

# BNDINGS

Volume 28, No. 2

A Publication of New Ways Ministry

Spring 2008

## Gay Catholics Implore Pope to Listen and Love

By Jonathan Rubin  
Religion News Service  
April 10, 2008

Gay and lesbian Catholics on Thursday (April 10) urged Pope Benedict XVI to see their lives and hear their testimonies during his U.S. visit next week, even as many acknowledged that may be unlikely.

With humor and intensely personal stories, the gay and lesbian Catholics declared their love for the faith and their longing to be accepted in a church that considers homosexual activity an "intrinsic evil" and homosexuality "objectively disordered."

Benedict embraces the church's traditional prohibitions against homosexuality; he has called gay unions "pseudo-matrimony" and wrote in 2003 that same-sex adoptive par-

ents do "violence to these children."

But the gay and lesbian Catholics said leaving the church isn't always an option.

"There's nothing that could push me away from the church. Nothing," said Heather Mizeur, a Maryland state legislator, who said she encouraged her partner to convert to Christianity.

"All the 10 Commandments boil down to love," she said. "We are rooted in love as Christians."

New Ways Ministry, a Maryland-based support group for gay and lesbian Catholics, has tussled with Benedict before. In 1999, Benedict — then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger — silenced the nun and priest who ran the group for positions that were "doctrinally unacceptable."



Heather Mizeur

Gregory Maguire

But gay Catholic advocates say time is on their side. "I believe that change will happen," said Gregory Maguire, a novelist whose book "Wicked" was made into a major

Broadway production. "The youths on this issue are smarter than we are."

New Ways director Francis DeBernardo said the pope has walled himself off from rank-and-file gay Catholics. "Unfortunately, this leader does not understand the issue of homosexuality or does not understand gay and lesbian people," said DeBernardo.

But Maguire said the pope could fix that by sitting down with gay Catholics, perhaps over dinner.

"As Christ sat with the suffering, come sit with us," he said. "Chicken or fish? Red wine or white? ...You are welcome any time, and you can take us as you find us, though a little advance notice would allow us to clear the bikes out of the driveway and tidy up the living room."

## New Ways Ministry and Pope Benedict's Visit to the U.S.

New Ways Ministry provided several public responses to Pope Benedict XVI's apostolic visit to the United States, April 15-20, 2008. The main event was a press conference held on Thursday, April 11, 2008, at the National Press Club, Washington, DC.

Entitled "A Few Minutes with the Pope: Lesbian/Gay Catholics Speak About their Church," the press conference featured several prominent lesbian/gay Catholics making presentations about what they would tell the pope about their faith, their lives, and their loves, if they had the opportunity to meet with him. The speakers were Gregory Maguire, best-selling author of *Wicked* (the novel which is the basis of the Broadway musical), Maryland State Delegate Heather Mizeur, and

Deborah Mizeur, a national health care policy consultant (and partner of Heather). Francis DeBernardo, New Ways Ministry Executive Director, also spoke at the press conference, giving a history of Benedict's involvement in gay issues, while urging the pontiff and church leaders to listen to the voices and reality of lesbian/gay Catholic lives before making any more statements on homosexuality.

Two unforeseen circumstances caused the last-minute withdrawal of two speakers who were originally scheduled to participate in the press conference. Teresa DeCrescenzo, the Executive Director of Gay and Lesbian Adolescent Social Services, Los Angeles, California, had to with-

draw a few days before the event because of a death in her family. Richard Rodriguez, noted essayist and commentator on "NewsHour with Jim Lehrer," came down with the flu two days before the event.

We attracted reporters from the following organizations: Associated Press, Associated Press Television, NewsChannel 8, *Washington Post*, *Washington Blade*, *Metro Weekly*, Current TV, *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, XM Radio, *National Catholic Reporter*, Polish Public Radio, Cox Broadcasting, Religion News Service, Inter Press Service, and Fox-TV. At last count, the Associated Press story appeared in close to two hundred papers around the globe. We also received attention from about a dozen Catholic blogs, both progressive and conservative.

Francis DeBernardo was also able to do eight radio interviews in San Francisco, CA, Tucson, AZ, Columbia, SC, Nashua, NH, Manitowoc, WI, Buffalo, NY, and Sarasota, FL.

New Ways Ministry made CDs of the press conference which we provided to individuals on the New Ways Ministry mailing list who provided donations to cover the other two-thirds of the project's budget. We will continue to make the CDs available to others who request information about the event.

A corollary prong of the papal visit

project was letter writing to the pope. Members of the New Ways Ministry mailing list were invited to write letters to the pope, telling of their own lives, their experiences in Catholic lesbian/gay ministry programs, their families which have lesbian/gay members, and the positive witness that lesbian/gay Catholics offer to the church. We collected 50 letters and, after two days of negotiations, we hand-delivered the letters to Monsignor John Maksymowicz, the priest-secretary of the papal nuncio to the United States, at the Vatican Embassy in Washington, DC, the pope's residence while in the nation's capital. We had a photo taken of New Ways Ministry staff presenting the letters to the secretary in the main hall of the Embassy. Included in the packet were the CD of the press conference, texts of the press conference speeches, and a letter from New Ways Ministry urging the pope to enter into dialogue with lesbian/gay Catholics.

Hand-delivering the letters to a member of the nunciature staff, we learned, guaranteed that they would be presented to the pope himself. Indeed, a few days after this delivery, New Ways Ministry received a personal letter from Archbishop Pietro Sambi, the papal nuncio, that the letters would be handed to the pope.

--More Papal Coverage on page 5--

## Gay Catholics urge Pope Benedict to enter dialogue during visit

From Agency Reports  
*Ekklesia.co.uk*  
April 14, 2008

In advance of Pope Benedict XVI's visit to the US, three prominent gay Catholics have urged the pontiff to enter into a dialogue with lesbian and gay Catholics.

They addressed the pontiff through open statements about their lives, loves, and hopes for the church at a press conference at the end of last week.

The event entitled 'A Few Minutes with the Pope: Lesbian/Gay Catholics Speak About Their Church' was sponsored by New Ways Ministry, a 31-year-old national Catholic ministry of justice and reconciliation for lesbian

and gay Catholics.

It featured panellists, all of whom are lesbian or gay Catholics, and included outstanding names from the worlds of literature, government, and health care including Gregory Maguire, author of more than a dozen children's novels and several for adults, most notably *Wicked*, which has been adapted into the Tony-award winning Broadway musical show.

Speakers also included Deborah Mizeur, an instructor of health politics and health financing at Georgetown University, and a former congressional advisor on healthy policy to the Committee on Ways and Means and Heather Mizeur, a recognized leader in

*DIALOGUE continued on page 8...*



## New MSJC Group Meets in St. Louis

In the spirit of recommendations from *Always Our Children*, the pastoral letter from the U.S. Bishops' Committee on Marriage & Family, a committee under the auspices of the Marianist Social Justice Collaborative (MSJC) is exploring possibilities for providing more effective pastoral care within the Marianist Family among families of gay/lesbian Catholics. The effort is consistent with the Church's teaching — especially considering the principles of Catholic Social Teaching — and is profoundly pastoral in its outreach.

The group met in St. Louis in January and has developed a two-hour program, "A Place at the Marianist Table," that considers the struggles of faithful gay/lesbian Catholics and how groups can be more welcoming and inclusive.

# BONDINGS

Spring 2008

Vol. 28, No. 2

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

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

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

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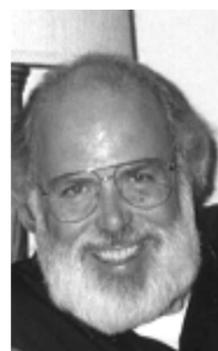
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**Rev. Joseph Muth**

## New Ways Ministry welcomes new board members

*Three religious and one diocesan priest agreed to serve for a term of three years on the New Ways advisory board. Their brief biographies appear below:*

### Cornelius Hubbuch, CFX

Cornelius Hubbuch, CFX, served as a high school teacher, principal, Provincial and Vicar General of the Xaverian Brothers. He chaired several boards of the Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools and was the Director of Formation for the schools. He was an Assistant Professor and co-director of the Institute for Spirituality and Worship at the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley and served on the staff at the Southdown Institute in Canada. He is currently on the Leadership Team of his province.

