some very difficult years, Luisa says she has never doubted that religious life is where she belongs.

Luisa served in a variety of ministries: parish ministry, vocation director for her community, coordinator of their motherhouse, spiritual direction, retreat work and liturgical spirituality. After Hurricane Katrina forced her to leave the community's house in 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 a new congregation, the Dominican Sisters of Peace, in 2009.

Here is my conversation with her.

## Jeannine: 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 among the lesbian and gay community as I have gay and lesbian people in my family. The 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 Courtney Sharp, a transgender woman who was recovering from gender affirming 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 for many transgender people, but there are no spiritual leaders who are willing to accompany them. This was 1999. She introduced me to other trans folks in New Orleans, and soon I was being contacted by transgender people from other parts of the country.

As a spiritual companion, I have been present to them on the phone, or by Skype and email, in coffeehouses, restaurants and in their homes, at church or guiding a retreat for them. But mostly, I pray for them and let them know I am praying.

I regularly attended transgender support meetings. For several years I facilitated a number of Transgender Awareness Evenings by inviting people to meet my trans friends and hear their stories. I mentored a couple of sisters who now do transgender ministry themselves.

## How do trans persons reconcile their faith and their gender identity?

Transgender people who contact me already know and love God, but there is a strong societal and religious message telling them they cannot be transgender and faithful to God at the same time. For example, Dawn was traumatized by two experiences of being harshly judged by



Sister Luisa DeRouen, OP

priests insisting she was doomed to hell unless she acknowledged 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 acknowledging that she was transgender and believing that God still loved her as she was.

Brian and his 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 was transgender. 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.

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 Catholic parish. After transitioning, Sandi has been totally accepted at her job and even travels internationally with her professional peers. However, her spouse and children largely reject 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.

Dawn, Brian and Sandi were able to reconcile their faith and their gender identity. Many others cannot and need spiritual companionship. 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 hated for who I am than loved for who I am not." How many of us can say that "living in our truth" is as important as it is for transgender people?

## 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 totally 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 establishment of our new congregation in

2009 my ministry has been approved by the Dominican Sisters of Peace.

There may be some sisters in my community who don't approve of what I'm doing, but no one has ever said that to me, nor have I heard that from anyone. Over the years, increasing numbers of my sisters have contacted me as a resource for themselves or someone they know, who needs guidance of some kind

with a transgender person. The sisters recognize that we all need to learn more about transgender people and stand with them. They have consistently thanked me for leading the way.

Four years ago I read an excellent article about you and your ministry by Nathan Schneider entitled, "A nun's secret ministry brings hope to the transgender community," in which you are identified as "Sister Monica." Why have you used a pseudonym in this ministry for so many years?

While my leadership team always recognized

this ministry as a call from God, they knew that the hierarchy does not yet know enough about this reality. If a bishop objected to the ministry, there could be undesirable ramifications for my community and my ministry. In 1999, I was asked not to participate in any publicity at all.

In 2014, as transgender people were becoming more visible, my prioress said that I and others could write about my ministry, without naming myself, my congregation, or the places I had lived. A consistent comment from both supporters and detractors has been "If what she's doing is God's work, why are they hiding?" That is a valid question.

Last year in this country a transgender person was murdered every other week. I am choosing to use my own name now because I feel compelled by God to give fuller witness to the lives of transgender people and to the truth of who I am. Because my talking must be monitored each day, I believe that my "voice" can reach countless people now by writing about the ministry and thus help to smooth the path for transgender people. 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 in Rome. 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 are disappointed because Pope Francis hasn't changed church teaching about sexual and gender matters. I don't expect him to. I consider him an ally because of his posture toward truth.

What's most important for Pope Francis is to engage the person. We're familiar with some of his favorite metaphors for a culture of encounter — the church as a field hospital and the shepherd

(Continued on page 6)

## Halligan: 'I want gay marriage in church - my love is not evil'

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 full 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. Pastoral care only brings 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 was "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 anyone else'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 images 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 Saturday, August 25, and five selected families from around the

world will be invited to give witness to their families' faith. What preparations are under way to ensure at least one of these families will be a family headed by a same-sex couple?" she asked.