### Anna Koop, SL

Anna Koop, SL, earned a Masters degree in Social Work from Catholic University of America. She served on the leadership team of the Loretto Community, as well as in outreach to new vowed members. Anna is a founding member of the Catholic Worker House in Denver, where she has lived for thirty years, as well as a founding member of the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, for which she is a board member. With two women, for whom she witnessed a gay union, she began a retreat for "Lesbian, Bisexual and Questioning Women of Faith," held at the Loretto Motherhouse.

### Elizabeth Linehan, RSM

Elizabeth Linehan is a Sister of Mercy of the South Central Community. Since 1976, Betsy has taught at Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia, PA.

Having chaired the Philosophy Department for fifteen years, she is currently an Associate Professor of Philosophy and co-chair of the Alliance, a committee that promotes welcome and inclusion of gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender members of the SJU community. For this work, she received the *Deo Gratias Award* from Dignity/ Philadelphia.

### Rev. Joseph Muth

Ordained in 1974, Fr. Joe Muth has served in six parishes in the Archdiocese of Baltimore. Currently he is Pastor of St. Matthew Church, a community of people from over 40 different countries. The Church established an Immigration Center in 2000 to assist people with political asylum, status adjustment, and family reunification.

Fr. Joe traveled to Africa with Catholic Relief Services' Global Fellows Program three times; in 1989, 1995, and 2006 and visited Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Rwanda.

## Turning bitterness into redemption

*By Dava Weinstein*

When my mother pre-deceased my father in 1998, I had been with my partner, Dorothy Calvani, for 26 years. My father changed his will after my mother's death, specifying that I would inherit 10% of his estate and my two siblings would share 90%. My father carried his demeaning view of Dorothy and me with him to his grave. It was an eye opener about just how my mother must have insisted that he keep his contempt of us to himself over the years.

Portions of a letter that I sent to my entire family describe our response to this very emotional moment in our lives:

As you know, mom and dad were very different. Both felt strongly about family, although their relationships to their own families were not the same... Unfortunately dad's love of family, taken to its extreme after mother's death, excluded my family life with Dorothy.

Dad's bitterness at the end of his life and his unequal treatment of me through his will got Dorothy and me thinking about young women whose families have withdrawn emotional and/or financial support because of their sexual or gender identity. How were we to transform our own experience of his treatment of us as devalued human beings into something positive and exciting?

We have sought to transform dad's narrowness by using the inheritance from him to truly pay tribute to mom's unconditional love. The Bee Winkler Weinstein Fund has been established to provide financial support for young women pursuing vocational or technical education. It is crucial for these lesbian, bisexual or transgender

women, ages 18-25, to receive financial grants for education that prepare them to be self sufficient in their lives.

The Fund is managed by the Stonewall Community Foundation with the intent to build the principal through contributions and reinvestment of a portion of the annual earnings. I have involved social service agencies that serve young people to determine the requirements for eligibility and the application process for distribution of grants. Grant decisions are based on need and include such items as legal name change expenses, college application fees, tuition for vocational or technical training, tools, etc. This Fund promotes the health and well being of young women.

Founded in 2002, Bee's Fund has distributed over 50 grants to date ranging \$35-\$1500. A young grant recipient, whose college application fees were underwritten, told us, "Bee's Fund rocks." What a compliment! Another recipient sums up her experience: "I am a young lesbian of color kicked out of my parents' home due to my sexual identity. As an aspiring artist, I am extremely thankful to the Bee's Fund for making a fantastical idea into a reality." Bee's Fund covered tuition and supplies to further her art career.

I am grateful to Dorothy. It is not every life partner who would agree to give away an inheritance. I am also grateful to the individual social workers and lawyers working with LGBT youth who have supported Bee's Fund through their volunteer advisory board hours, insuring that it is administered in a most professional way. Easy to complete application forms are available at [www.stonewallfoundation.org](http://www.stonewallfoundation.org).

I often wonder who has been redeemed in this story.



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

# Sister Fabian's Pro-Gay Crusade

*In China, progressive views about homosexuality and HIV come from an unlikely place - the Catholic Church.*

By Adam Minter  
Mother Jones  
February 13, 2008

The gray plaza in front of Shenyang's century-old gothic cathedral is largely abandoned on this Sunday morning, the church's twin spires separated from a bustling shopping district by a crusty wrought-iron fence that does nothing to keep out the thump of Chinese hip-hop blaring from nearby storefronts. From a bunker-like convent beside the cathedral, the Catholic seat of northeast China's Liaoning Province, a nun in a calf-length habit rushes toward me. Sister Fabian Han Fengxia, 36, wears wire-rimmed glasses and a shiny silver medallion that signifies her place among the diocese's community of 93 nuns. "We are very busy these days," she says, firmly shaking my hand. "Many new clients."

These particular clients are 68 mostly gay HIV-positive residents of Shenyang, an industrial metropolis of 7 million people. "The gay community is where the disease is here," she tells me. "So we work with them." Sister Fabian directs a program that provides all manner of support for HIV-positive men and women, such as emergency funds, job training, medical services at the diocesan clinic—and even house calls. Though most of the clients are in Shenyang, Fabian and the other sisters also tend to a rural village of farmers infected during a blood collection drive in the 1990s. Officially, it's estimated that there are more than 650,000 HIV-positive people in China (unofficially, the number is thought to exceed 1 million), with Liaoning home to 3,000 of them, according to Fabian. China's Ministry of Health says that between 2.5 and 6.5 percent of China's gay men are infected, and the number is growing; these days, the ministry records an average of 3,000 new cases per month.

While it's not unusual for the Catholic church to assist HIV-infected men and women—according to the Pontifical Council on Health Care, Catholic organizations provide a quarter of HIV-related services worldwide—it's quite unique that a church should work so closely with an organized gay com-

munity. Such alignments are rare in other parts of the world, where Rome's canonical view of homosexuality as "contrary to the natural law" often sets the agenda. Yet in China, where the church was persecuted and cut-off from mainstream Catholicism for more than half of the last century, a more progressive and independent perspective has arisen. Fabian is certainly aware of Rome's views. But she says she is unmoved by the prejudices of others. "We help whoever needs our help," she says. "We don't differentiate between gay men and poor farmers."

Fabian leads me to a cramped, cubicle-divided, fluorescent-lit office where her two assistants, Sister Catherine and Sister Peter, report that a client is having difficulty applying a salve to sores on his back. "He uses a chopstick to do it because he can't reach," Fabian sighs. "He doesn't want his family to know that he is sick." Later that afternoon, she will ride her bicycle for an hour to his home and help with the medicine. In China, AIDS is highly stigmatized—associated as it is with sex workers, drug users, and those of generally low character—to the point where it's often impossible even to discuss with blood relatives. The three sisters all know of families broken apart or ostracized after an HIV-positive diagnosis. When Fabian took the helm of the diocese's program in 2005, she and the other sisters struggled with their own prejudices against gay men. "We all thought they had a psychological problem or something bad happened in their family that changed their sex behavior," she explains. "But time after time, you begin to understand and love them. Really love them."

Raised in a non-religious family, Fabian joined the convent at age 21 after she "ran away" from a dead-end sales job in 1992. "I didn't know anywhere else to go," she laughs. The sisters offered to send her to medical school and in 1996, after graduating with hon-



ors, she established a clinic for Shenyang's priests and sisters. Two years later, she expanded the clinic to provide free services to the city's poor. "Perhaps that's a calling," she remarks offhandedly. When pressed to explain further, she snaps, "Maybe you think I'm a lovely person, but my colleagues think otherwise." Referencing a deep strain of impatience and a quick temper, she finally adds, "I do it because I love the people."

In 2003, with the help of the Catholic Maryknoll order in New York, Sister Fabian enrolled in a two-year course at Fordham University and earned her Masters of Arts in pastoral care. Not long after her return to China, the diocesan leadership placed her in charge of its AIDS program which, at that point, lacked clients from Shenyang's gay population. "At first," Fabian says, "they were suspicious of us because of what they'd heard about the Church in the past." But with the assistance of Sisters Peter and Catherine, she aggressively pursued a relationship. She offered frank advice on risk prevention, speaking to any group or meeting that would have her, and perfected what appears to be the city's first and only HIV support groups, where clients discuss practical topics such as nutrition. "They don't really share their feelings or their conditions," she explains. "It's not very Chinese to do so." The turning point for the program came in late 2005. A man dying of AIDS

had been abandoned by his family and was alone. So the sisters cared for the man, and after his death, washed and prepared his body for the funeral. "From that point," Fabian says, "trust developed. We became very close."

Now, HIV-positive people who can't or won't go anywhere else seek out Sister Fabian, who is known to be not only sympathetic but adept at negotiating China's formidable medical bureaucracies (though illegal, many healthcare facilities refuse to treat HIV-positive patients). Two years ago, in cooperation with Shenyang's two largest

gay-rights organizations, Fabian arranged to have 250 men tested for HIV at a remote site, and though she concedes that "the only ones who came were those who wanted to prove to their partners that they didn't have it," she is proud of the accomplishment. In August, when a destitute gay man in Dalian was dismissed from his hospital bed because of his HIV-positive status, Fabian arranged for and even financed his treatment from her program budget. "I asked the [Dalian] gay community leader to come with me," she recalls. "And he did," making for an unusual paring in modern China.

After spending the afternoon in Fabian's office, viewing a formidable collection of slides and documents, she and I walk to Changzhi's Farmer Food, a tiny restaurant dominated by a plastic tree trunk and hanging branches so that it resembles a tree house. Fabian orders a large bowl of tofu in a salty sauce, spicy eggplant, and mushroom soup. In speaking of Chinese religious life, she says solemnly, "The roles for sisters are changing so fast. It makes it hard to know the proper course." When we can't finish the food, she asks for boxes. "So much pressure these days," she offers. Later, at the cathedral gate, she gives the leftovers to the guards.

*Adam Minter is a Shanghai-based writer who has written for the Atlantic, Slate, and the Los Angeles Times, among others. He blogs at Shanghai Scrap.*

## Right or Rite, Civil Discussion in Order

By Thomas Reese  
Washingtonpost.com  
May 27, 2008

For almost 2,000 years, Christianity has considered any sexual activity outside of a marriage between a man and a woman to be sinful. This included prostitution, bigamy, adultery, fornication and homosexual activity. In many societies formed by Christianity, these activities and divorce were illegal, although enforcement of the laws was spotty.

The separation of church and state, as well as the desire to free private moral decisions from state control, has led to the legalization of divorce and the decriminalization of birth control, adultery, fornication and homosexual activity (but not prostitution and bigamy). Societal views of homosexuality have changed as we have become aware that homosexuality is an orientation that is not chosen.

While few Americans support the criminalization of homosexual activity, a majority still opposes state-sanctioned homosexual marriages. Caught in the middle of this emotion-filled issue, politicians came up with "domestic partnerships" as a compromise that gives many or all of the rights of married

couples to gay partners but continued to reserve the "m" word for heterosexuals.

Recently some Christian churches have changed their view of homosexual activity. These churches argue that if God made a person a homosexual then it would not be wrong for that person to establish a committed and loving homosexual relationship that included sexual activity. Some churches have gone so far as to celebrate these relationships as Christian marriages, even if these marriages are not recognized by the state. Such decisions have been controversial even within the churches that have approved homosexual marriages.



Thomas Reese SJ

that have approved homosexual marriages.

The Catholic hierarchy does not support ecclesial or state-sponsored homosexual marriage and still argues that sex outside of marriage, including homosexual activity, is sinful. It no longer supports the criminalization of homosexual activity, and it argues against discrimination against homosexuals. It teaches that homosexuals should be loved and re-

spected (see "Always our Children," 1997).

The California Supreme Court, like the Massachusetts Supreme Court, has ruled that the state constitution requires that the state recognize same-sex marriages. The court specifically said that churches would not be required to perform such weddings.

Many, even some who support gay marriage, believe that this was an unwise decision on the part of the court. California already allowed domestic partnerships with most of the rights of married couples. By rejecting what had been a political compromise, the court has made it inevitable that a state constitutional amendment will be put on the ballot in California. The amendment will not only overturn the decision but may also eliminate domestic partnerships.

I agree with those who believe that the California Supreme Court's decision was unwise, but I would oppose a constitutional amendment that would forbid gay marriages. I believe that this issue should be dealt with by state legislatures, not by the courts or referendums.

Homosexual relationships exist in American society in not insignificant numbers. Even if you consider such relationships immoral, it can be argued that the state has an interest in encouraging these relationships to be stable and long term rather than multiple and short term. State legislatures are used to coming up with compromises that are acceptable to most

of the people. They can also return to legislation to adjust it based on experience and future circumstances.

Some argue that gay marriage is a threat to marriage as a heterosexual institution. I have never understood this argument. In an apartment building filled with unmarried couples, both gay and hetero, if all the gay couples got married, it would seem to me that their example would inspire the heterosexuals to think about marriage. I would prefer to reserve the word "marriage" to heterosexuals, but I don't think it is worth fighting over.

I think it is foolish for churches to expend their political capital opposing the legalization of gay marriage. There are many other issues of greater importance: abortion, hunger, global warming, peace, health care, etc. Pro-life churches and organizations should especially be suspicious when gay marriage is given more prominence as an issue than abortion. Money and resources that would have gone to pro-life work are being siphoned off to oppose gay marriage.

The issue of gay marriage is not going to go away quickly. It is a highly emotional issue that continues to divide our country. Everyone needs to step back, take a deep breath and count to ten before saying anything. Proponents and opponents need to respect each other and be civil in their debate. My guess is that those who are most civil will win the day.

# Fury at bishop's gay 'persecution' claim

By Alan MacDermid  
www.theherald.co.uk  
March 13, 2008

Gay rights activists hit back yesterday after a Catholic bishop challenged the homosexual community's attendance at the annual Holocaust memorial service.

The Rt Rev Joseph Devine, Bishop of Motherwell and president of the Catholic Education Commission, said in a lecture that the gay lobby went to the memorial to present the "image of a group of people under persecution".

He also pointed out that actor Sir Ian McKellen was given a New Year's honour for services to gay rights, whereas Oscar Wilde was locked up only a century ago for homosexual acts.

In the fourth of the Gonzaga Lectures held

at St Aloysius' College in Glasgow, Bishop Devine spoke of "a giant conspiracy" advancing the cause of secularism. He said secularism was more dangerous than sectarianism because it was more insidious.

Bishop Devine said: "The homosexual lobby has been extremely effective in aligning itself with minority groups. It is ever-present at the service each year for the Holocaust memorial, as if to create for themselves the image of a group of people under persecution. We neglect the gay movement at our peril.

"Issues around sexuality are powerful factors in shaping public policy. I want to ask you if you are able to see the giant conspiracy that's taking place before our eyes, even if we didn't see it at the time? I take it you're beginning to see that there is a huge and well-orchestrated conspiracy taking place which the

Catholic community completely missed.

"It's a very small group of people, but very active and organised and extremely indulgent. The opposition know exactly what they're doing. We don't."