Speakers at the conference, titled 'Future Families: Challenges for Faith and Society', included Susan Casey, a divorced mother of two originally from the US but living in Ireland.

She criticised the Church's "demonisation" of divorced and separated families and warned that "the Eucharist is being used as a weapon rather than nourishment" against people whose marriages fail.

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 of Ireland, and Ray Kelly, of Unmarried and Separated Families of Ireland.

Concern was expressed by participants that conservative American funders were "calling the shots" over the line-up of workshops and speakers for the WMOF event in Dublin.

Patricia Fitzsimons, of the Association of Catholics in Ireland's steering group, said Irish Catholics were concerned that the WMOF gathering "isn't seen to be expressing the views of Irish people" +



Ursula Halligan

# Guyanese Catholic Leaders Support Gay Rights Against Other Denominations

By Lizzie Sextro

Bondings 2.0

NewWaysMinistry.org/blog

June 18, 2018

Guyanese Catholic Church leaders have decried the homophobic pronouncements of other Christian denominations who have claimed that homosexuality, or “buggery” (as it is referred to there), should be illegal in the country.

On June 2, the day of Guyana’s Pride Parade, the Georgetown Ministers’ Fellowship (GMF) hosted a press conference in which members of the Christian group denounced the parade as a “blemish on the social fabric of the republic.”

The GMF’s main goal of the press conference was to get answers from the current government. In the words of the only female panelist at the press conference, Valerie Leung, the group requested that the government “expressly and explicitly tell the people of Guyana in writing, truthfully what is their position on homosexuality.” *Stabroek News* reported:

“... GMF representatives declared that as representatives of the Christian community, which comprises more than 60% of the Guyanese population, it was concerned about local and international efforts to pressure government to legalise buggery in Guyana. The group has committed to praying for those caught within such a lifestyle and lobbying government against the decriminalisation of homosexual acts.

“Buoyed by the vocal support of a



Bishop Francis Alleyne

room filled with worshippers, Minister of the Gospel Marlon Hestick proclaimed that a gay parade is an expression of a sexuality, which is currently prohibited by Guyanese law.”

Although GMF claimed to represent the entire Christian community of Guyana, Catholic leaders and other Christian groups have refused to stand behind the GMF’s harmful position. Contrasting the GMF’s overt expression of homophobia, some Roman Catholic Guyanese leaders and leaders of other Christian denominations have supported the rights of LGBTQ persons:

“At the launch of the inaugural LGBT Pride Festival last year, the Society

Against Sexual Orientation Discrimination (SASOD) said religious leaders had decried discriminatory laws against the LGBT community.”

“The launch took the form of an Inter-Faith service at the Catholic Life Centre on Brickdam, which was attended by religious persons, leaders of the faith-based organisations and LGBT persons.”

“Head of the Roman Catholic Diocese in Guyana, Bishop Francis Alleyne, who co-hosted the service with SASOD, had said then that the issue of LGBT rights was a sensitive one. ‘This topic is a volatile one. There is still a lot of fear and insufficient listening to expect an objective response from people,’ Bishop Alleyne was quoted as saying in the

SASOD statement.”

Despite the continued violation of human rights of Guyanese LGBTQ persons, the GMF refused to support the human rights cause of other Christian leaders. Leung, who likened homosexual acts with consensual incest, was quoted saying, “You can’t have a right to do what is wrong.”

However, the pushback to the GMF from Catholic and Christian denominations says that the “wrong” that is actually being committed is the violation of LGBTQ rights. Unlike a U.S. bishop who recently voiced his disapproval of Pride celebrations as “morally offensive,” Guyana’s Bishop Alleyne seemed more concerned with protecting the human dignity of the LGBTQ community, encouraging the country to listen rather than condemn. ✦