After Bishop Devine's lecture on Tuesday night, titled *Sectarianism and Secularism: Bugbears for the Catholic Church in Scotland*, one audience member asked how Catholic parents should "come to terms with a child's mission to become homosexual". He replied: "This must be a nightmare moment for any parent. There are many days when I'm glad to not be a parent. I would try to handle it with a degree of compassion, but would not tolerate that behaviour. I would not condemn, but I would not tolerate it."

Bishop Devine clashed repeatedly with the previous Scottish Executive and during his

lecture cited the battles over Clause 28, legalising civil partnerships and same-sex adoption.

He concluded his lecture stating: "Like Mel Gibson, who said, I'm going to pick a fight, so am I."

Calum Irving, director of the gay rights group Stonewall Scotland, said yesterday that lesbian and gay people were among groups targeted by the Nazis for extermination - together with Jews, communists and gypsies.

He said: "It is a shameful disgrace anyone should try to deny that, especially a man supposedly of the Christian faith. A lot of his remarks are unchristian and out of step with a great swathe of Christian people throughout Scotland. As for Oscar Wilde - is he saying gay people should be thrown in jail now as they were a century ago?"

# Taking on Polish prez's baiting

By Andy Humm  
www.gaycitynews.com  
April 3, 2008

New Yorker Brendan Fay and his husband Tom Moulton, both gay activists, were flown to Warsaw by Poland's private TVN television network this week for a round of political meetings, press conferences, and interviews that have substantially advanced the discussion of LGBT rights there, according to a Polish gay activist.

Fay and Moulton got sucked into Polish politics when President Lech Kaczynski used footage of their 2003 wedding in Canada in a March 17 televised speech to the nation warning that adoption of the European Union's Lisbon Treaty would compel Poland to recognize same-sex marriages, which he linked to the end of "moral order."

The Polish parliament voted overwhelmingly to adopt the treaty on April 2, an outcome that New York-based Polish gay activist Daniel Domagala of the Campaign Against Homophobia, the leading LGBT rights group in Poland, said was going to happen anyway.

But the media frenzy that surrounded Fay and Moulton this week, from the moment they landed in Warsaw, certainly did not hurt the cause of gay visibility in Poland.

"They gave a human face to the issue," Domagala said.

Fay and Moulton, who live in Astoria, Queens, and have long records of gay activism, attracted considerable media attention in New York in the wake of the president's attack, especially from Polish news outlets. The couple held a press conference at the Manhattan offices of Human Rights Watch last week calling on the president to apologize.

A spokesperson for Kaczynski said, "Mr. Brendan Fay, who invited the media to his quasi-wedding, should not be surprised that his image was used," CWNews.com reported. The spokesperson said the president would not meet with them.

Two TV networks sought to bring the men to Poland and Fay and Moulton settled on TVN, the private network, over public television. Fay said they were in close contact with Polish gay leaders about all aspects of the trip and had stipulated that local leaders be included in any meetings they had there.

"Now the story is shifting from New York to Warsaw," Fay said by telephone from Kennedy Airport just before boarding their flight.

The effects of the attacks on the couple have been dramatic.

"It has brought visibility to the issue," said Domagala. Before this, he said, "No only had a lot of LGBT people been in the closet,

but all of our supporters had been in the closet."

The incident drew out the government of Prime Minister Donald Tusk, elected in October to replace that of Jaroslaw Kaczynski, the president's identical twin brother and leader of the right-wing Law and Justice Party. Jaroslaw Kaczynski was exposed in the Polish media as a closeted gay man in 2006.

The government's plenipotentiary for equal legal status, Elzbieta Radziszewska, did not come out for gay partner rights, but "she said there should not be discrimination in Poland" against LGBT people, Domagala noted, and "offered to look after the LGBT community" through the powers of her office.

On March 28, more than 600 Polish intellectuals signed a letter "saying they were embarrassed by Kaczynski's speech, assuring the US couple of their support and solidarity," the UK Gay News reported.

With Polish gay leaders, Fay and Moulton joined with leftist members of the Polish parliament to meet Monday with the chair of the Commission for Justice and Human Rights, Ryszard Kalisz. At a press con-

ference afterwards, Tomasz Szypula of the Campaign Against Homophobia, said, "Thanks to the invitation that Fay and Moulton got to visit the Parliament, we were offered a great opportunity to propose recommendations to the government which work towards gaining equal rights for LGBT people," according to the UK Gay News.

The contingent also met with the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights to try to advance a dialogue with the Polish president, noting that the principal of dialogue is enshrined at that nation's Constitution.

On Tuesday, Fay and Moulton did "Good Morning TVN" and held another press conference with LGBT leaders, including Yga Kostrzewa of Lambda Warsaw who "expressed hope that the couple's visit would inspire a national dialogue for legal recognition of same-sex couples in Poland," according to an email from Szypula. While the US State Department is under attack here for insensitivity on LGBT issues - most notably from a new group formed by the out gay former US ambassador to Romania, Michael Guest - Fay and Moulton got a meeting at the US embassy in Warsaw with Michael Steven Tulley, counsellor for management affairs,

and vice consul Andrea Gorog. They then met with a program head at the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

It should be noted that Fay and Moulton are not professional gay activists, paid for the work they do on the community's behalf. They are active members in Dignity and organize the annual inclusive Queens St. Patrick's Day Parade, both as volunteers.

Moulton is a pediatric oncologist and Fay works as a documentary filmmaker. He produced a film on the life of Father Mychal Judge, the gay Fire Department chaplain who was killed at the World Trade Center on 9-11, and is completing another on Reverend John McNeill, Dignity's founder. Through the volunteer Civil Marriage Trail, Fay and Moulton also assist American couples who travel to Canada as they did, to legally marry.

"We leave Poland inspired by the many meetings and conversations," Fay said in an email. "We feel confident that a brighter day of equality is closer at hand."

"We leave Poland with the hope that the dialogue that has begun in earnest will continue," Moulton added.



## Recalling Fr. Mychal Judge on Eve of Pope's Ground Zero visit

On April 19, 2008, the eve of Pope Benedict XVI's visit to Ground Zero, the site of the World Trade Center in New York City, an interfaith vigil in memory of Fr. Mychal Judge, OFM, was held to honor the fire department chaplain who died during the 9/11 bombing of the building, and who ministered with gay Catholics in NYC.

"Mychal Judge had a heart as big as New York," said event organizer Brendan Fay, a gay Catholic. "For the Catholic gay community he was family as well as our priest. When we were exiled and excluded by the institutional Church, he provided the sacraments in our living rooms and community centers."

Fay (third from left) joins other participants, above, around a banner, painted by Brooklyn artist, Ian Hart, which depicts scenes from the friar's ministries. At the service, Tom McLoughlin of DignityNY gave out postcards of the banner image with Mychal's prayer on the back.

# Papal visit provokes array of protests

By David Crary  
Associated Press  
April 13, 2008

Pope Benedict XVI may not see them or hear them, but aggrieved Roman Catholic activists hope his U.S. visit this week will help them draw attention to issues ranging from the ordination of women and gay rights to sex abuse by priests and the Vatican ban on contraception.

The groups have planned vigils, demonstrations and news conferences to press their causes as the pope visits Washington and New York. On Monday evening, the eve of his arrival, supporters of women's ordination will host what they are calling "an inclusive Mass" at a Methodist church in Washington, presided over by Catholic women — including two who were recently excommunicated.

"We cannot welcome this pope until he begins to do away with the church's continuing violence of sexism," said Sister Donna Quinn, coordinator of the National Coalition of American Nuns.

Participants in the service will include Rose Marie Hudson and Elsie McGrath, who were excommunicated last month by Archbishop Raymond Burke of St. Louis because they were ordained as part of a women-priest movement condemned by the Vatican.

"In the face of one closed door after another, Catholic women have been innovative, courageous and faithful to the church," said Aisha Taylor, executive director of the Women's Ordination Conference. "They continue to make a way where is none."

Gay Catholic activists, who plan to demonstrate Tuesday along the papal motorcade route in Washington, have compiled a list of statements by Benedict during his career which they consider hostile to gays and lesbians. These include forceful denunciations of gay marriage and of adoption rights for same-sex couples.

"He has issued some of the most hurtful and extreme rhetoric against our community of any religious leader in history, and we want to call him into account for the damage that he's done," said Marianne Duddy-Burke, executive director of DignityUSA.

Duddy-Burke said she hopes the protests will be coupled with celebration of the gains made by gay Catholics in America in recent years. She cited the growing number of parishes welcoming openly gay members and the dozens of Catholic colleges that now have gay-straight alliances.

Another gay Catholic group, New Ways Ministry, hosted a news conference at which speakers conveyed what they would tell the pope if they had the opportunity. The speakers included Gregory Maguire, author of the best-selling novel "Wicked," who along with husband Andrew Newman is raising three adopted children as Catholics in Massachusetts, the only state to allow same-sex marriages.

"We invite you to spend a day, a meal, a weekend with us," Maguire said in his message to the pope. "We don't want to serve as a poster-family for gay Catholics. ... We will just be ourselves, in all our confusion, aspiration, need and joy."

Another divisive issue being raised this week is the Vatican's ban on contraception. Gay rights groups and others say the ban undermines programs promoting condom use to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS.

In a conference call Monday organized by Catholics for Choice, four Catholic theologians will be examining the impact of the 1968 encyclical "Humanae Vitae," which defined the Vatican's opposition to artificial birth control.

"Catholics wonder why there's this huge disparity between what the hierarchy says we

should do in regard to contraception and what Catholics on the ground actually do," said Catholics for Choice president Jon O'Brien.

He termed the ban "a great tragedy ... a policy that lacks compassion and understanding."

Asked about the prospects that Benedict might reconsider the ban, O'Brien replied, "I do believe in miracles."

For many American Catholics, the most distressing church-related issue of recent years has been clerical sex abuse. Thousands of molestation allegations have been filed against Catholic clergy, and dioceses have paid out more than \$2 billion in claims since 1950.

David Clohessy, national director of the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests, said his advocacy group would not be mollified even if the pope meets privately with abuse victims.

"Extraordinarily few Catholics and victims will be moved in any way by gestures, words, tokens," Clohessy said. "It's as plain as day that three years into his papacy, Benedict has done literally nothing to protect the vulnerable or heal the wounded."

Clohessy said his group will make use of the papal visit to press for tough disciplinary action against bishops who covered up abuses by their priests and to urge pre-emptive steps by the Vatican against abuse by priests in other nations.

Clohessy expressed disappointment that the pope was not visiting Boston, where the scandal burst into the national spotlight in 2002.

"Showing a willingness to visit the epicenter of the crisis — that would have been one gesture that might have been effective," Clohessy said.

Voice of the Faithful, a Boston-based reform group which emerged from the scandal, placed a full-page ad last week in *The New York Times*, costing more than \$50,000, to air its call for a transformation of the church.

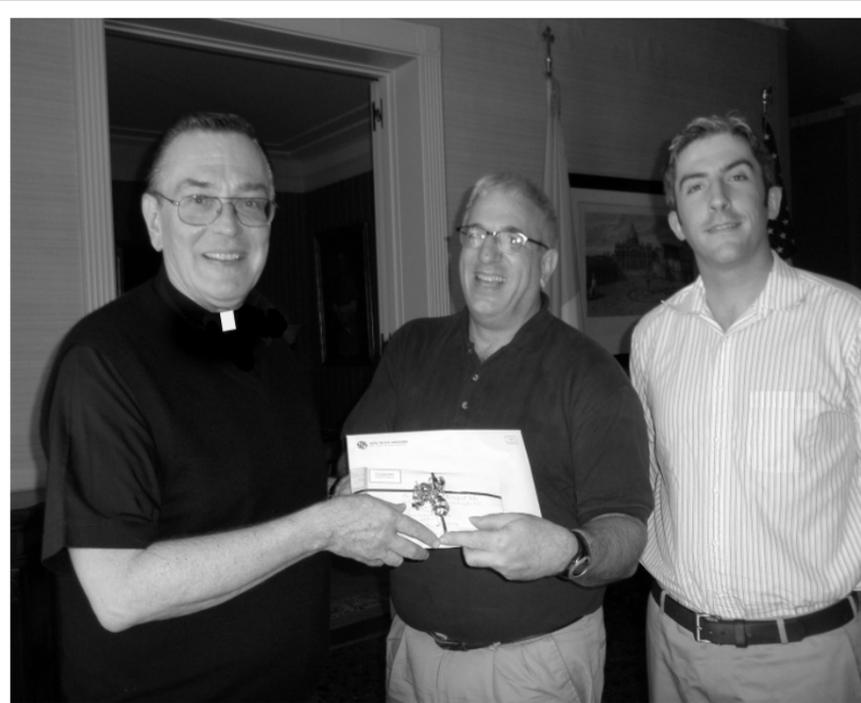
The ad urged Benedict to meet with abuse victims, oust bishops who covered up abuse and promote a greater role for lay

Catholics in running their parishes.

The extent to which the pope addresses the varied grievances during his trip remains unknown. But the Vatican's envoy to the United States, Archbishop Pietro Sambi, said any dissent that might arise was regrettable.

"Even in the Catholic church, nobody has

the right to instrumentalize the visit of the pope to serve their personal interests," Sambi told the *National Catholic Reporter*. "The problem is that there are too many people here who would like to be the pope ... and who attribute to themselves a strong sense of their own infallibility."



## Letters to the Pope

Monsignor John Maksymowicz (left), secretary to Archbishop Pietro Sambi, the papal nuncio to the United States, accepts a packet of letters from New Ways Ministry staff members, Francis DeBernardo and Matthew Myers, at the Vatican Embassy in Washington, DC, which served as Pope Benedict's residence on his April 2008 apostolic journey.

The packet included 50 letters to Pope Benedict XVI from friends of New Ways Ministry, who wrote to the pontiff telling him of their hopes for a Catholic Church that is more inclusive of its lesbian/gay members. Included in the packet were the CD of New Ways Ministry's press conference (see page 1), texts of the press conference speeches, and a letter from New Ways Ministry urging the pope to enter into dialogue with lesbian/gay Catholics.

In an acknowledgement letter, Archbishop Sambi assured New Ways Ministry staff that the letters would be personally delivered to Pope Benedict during his stay in Washington.

# Pope makes distinction between gays and pedophiles

By Tony Grew  
Pinknews.co.uk  
April 16, 2008

The leader of the Roman Catholic Church has spoken out about the sexual abuse of children by priests.

Benedict XVI gave a rare insight into his views to reporters accompanying him on his first Papal visit to the United States, which began yesterday.

In his comments the pontiff moved to dismiss the suggestion that he links sexual abuse of children with homosexuality.

In 2005 he caused controversy when he appeared to preclude men who may identify as homosexual from training for the priesthood as a response to revelations that thousands of children across the world had been sexually abused by Roman Catholic clergy.

A Vatican report commissioned by the Pope said that the church will ban men who "publicly manifest their homosexuality or show an overwhelming attraction to homosexual culture even if it is only intellectually."

"It is difficult for me to understand how it was possible that priests betrayed in this way," Benedict told reporters yesterday.

"Their mission was to give healing, to give the love of God to these children.

"We are deeply ashamed and we will do what is possible that this cannot happen in the future.

"I would not speak at this moment about homosexuality, but paedophilia which is another thing.

"And we would absolutely exclude pedophiles from the sacred ministry.

"Who is guilty of pedophilia cannot be a priest.

"We'll do all that is possible to have a strong discernment, because it is more important to have good priests than to have many priests."