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*Fresno:* St.. Paul Catholic Newman Center  
*Goleta:* St. Mark Univ. Parish  
*Hawthorne:* St. Joseph (Spanish)  
*Hayward:* All Saints  
*La Puente:* St. Martha  
*Lemon Grove:* St. John of the Cross  
*Long Beach:* St. Matthew  
*Los Angeles:* Blessed Sacrament,  
Christ the King, Mother of Good Counsel, St. Camillus Center-LA USC Medical Center (Spanish), St. Agatha, St. Paul the Apostle, St. Anselm  
*North Hollywood:* St. Jane Frances de Chantal, St. Patrick  
*Oakland:* Our Lady of Lourdes, St. Columba, St. Jarleth

*Oceanside:* St. Thomas More  
*Orange:* Holy Family Cathedral  
*Palm Springs:* St. Theresa  
*Pasadena:* Assumption of the B.V.M.  
*Redondo:* St. Lawrence Martyr  
*Redwood City:* St. Matthias  
*Ross:* St. Anselm  
*Sacramento:* St. Francis of Assisi  
*San Carlos:* St. Charles  
*San Diego:* Ascension, St. John the Evangelist, St. Jude Shrine, Catholic Community of UC, San Diego  
*San Dimas:* Holy Name of Mary  
*San Francisco:* Most Holy Redeemer, Old St. Mary Cathedral, St. Agnes, St. Dominic, St. Ignatius, St. Teresa of Avila  
*San Jose:* St. Julie Billiart, St. Martin of Tours (Emmaus Community)  
*San Luis Obispo:* Mission San Luis  
*San Ramon:* St. Joan of Arc  
*San Raphael:* Church of San Raphael & Mission San Raphael Arcangel  
*Santa Barbara:* OL of Guadalupe  
*Santa Cruz:* Holy Cross  
*Santa Monica:* St. Monica  
*Simi Valley:* St. Rose of Lima  
*Spring Valley:* Santa Sophia  
*Stanford:* Catholic Community at Stanford University  
*South Pasadena:* Holy Family  
*Valinda:* St. Martha  
*Vernon:* Holy Angels Catholic Church of the Deaf  
*Walnut Creek:* St. John Vianney  
*West Hollywood:* St. Ambrose, St. Victor  
*Whittier:* St. Mary of the Assumption

### Colorado

*Arvada:* Spirit of Christ  
*Avon:* St. Edward  
*Colorado Springs:* Sacred Heart  
*Denver:* St. Dominic, Christ the King, Our Lady of Mount Carmel  
*Lafayette:* Immaculate Conception  
*Lakewood:* St. Bernadette

*Littleton:* Light of the World,  
St. Frances Cabrini

### Connecticut

*Guilford:* St. George’s  
*Hartford:* St. Patrick-St. Anthony

### Delaware

*North Wilmington:* Holy Child  
*Wilmington:* St. Joseph, Sacred Heart Oratory

### District of Columbia

Holy Trinity, St. Matthew Cathedral

### Florida

*Daytona Beach:* Our Lady of Lourdes  
*Flagler Beach:* Santa Maria del Mar  
*Ft. Lauderdale:* St. Anthony, St. Maurice  
*St. Petersburg:* Holy Cross  
*Tampa:* Sacred Heart, Christ the King

### Georgia

*Atlanta:* Shrine of the Immaculate Conception

### Idaho

*Boise:* St. Mary

### Illinois

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

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

### Iowa

*Coralville:* St. Thomas More

### Kentucky

*Lexington:* Historic St. Paul Church  
*Louisville:* Epiphany, Cathedral of the Assumption, St. William

### Louisiana

*New Orleans:* St. Augustine

### Maine

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

### Maryland

*Baltimore:* Corpus Christi, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Ignatius, St. Matthew, St. Vincent dePaul  
*Columbia:* St. John the Evangelist  
*Gaithersburg:* St. Rose of Lima  
*Hagerstown:* St. Ann  
*Severn:* St. Bernadette

### Massachusetts

*Boston:* Paulist Center, St. Anthony Shrine, St. Cecilia  
*Buzzard’s Bay:* St. Margaret’s/St. Mary’s  
*East Longmeadow:* St. Michael  
*Newton:* St. Ignatius  
*Provincetown:* St. Peter  
*Sharon:* Our Lady of Sorrows  
*Springfield:* Sacred Heart

### Michigan

*Ann Arbor:* St. Mary Student Parish  
*Detroit:* St. Leo, Christ the King, Gesu Parish  
*St. Ignace:* St. Ignatius Loyola  
*Westland:* Ss. Simon and Jude

### Minnesota

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

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

By Sarah Gregory

*Bondings 2.0*  
NewWaysMinistry.org/blog  
June 10, 2018

“So, you’re still Catholic.”