Pope Benedict XVI is in the US until 20th April and will meet President Bush and address the United Nations.

It is Benedict's first official visit to the US. His predecessor John Paul II visited seven times.

The ABC News poll released yesterday

found that 60% of Roman Catholic Americans disagree with the ban on priests getting married, and the same number back women priests.

A group that works for the rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans in the Roman Catholic church is planning a series of protests against Pope Benedict during his visit.

The Rainbow Sash Movement said it is calling on "Catholics of good will" to take the Papal visit as an opportunity to shower the Pope mobile with ashes instead of confetti.

"Ashes are an ancient and appropriate greeting for a sinner who has caused the Church so much division and pain," RSM said in a statement.

The group is calling for reform across a range of issues, from marriage for priests to stronger action against bishops who protected child-abusing clergy.

**"I would not speak at this moment about homosexuality, but pedophilia, which is another thing."**

# Aquinas cancels gay-rights speaker

By Nardy Baeza Bickel  
The Grand Rapids Press  
April 11, 2008

After Aquinas College canceled a presentation by philosopher and gay-rights advocate John Corvino, a group of students now is looking for an independent venue to host the speaker.

Corvino's presentation "What's Morally Wrong with Homosexuality?" was scheduled last week at the college, but administrators postponed it until April 22 after receiving complaints.

Aquinas President Ed Balog canceled the event Thursday, saying the Catholic school cannot endorse a program that directly opposes church teachings.

"I'm not trying to keep people from seeing him. I'm trying to prevent the college from sponsoring an event that displays an attack on Catholic teaching values," Balog said.

The cancellation came a week before Pope Benedict XVI's scheduled meeting with more than 200 Catholic school officials from across the country. The gathering Thursday, at Catholic University in Washington, D.C., is being called a lecture, but Vatican watchers predict it will be an admonishment that teaching and activities at U.S. Catholic colleges and universities more closely adhere to church orthodoxy.

Church officials won't give details about the content of the speech, but conservative Catholics are predicting — and hoping for — shock waves from Benedict, who before becoming pope was associated with public reprimands of Catholic theologians and blocked appointments of university faculty members he thought were too liberal.

"One thing the pope will emphasize is the importance for all (Catholic) schools to realize that they aren't independent contractors, they are part of the church," said the Rev. David O'Connell, Catholic University's president.

He said the Vatican is concerned about

the lack of Catholic faculty at Catholic universities and about rampant "moral relativism" — the belief that there is no objective right or wrong — on campuses.

According to Corvino's Web site, the Wayne State University philosophy professor "challenges all sides of the debate to re-

think easy assumptions about homosexuality."

He has been speaking out on gay rights for 15 years, and has spoken on other Catholic campuses.

Some Aquinas students said they are upset about the way administrators handled the issue. It has sparked an online debate in some parts of the community.



John Corvino

Tree Top Productions, an Aquinas student programming group, set up Corvino's visit and said it was approved by an adviser.

"The programming board had been actively advertising since January and they canceled the morning of the event. It was very disrespectful to Corvino, and to the students that wanted to hear him speak," said junior Bev Pels, 21.

"I think they're not bringing him because there's so much outside pressure. It's not that the administration is homophobic, but the policy appears to be that way and it's alienating to students."

She said organizers are hoping to find a new, off-campus venue that can seat up to 70 people. Corvino has offered to speak for free.

Rebecca Kirk, 19, of Sturgis, was upset by the college's decision because, she said, Aquinas is known for being more open-minded than some private schools.

"We want to bring him ... so people can hear what he has to say," Kirk said. "The best way to get someone interested in hearing someone is by censoring him."

Sophomore Anna Thiakos, 20, agreed.

"It's important that free speech isn't censored and that we address the problem of homophobia in our community, whether it's

from a secular or religious point of view."

Balog said he wasn't familiar with Corvino's work until the day before the event. The school initially had hoped to provide a follow-up speaker to present the church's point of view on the issue.

But after reviewing some of Corvino's presentation, in which he talks about a "sexual act" condemned by the church, they decided against that.

"We want to explore the issue from an academic perspective, not from the perspective of an antagonistic attack to core Catholic values," Balog said.

Asked whether he was pressured by

Bishop Walter Hurley to cancel the event, he said, "No. He was one of the many people that wanted to ask for clarification."

Other U.S. bishops have slammed various events at colleges in their dioceses as violating Catholic doctrine: a rally by abortion rights supporter and Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton at St. Mary's University in San Antonio; a Georgetown University theologian's questioning whether Jesus offers the only road to salvation; and a performance of "The Vagina Monologues" at the University of Notre Dame.

The Washington Post contributed to this report.

## Catholic University announces club for gay, straight students

National Catholic Reporter  
February 22, 2008

The University of Portland, run by the Holy Cross Fathers, has recognized a club that seeks to build community and understanding between students who are heterosexual and those with a homosexual orientation.

Approved in January, the Gay Straight Partnership's mission statement says it aims "to help all students grow in friendship, knowledge, faith and service." Club members also plan to educate students on issues surrounding sexuality — without advancing an agenda.

University vice president John Goldrick, in charge of student life, approved of the club after asking for some changes in its proposal, including the removal of a section on networking with other schools.

The university's officers also suggested the group strengthen the wording of its mission to ensure that "the group will provide balanced programming and education and will offer a clear, faithful presentation of the Catholic church's teaching about human sexu-

ality and sexual orientation," said a memo from Goldrick to the student activities office.

"I'm delighted and honored that this group of students got to be involved in a process and it went this way and got recognized," club founder Valerie Silliman told *The Beacon*, the University of Portland newspaper.

Silliman, a senior English major from Sequim, Wash., said the club will make the university a more welcoming place.

The university turned down groups in 1994 and 1999 that seemed to promote beliefs counter to Catholic

teaching on homosexuality. The church teaches that all homosexual acts are morally wrong but affirms the dignity of those with homosexual inclinations and says that having such an inclination is not in itself sinful.

Advisers for the club will be Holy Cross Fr. John Donato, the university's associate vice president of student life, and Stacey Noem, a campus minister.

The group will receive a small budget, which *The Beacon* reported is currently \$174.



## Gay-Friendly Catholic Colleges

Below is a partial list of known "gay-friendly" Catholic colleges and universities, that is, those Catholic colleges that have some type of gay and lesbian student group, support group, ally group, etc. Thank you for helping us add to this growing list! If you are aware of such a college that is known as welcoming to gay and lesbian people, please let us know. Tell us if this welcome is because of a club, support services, participation in gay community events, or simply the friendliness of faculty and staff.

### Arizona

Tempe: All Saints Catholic Newman Center

### California

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

### Colorado

Denver: Regis University

### Connecticut

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

### District of Columbia

Georgetown University

### Florida

Miami Gardens: Saint Thomas University  
Miami Shores: Barry University

### Illinois

Chicago: DePaul University, Loyola University, Saint Xavier College

### Indiana

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

### Iowa

Dubuque: Loras College

### Kentucky

Louisville: Spalding University

### Louisiana

New Orleans: Loyola University New Orleans

### Maryland

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

### Massachusetts

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

### Michigan

Ann Arbor: St. Mary Student Parish

### Missouri

St. Louis: Saint Louis University

### Minnesota

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

### Montana

Helena: Carroll College

### Nebraska

Omaha: Creighton University

### New Hampshire

Nashua: Rivier College

### New Jersey

South Orange: Seton Hall

### New York

Albany: College of Saint Rose  
Bronx: Fordham University, Manhattan College  
Buffalo: Canisius College  
New Rochelle: College of New Rochelle, Iona College  
Poughkeepsie: Marist College  
Riverdale: College of Mount Saint Vincent  
Rochester: Nazareth College of Rochester  
Syracuse: LeMoyne College

### Ohio

Cincinnati: Xavier University, University of Cincinnati  
Columbus: Ohio State University  
Dayton: University of Dayton

### Oregon

Marylhurst: Marylhurst University  
Portland: University of Portland

### Pennsylvania

Cresson: Mount Aloysius  
Erie: Mercyhurst College  
Philadelphia: Chestnut Hill College, LaSalle University, Saint Joseph's University  
Villanova: Villanova University

### Rhode Island

Newport: Salve Regina University

### Texas

Austin: Saint Edward's University, University of Texas  
San Antonio: University of the Incarnate Word

### Vermont

Colchester: Saint Michael's College

### Washington

Lacey: Saint Martin's College  
Seattle: Seattle University  
Spokane: Gonzaga University

### Wisconsin

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

# Gay-Friendly Parishes

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

## Alabama

*Montgomery*: St. Bede

## Arizona

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

## California

*Berkeley*: Holy Spirit Parish  
*Burney*: St. Francis of Assisi  
*Carlesbad*: St. Patrick  
*Claremont*: Our Lady of the Assumption  
*El Cajon*: St. Luke  
*Escondido*: St. Timothy  
*Fremont*: St. Joseph - Mission San Jose  
*Hawthorne*: St. Joseph (Spanish)  
*Hayward*: All Saints  
*LaPuente*: St. Martha  
*Lemon Grove*: St. John of the Cross  
*Long Beach*: St. Matthew  
*Los Angeles*: Blessed Sacrament, Christ the King, Mother of Good Counsel, St. Camillus Center-LA USC Medical Center (Spanish), St. Paul the Apostle  
*North Hollywood*: Blessed Sacrament, St. Jane Frances de Chantal, St. Patrick  
*Oakland*: Our Lady of Lourdes  
*Oceanside*: St. Thomas More  
*Orange*: Holy Family Cathedral, Koinoia  
*Pleasanton*: Catholic Community of Pleasanton  
*Sacramento*: St. Francis of Assisi  
*San Carlos*: St. Charles  
*San Diego*: Ascension, Christ the King, San Rafael, St. Jude Shrine  
*San Francisco*: Most Holy Redeemer, Old St. Mary's Cathedral, St. Agnes, St. Dominic  
*San Jose*: St. Julie Billiart, St. Martin of Tours (Emmaus Community)  
*San Luis Obispo*: Old Mission of San Luis Obispo  
*San Rafael*: Church of San Rafael & Mission San Rafael Archangel  
*Santa Clara*: GALA  
*Santa Cruz*: Holy Cross  
*Santa Monica*: St. Monica  
*Spring Valley*: Santa Sophia  
*Walnut Creek*: St. John Vianney  
*West Hollywood*: St. Ambrose, St. Victor  
*Whittier*: St. Mary of the Assumption

## Colorado

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

## Connecticut

*Hartford*: St. Patrick-St. Anthony

## District of Columbia

Holy Trinity, St. Aloysius, St. Matthew Cathedral

## Florida

*Ft. Lauderdale*: St. Anthony, St. Maurice  
*Melbourne*: Ascension Parish  
*Naples*: St. John the Evangelist  
*St. Petersburg*: Holy Cross  
*Winter Haven*: St. Matthew

## Georgia

*Atlanta*: Shrine of the Immaculate Conception

## Illinois

*Berwyn*: St. Mary of the Celle  
*Chicago*: Immaculate Conception, St. Clement, St. Gertrude, St. Gregory, St. Peter, St. Sylvester, St. Teresa of Avila, St. Thomas the Apostle  
*Clarendon Hills*: Notre Dame  
*Country Club Hills*: St. Emeric

*Evanston*: St. Nicholas  
*Morton Grove*: St. Martha  
*Oak Park*: Ascension, St. Catherine of Sienna-St. Lucy  
*Schaumburg*: St. Marcelline

## Indiana

*Evansville*: St. Mary  
*Indianapolis*: St. Thomas Aquinas

## Iowa

*Iowa City*: St. Thomas More

## Kentucky

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

## Maine

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

## Maryland

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

## Massachusetts

*Boston*: Paulist Center, St. Anthony's Shrine  
*Newton*: Our Lady Help of Christians  
*Sharon*: Our Lady of Sorrows  
*Springfield*: Sacred Heart  
*Worcester*: Holy Cross College

## Michigan

*Ann Arbor*: St. Mary Student Parish  
*Detroit*: St. Leo  
*Kalamazoo*: Lambda Catholics  
*St. Ignace*: St. Ignatius Loyola

## Minnesota

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

## Missouri

*Kansas City*: Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Guardian Angels, St. Francis Xavier, St. James  
*St. Louis*: St. Cronan, St. Margaret of Scotland, St. Pius V

## Montana

*Billings*: Holy Rosary

## Nebraska

*Omaha*: Holy Family, Sacred Heart

## Nevada

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

## New Hampshire

*Manchester*: Parish of the Transfiguration  
*Merrimack*: St. John Neumann

## New Jersey

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

## New Mexico

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

## New York

*Baldwinsville*: St. Augustine  
*Bellmore*: St. Barnabas the Apostle  
*Brooklyn*: St. Andrew the Apostle, St. Boniface, St. Athanasius  
*Deer Park*: Ss. Cyril and Methodius  
*East Islip*: St. Mary  
*Elmira*: St. Mary  
*Fairport*: Church of the Assumption  
*Henrietta*: Good Shepherd  
*Manhattan*: Holy Name of Jesus, St. Francis Xavier, St. Paul the Apostle  
*Melville*: St. Elizabeth

*Rochester*: Blessed Sacrament, St. John the Evangelist (Humboldt St.), St. Mary, St. Monica  
*Syracuse*: St. Andrew the Apostle, St. Lucy  
*Utica*: St. Francis DeSales  
*Wantagh*: St. Frances de Chantal  
*Westbury*: St. Brigid

## North Carolina

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

## Ohio

*Akron*: St. Bernard  
*Cincinnati*: St. George-St. Monica  
*Cleveland*: Ascension of Our Lord, St. Malachi, St. Martha  
*Mentor*: St. John Vianney  
*University Heights*: Church of the Gesu  
*Westlake*: St. Ladislav  
*Wooster*: St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception

## Oregon

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

## Pennsylvania

*Philadelphia*: Old St. Joseph, Old St. Mary, St. John the Evangelist, St. Vincent DePaul  
*York*: St. Joseph

## Rhode Island

*Providence*: St. Francis Chapel  
*Wickford*: St. Bernard



## Tennessee

*Memphis*: Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception

## Texas

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

## Virginia

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

## Washington

*Pullman*: Sacred Heart  
*Seattle*: St. Benedict  
*Tacoma*: St. Leo

## Wisconsin

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

## Canada

*Toronto*: Our Lady of Lourdes

**To add your faith community to our list, please contact the New Ways Ministry office via [NewWaysM@verizon.net](mailto:NewWaysM@verizon.net) or at 301-277-5674. Thanks!**

## Next Steps: Developing Catholic Lesbian/Gay Ministry



Weekend Workshop for Pastoral Ministers,  
 Leaders of Catholic Institutions,  
 and all interested in lesbian/gay ministry

**August 8 - 10, 2008**

**Loretto Spirituality Center  
 4000 South Wadsworth Blvd.  
 Littleton, CO 80123 (near Denver)**

### Description

- + How can Catholic communities respond compassionately and faithfully to the gifts, needs, and life experiences of lesbian and gay people and their families?
- + What skills, knowledge, and talents are needed to address lesbian/gay issues in Catholic environments?
- + What role can pastoral leaders play in building bridges between faith communities and those who feel alienated and ostracized because of sexual orientation issues?

This weekend of prayer, presentations, dialogue, and planning is designed to assist those seeking ways to include lesbian/gay people and issues in their home parishes, schools, or other ministerial settings.

All interested in learning to develop lesbian/gay ministry programs are invited to participate.