I couldn’t tell from the inflection 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, 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 have shaken the dust from their sandals and left the Catholic Church. Some have found their “Home Away from Rome” in the Episcopal Church, others in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) or other denominations. Many others live in comfortable and quite peaceable atheism, agnosticism, or – for an epicurean few – Pastafarianism (not a typo; Google it). Trying to understand the Catholic Church can involve wading hip-deep in fear, hypocrisy, and worse. There’s NO shame at all in walking away from that. None.

So the questions – you’re still Catholic? – *are you?* – nothing odd there at all.

Except ... *except* ... the person who posed that question just a few months ago – well, he was – **and is** – a Roman Catholic priest. If I would have answered him most honestly, not because his church role but because of the human being he is – someone who has earned my trust in abundance – yes. **I am still Catholic.**

But that wasn’t my reply. I lobbed the question right back at him. If this were Wimbledon, it would’ve been an excellent volley back across the net. Point!

He laughed – a comfortable, relaxed laugh, and one that reminded me of what I know in the core of my being and know that *he* knows and believes as well – Catholic means *universal*. ALL. All means ALL, y’all. We share a religion, but how we each experience our faith is between ourselves and God.

Any answer to the question, “Are you still Catholic?” needs to be tempered with a healthy shot of humility. As Catholics, we have to be aware of the baggage of pain and alienation that our identification may quite reasonably trigger in other people. As odd as it might sound, “the love that dare not speak its name” these days may not be our sexuality, but our religious identity. Or, to put it bluntly, if our beliefs are central to how we engage with our sisters and brothers, it might be time these days to discern where, whether, how, and to whom we disclose our use of that label – the big-C “Catholic.”

My very presence on *Bondings 2.0* was a matter of such discernment, too. In early 2017, a friend and PhD colleague at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley sent me a note. New Ways Ministry was looking for a few GTU students and alums to write a series 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 now-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 a rainbow flag 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, call it Catholic guilt or being taught by the Jesuits, I spent some uncomfortable time in an Examination 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 backside. 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

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**Missouri**

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

**Montana**

*Billings:* Holy Rosary, St. Pius X

**Nebraska**

*Omaha:* Holy Family, Sacred Heart

**Nevada**

*Las Vegas:* Christ the King, Guardian Angel Cathedral

**New Hampshire**

*Merrimack:* St. John Neumann  
*Pelham:* St. Patrick

**New Jersey**

*Hoboken:* Our Lady of Grace  
*Keyport:* St. Joseph  
*Lawrenceville:* St. Ann  
*Long Beach Island:* St. Francis of Assisi  
*Maplewood:* St. Joseph  
*Monmouth:* Precious Blood  
*Pompton Lakes:* St. Mary  
*South Plainfield:* Sacred Heart  
*Tinton Falls:* St. Anselm

**New Mexico**

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

**New York**

*Albany:* St. Vincent DePaul  
*Baldwinsville:* St. Augustine  
*Bellmore:* St. Barnabas the Apostle  
*Bellport:* Mary Immaculate  
*Binghamton:* St. Francis of Assisi  
*Brooklyn:* St. Andrew the Apostle, St. Boniface, St. Athanasius, St. Augustine, Immac.Heart of Mary  
*Deer Park:* Ss. Cyril and Methodius  
*East Islip:* St. Mary  
*Elmira:* St. Mary  
*Fairport:* Church of the Assumption  
*Henrietta:* Good Shepherd  
*Manhattan:* Ascension, Blessed Sacrament, Holy Name of Jesus, St. Francis deSales, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Francis Xavier, St. Ignatius Loyola, St. Paul the Apostle  
*Pittsford:* Church of Transfiguration

*Rochester:* Blessed Sacrament, St. Mary (Downtown), St. Monica  
*Saratoga Springs:* St. Peter  
*Syracuse:* St. Lucy, All Saints  
*Utica:* Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Historic Old St. John’s  
*Wading River:* St. John the Baptist  
*Wantagh:* St. Frances de Chantal  
*West Islip:* Our Lady of Lourdes  
*Westbury:* St. Brigid

**North Carolina**

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

**Ohio**

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

**Oregon**

*Beaverton:* Spirit of Grace  
*Portland:* St. Andrew, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Phillip Neri, Downtown Chapel (St. Vincent de Paul)

**Pennsylvania**

*Danville:* St. Joseph  
*Philadelphia:* Old St. Joseph, Old St. Mary, St. John the Evangelist, St. Vincent DePaul  
*Wilkinsburg:* St. James

**Rhode Island**

*Providence:* St. Raymond  
*Wickford:* St. Bernard

**Tennessee**

*Alcoa:* 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  
*Mechanicsville:* Church of the Redeemer  
*Richmond:* Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Sacred Heart Parish  
*Roanoke:* St. Gerard  
*Triangle:* St. Francis  
*Virginia Beach:* St. Nicholas

**Washington**

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

**Wisconsin**

*Fond du Lac:* Holy Family  
*Madison:* Our Lady Queen of Peace  
*Menomonee Falls:* Good Shepherd  
*Milwaukee:* Good Shepherd, Prince of Peace, Trinity-Guadalupe  
*Wauwatosa:* St. Pius X



## INTENTIONAL EUCHARISTIC COMMUNITIES

**Arizona**

*Scottsdale:* Franciscan Renewal Center

**California**

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

**District of Columbia**

Communitas

**Florida**

*Tampa:* Franciscan Center

**Iowa**

*Coralville:* Full Circle Small Faith Community

**Maryland**

*Baltimore, Annapolis, Thurmont:* Living Water Inclusive Catholic Community  
*Greenbelt:* Greenbelt Catholic Community

**Michigan**

*Grand Rapids:* Marywood  
*Kalamazoo:* Lambda Catholics

**Minnesota**

*Minneapolis:* Spirit of St. Stephen's Catholic Community

**Ohio**

Dayton: Living Beatitudes Community

**Oregon**

*Portland:* Journey and Koinonia Catholic Community

**Pennsylvania**

*Pittsburgh:* Dignity//Pittsburgh

**Virginia**

*Arlington:* NOVA Catholic Community

**Washington**

*Lacey:* Holy Wisdom Inclusive Catholic Community

**Wisconsin**

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

## 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 homosexual persons have been and are still subjected to malicious expressions and violent actions, we pray that Christians, living on the grace of the Gospel, bear witness and proclaim, with prophetic audacity, the unconditional respect

due to each person and denounce all forms of discrimination and marginalization."

Ecumenical prayer vigils against LGBT discrimination occurred in several other Italian cities as well. For the eleventh year, communities in Italy and Spain passed a baton along, marking each stop with prayer vigils and torchlit processions, reported IDAHOBIT's website.

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 in the past. It's right therefore for society and faithful to apologize to those they have despised 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 nations. Bishop Camisasca's acknowledgement that society and the Church need to apologize to LGBT people who have been harmed is particularly notable, 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 on LGBT issues in Italy. *Crux* noted that during World Pride Day in 2000, which was held in Rome, then-Pope John Paul II said he had a "deep sadness" because Pride was an "offense to the Christian values." Today, the three Italian church leaders above join the growing ranks of Catholic officials worldwide who recognize the need for IDAHOBIT events and the goodness of Pride celebrations.

As June ends, these episcopal prayers are worth celebrating, and they serve as an impetus to spend the coming year advocating so that more church leaders will 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 these topics intersect with Christian beliefs by establishing dialogue groups. For example, the diocese of Créteil created discussion 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. Established by Bishop Michel Santier, the groups seek 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 Santier told them that they were all "part of the body of Christ." Additionally, Bishop Dominique Lebrun, of the diocese of Saint-Etienne said, "Wel-

coming 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 Daull, a member of Cados ("Chrétiens s'accueillant dans leurs différences d'orientations sexuelles," or "Christians welcoming each other in their different sexual orientations") in Nîmes.

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 – Christian or not – to rebuild 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 "living in sin," she noted.

The movement in the French Church toward inclusion of LGBT persons is trying to change such negative understandings. The movement has arrived in the wake of Pope Francis's historic "Who am I to judge?" comment. In France, such discussion groups seek to promote a similar accepting attitude and allow people of all sexualities and identities to feel welcome in their churches.

Many French citizens are Catholic, though the level of church participation varies.

Claude Besson, another leader of these groups, is a major voice for LGBT Catholics and a "pioneer of welcoming gay people in the Church," according to *La Croix*. Besson commented:

"Of course, certain people would want 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 the Church itself. Hopefully, other 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, defaults to the doctrinal 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 Cremona, the Discalced Carmelite 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 kind of legal recognition. Do you think Catholic parishioners are as accepting of transgender people as they are of lesbian and gay people? Do you believe trans issues 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 about respect and dignity for all and treats people in a respectful and welcoming way, so will most of the parishioners. If he preaches negatively about some of our baptized sisters and brothers, then parishioners feel justified in acting accordingly.

I believe that trans issues are getting both harder and easier to deal with in our church. On the one hand, at no time in our history have Catholics been more educated, thanks in large part to the internet. People don't rely on the hierarchy for their information to the extent that they did in the past. Many now have advanced degrees in theology and a more mature spirituality than in the past. There are more opportunities to learn about and meet transgender people.

On the other hand, the current climate in our country emboldens divisiveness, prejudice and fear of all who are different. That societal message both originates from, and spills over into, our churches. As transgender people become more visible in our Catholic institutions, bishops have to grapple with how to deal with them in Catholic hospitals, schools, retreat centers, retirement homes, etc. I am aware of two dioceses that sponsored a workshop for diocesan employees re-

garding transgender people. Tragically, in both instances the information given was outdated, inaccurate, and insensitive.

Last year the National Catholic Bioethics Center hosted a conference called Healing Persons in a Wounded Culture. Not surprisingly, transgender issues were prominent on the agenda, but there were no transgender people invited to speak. Yet the president [of the National Catholic Bioethics Center] was quoted as saying that the bishops present were seeking ways "to accompany these people, help them, be with them, be close to them." How can bishops minister to people without speaking with them? Non-engagement keeps our bishops dangerously ill-informed while it maximizes dangers for transgender people.

**What do you hope our readers will take away from this conversation?**

I hope people will say, "Wow, this sister really loves transgender people and has invested much of her life for them and with them. This challenges me to examine my own prejudices about transgender people." I hope minds and hearts will be open to learn about transgender people and to seek out opportunities to meet them, if possible. I pray that your readers will see transgender people as God sees them. That means to see them as the persons they are. †

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

# I came out as a gay, Catholic priest on the Feast of the Annunciation

By Rev. Fred Daley  
*America*  
March 23, 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. I knew this was 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 full sexuality through high school, seminary and the first years of priesthood. Society and the Catholic Church taught me that premarital sex was sinful and homosexuality was abominable.

From the moment I was ordained, I felt fulfilled in my vocation and loved all the aspects of my ministry: presiding at liturgies, visiting the sick, teaching children and enjoying parish life. I was blessed to have a pastor who taught me that serving the people was the heart of the priesthood.

After a few years, however, I began to notice an ache within me. This ache deepened as I recognized the emergence of a sexual energy that I had tried to resist for so long. Soon, the ache 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 Jesuit 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 was and am wholly loved by God.

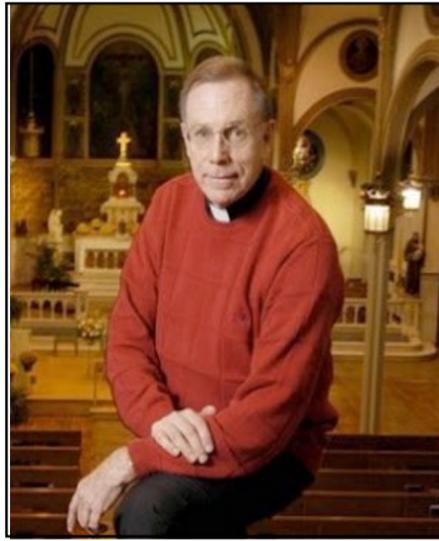
Little by little, with the help of some counseling and spiritual direction, I began to accept myself and, eventually, love myself as a gay man. I finally understood the true sacrifice of celibacy. Although I never acted on any of my desires, I needed to consciously recommit myself to this way of life 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 love for my parishioners. My capacity for friendship and empathy deepened profoundly.

But I also grew increasingly frustrated that being closeted prevented me from sharing 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 so-ciety, and this included 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 scape

-goating 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



Rev. Fred Daley

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 the United Way's 'Real 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—she hated "those damned guitars at Mass"—relieved my fears. Mary always counted the offertory collection after the 8 a.m. Sunday Mass. Holding my breath, I knocked on the parish office door. Mary got up from her chair, gave me a hug and said, "Don't worry, Father, I like men, too!"

I received hundreds of letters from around the country offering support. A few folks sent negative letters expressing concern for my homosexual soul going to hell—but even they assured me of their prayers. My bishop at the time and his successor have respected me and supported my ministry.

Many folks ask me if I think other gay priests should "come out." Taking this step is a very personal and sacred decision for each person. I would only

(Continued on page 8)

## LGBT-friendly Catholic Colleges and Universities

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



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

By Francis Morgan

*Bondings 2.0*

NewWaysMinistry.org/blog

June 17, 2018

*The author is the grandfather of a transgender child. To protect the identity of his family, he is using the pseudonym "Francis Morgan." 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. Marsha always wanted to name a daughter after my mother, Mary, so she named the twins Joanne and Mary. Joanne always loved to wear tutus and Mary wanted to wear camouflage type outfits.

For the last couple of years or more, Mary has insisted that he is a boy, not a girl, and he has taken the name Joseph. Joseph is greatly troubled that he doesn't have a boy's body and desperately wants a "pee part." He has tried various things such as urinating standing up and placing a small branch in his vagina. He often reacts 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 fully identifies and firmly believes that he is a boy.

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 comes when the child is persistent, consistent, and insistent concerning who they are.

It was clearly apparent to our family that Joseph was transgender when he was about 2 1/2 to 3 years old because he was very persistent, consistent, and insistent that he was a boy. The twins just turned five years old in September. Everyone in our immediate and extended family has been accepting and fully supportive of little Joseph. It was very satisfying to see Joseph so overjoyed when he got his haircut and dressed like the boy he is.

Our state is attempting to pass legislation to prohibit professionals from seeking to change an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity. I wrote to ask our legislators to support this bill because I believe strongly that medical and mental health providers should not engage in conversion or reparative therapy. We need to protect LGBT youth. People must be allowed to be who they are.

On behalf of our Roman Catholic Bishop, the diocesan spokesperson, whom I greatly respect, testified in opposition to the bill during the bill's public hearing. I was very much saddened that the Church that I love is so narrow-minded that it ignores science and the mental well-being of God's children. Joseph is going through such mental anxiety because people will not accept the way God created him. We see him as a very special child of God. The bill even exempts "the church," yet the church tries to impose its beliefs on civil society. How shameful of the church, *my church*.

I once had a meeting with our

Bishop and, in conversation over several topics, I talked about the time when I was police chief. I had created a "hate/biased crimes task force" with members of various minority communities. Because a number of "gay-bashings" had occurred in our community, our command staff and I met with representatives of the LGBT community. I unwittingly



made the mistake of using the term "sexual preference" at our first meeting.

A young man stood up and said, "Excuse me, Chief, but it isn't 'sexual preference.' It's 'sexual orientation'." He continued, "When I was young, and other boys developed an attraction to

young girls, I never experienced that. I don't know what that is. I developed an attraction to young boys like me. It wasn't a preference that I chose. It just was my orientation." This incident caused me to think about my own heterosexual orientation. It wasn't a choice for me either; it just *was*.

I told the Bishop, "I believe that the kind and loving God that I know wouldn't damn someone to hell for living out the life that God gave him or her. I believe you are born with your sexual orientation."

The Bishop responded, "Do you have scientific proof?"

I was flabbergasted and couldn't counter quickly enough to say, "Do you have scientific proof that lesbian and gay people are *not* born with their sexual orientation?" I find it hard to accept that the leaders of my Catholic Church are so harsh on this issue.

As a police officer, I saw suicides of all sorts from young people to elderly and by various means, including drugs and guns. I even had brain matter drip from a ceiling onto my head while I was investigating a suicide. Having seen these senseless deaths, I now am fearful 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.

Does my Catholic Church become complicit in such deaths by its positions on LGBT issues? Where is my "pro-life" church? My Church needs to broaden its perspective and to communicate with LGBT people and their families. LGBT people are hurting. I too, as a grandfather of a transgender child, am hurting. I firmly believe that Jesus would be drawn to LGBT persons and bless them as his own loving children that we all are. God does not make mistakes! ✚

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

(Continued from page 5)

the church teachings around sexuality and gender to be regressive and repressive. To use my fancypants theological education, those teachings simply haven't been *received* by the faithful. Church teachings aren't authoritative just because someone in authority says them, as it turns out. The authority of the teachings takes hold when the people of God say "Yeah – that makes sense and conforms to what both my rational mind and well-formed conscience (see Catechism of the Catholic Church 1783) says is true." Until or unless that reception of the teachings happens, they're not binding on the Catholic conscience. (*Lumen Gentium 12*)

It's precisely that combination of rational thought (enshrined in Vatican II in *Gaudium et Spes 36*) and quite well-formed consciences, *thankyouverymuch*, that has led many people to leave the Roman Catholic Church. The departees include not a small number of priests and religious who couldn't teach what they know to not be true. Indeed, ten years ago this summer, my Catholic school-educated son went on vacation with me in the summer after he completed fourth grade, and found himself the official wedding photographer for the marriage of two beloved friends. One half of the couple was in the process of leaving the priesthood. It was a bit of a shotgun wedding due to the looming vote on California's Proposition 8, and so my son had the unique experience of seeing a family friend preside at Mass, and then several weeks later, say "I do" to the man who became – and remains – his husband.



It was a teachable moment, perhaps one of the more important ones in my 12-year career as a Catholic school mom. He knew one of the men as "Father" – and excellent catechesis in school, church, and home taught him the significance of

that role. But he also was receiving even more important catechesis 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 hear more about the Church's teachings on homosexuality from people other than me, and while his conscience was to be

formed to be 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, biology, sociology, and humanity is in pretty decent shape, too. So, too, is my own comfort in at 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" – or "CIA." (No, not creepy at all. I mean, love you dearly, Sisters, but really? CIA!?) I claim it in the name of Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker movement, and Thomas 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 and living on the streets. Jesus said, "Whoever is not against you 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 innocently asked me, "So you're still Catholic?" – gets that. He exudes peace and compassion, but probably also encounters people who expect judgment anyway. That's what seems to be the Church's specialty these days.

But that's not all we are.

So yeah. I'm still Catholic. I'm saying it here, and it appears that I'll be writing here from time to time, under my own name, as long as they'll have me. Life and the Day Job™ take my time too, but I'm hoping to offer y'all a little bread for the journey, and receive some as well. Be Church and show that "church" doesn't mean fear, rejection, or damnation. We can say it and claim it too. Catholic. Still Catholic. We've got this. Thanks be to God. ✚

## Gay Priest Comes Out

(Continued from page 7)

ask my brother gay priests to pray for the grace 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 struggles, too. Any illusion of being 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 teaching 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. Through that gift, I could become the person God intends me to be. Do I have any regrets? Not a one! For the past 14 years, I have looked forward to March 25, the Feast of the Annunciation of the Lord, as the day an angel whispered in my ear: "Fred, 'Be not afraid.'" On that day, love conquered fear in my relationships with God, my neighbors and my-self. Often, with gratitude I reflect on the words: "We are as sick as our secrets." ✚