**Sponsored by New Ways Ministry.  
 For more info, call 301-277-5674 or email at [NewWaysM@verizon.net](mailto:NewWaysM@verizon.net).**

# The Unlikely Rebel

By **Ariadne Massa**  
*Times of Malta*  
 March 16, 2008

*Sr Jeannine Gramick, the diminutive Roman Catholic nun from the US, is urging the Vatican to show its compassionate side to gay and lesbian Catholics and shun the evil of prejudice that hounds this community. The subject of an acclaimed documentary, Sr Jeannine tells Ariadne Massa the argument that gay sexuality is unnatural, is based solely on 'plumbing'.*

Taking a sip of English Breakfast tea, Sr Jeannine Gramick, 65, emits a peaceful aura that veils her steely resolve to pursue her mission to support gay and lesbian Catholics.

Dressed in a mint-coloured shirt, buttoned right up to her neck, and a blue cardigan, it's hard to imagine this nun, with her gentle demeanour, standing up to the Vatican and sticking to her guns - "in a non-violent way".

In Malta last night to address a public talk titled 'On Becoming Whole: Sexual and Spiritual Integration', organised by Drachma, Malta's gay Catholic group, Sr Jeannine explains her crusade, which inspired the documentary *In Good Conscience*.

In 1999, the Vatican's Congregation for Doctrine of the Faith, then led by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (who is now the Pope), issued an edict ordering Sr Jeannine to shut down her New Ways Ministry, a Catholic centre working for the justice and reconciliation of gays within the Church.

When the president of the Bishops Conference in the US asked Cardinal Ratzinger to explain, they were told this meant no retreats, workshops or liturgical celebrations for the gay and lesbian community.

Under Canon Law, this order cannot be interpreted further than these words, which meant it did not stop Sr Jeannine from speaking publicly.

She spent that year travelling across the US talking about the investigation. As a result, thousands upon thousands of letters poured into the Vatican calling for the case to be re-examined, but the Congregation decided against.

Instead it went a step further to gag the nun, by ordering her religious superior in Rome to completely silence her on homosexuality and sexual matters.

"I felt I could not abide by this order; it was a matter of conscience," she says, hold-

ing the silver cross, which she wears prominently around her neck.

So instead of disobeying her superior, she transferred from the School Sisters of Notre Dame to the Sisters of Loretto, who support Sr Jeannine in her ministry. So far, the Vatican has stopped short of issuing a new edict.

"The edict made me very sad, because of what it represented. It was interpreted, rightly so, by the gay and lesbian Catholic community as another slap in the face; another rejection," she says.

"It had meaning far beyond me. It didn't show the compassionate side of the Church, which is what we should be about. I think it was mean-spirited. Of course, Church officials look at it differently... one's understanding depends on where you stand."

To understand Sr Jeannine's crusade, it's essential to trace her journey into this ministry in 1971, when, following the Second Vatican Council, a lot of ecumenical work with other religions was underway.

Having entered the convent at 18, because she felt she was "God's No.1 best friend", she was pursuing her Ph.D. in mathematics education from the University in Pennsylvania, when she got roped into reaching out to the gay community by an Episcopal priest.

In those days, she believed "there was something psychologically wrong" with gays, but suddenly her ideas were being challenged when she met successful gay professionals who seemed far from imbalanced.

Her involvement began when she befriended a gay man who had left the Catholic Church, and joined the Episcopal Church, because he felt he didn't fit in.

"Me, the good little nun that I am, said, 'Once you're Roman Catholic, you're always Roman Catholic'. He said he would love to go to a Catholic Mass, but he didn't feel welcome, so instead we celebrated a Roman Catholic Mass at his apartment for him and his gay friends and that's what we did every week," she recalls.

"Gays, who had not been to Church for decades because they felt rejected, came and left with tears of happiness that a Catholic nun and a priest had welcomed them.

"I spoke to my superiors and they were really women of vision who believed the Church had neglected the gay community and they encouraged me to do whatever I could," she says, adding that initially her fellow nuns in the convent weren't as enlightened as her



**Sr. Jeannine Gramick**

superiors.

And so her ministry to educate and raise awareness on struggle of the gay community to seek acceptance and equality began and, in 1977, she co-founded the New Ways Ministry.

She has untiringly worked to promote this cause for 35 years and she is the author of numerous articles and books on the subject.

A woman who prefers to look on the bright side, she is content to see that change is happening, even though it tends to be excruciatingly slow on the subject of sexuality and homosexuality.

She refers to a document that emerged from a bishops' conference, which says, "Prejudice against homosexuals is a greater infringement on the moral norm than any kind of sexual activity.

"Well, let's put this into practice. Instead of the Vatican making all these pronouncements about homosexual activity, let's make the pronouncement about the evils of prejudice and violence against the gay community. That's what we should be teaching," she stresses.

Described by Time Out magazine in New York as, "a freedom fighter on the frontline of the cultural wars", Sr Jeannine doesn't know whether she will live to witness the reconciliation between the Church and the gay community.

"I never thought I would see same-sex marriage on the Church's agenda. We may be coming out the wrong way on this, but at

least we're talking about it," she says.

How does she view same-sex unions?

"I'm part of the National Coalition of American Nuns. In the 1990s, we made a statement, and continue to make such statements, that marriage is a civil right. Basically, I also believe that all the sacraments should be open to gay people, and that includes marriage," she stresses.

Though her opinion may not go down well with the hierarchical Church, polls in the US show that around 50 per cent of Catholics support same-sex civil unions. Though this support dwindles to 20 per cent when asked if gays should be granted the sacrament of marriage, Sr Jeannine is encouraged that the level of acceptance had increased over time.

How does she reconcile the arguments that same-sex unions are unnatural?

"Our problem as human beings is that we think only one thing is natural and anything beyond that is unnatural. We think that what is natural for most has to be natural for everybody and that's not true. These arguments are based on plumbing... one sexual organ fits in another... that's ridiculous! This is a very male-based theology."

Sr Jeannine believes there is radical need for reform, and though new ideas are being pushed forward by theologians, these were being quashed by the Vatican.

She points out that the aim of the Congregation was to create a platform for theological ideas to flourish, but instead it took a watchdog approach.

Doesn't she fear excommunication, if she persists in her crusade?

"No. But when I was going through the investigation process my provincial put the idea in my head. She insisted we take a pilgrimage to the birthplace of our foundress to pray for a miracle," she recalls with an affectionate smile.

Through sheer coincidence, travelling on the plane between Rome and Munich was Cardinal Ratzinger himself.

"My superior went up to him and said, 'Sr Jeannine is a very good sister. We're very afraid she's going to get excommunicated'. And he replied, 'Oh, no no... it's not that level of doctrine', she laughs, admitting that her miracle had happened on the plane.

As a nun who is very much devoted to her Church, Sr Jeannine feels the need to apologise to lesbians and gays "for all the pain and suffering we have caused", and hopes she can make reparations through her work. "I believe God loves each person as they are."

## Upcoming Programs

**October 3 -5, 2008**

**Magisterium, Theologians, and Folk Like Us: Sex, Sexuality, and Developing Catholic Faith**

Retreat/Workshop for Lesbian/Gay Catholics, Parents, and Pastoral Ministers

Aston, Pennsylvania (Philadelphia suburb)  
 Facilitated by James Halstead OSA

**December 12 - 14, 2008**

**Lesbian Sisters: Understanding, Education, and Action**

Conference for women religious who are lesbian, congregational leaders, or formation/vocation ministers

Racine, Wisconsin

**February 27 - March 6, 2009**

**El Salvador: Land of Martyrs**

LGBT-friendly pilgrimage led by Sr. Jeannine Gramick SL

For program and registration information,  
 please visit [www.newwaysministry.org](http://www.newwaysministry.org) or call New Ways Ministry at 301-277-5674.



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the debate about legalizing same-sex marriage.

New Ways Ministry's Executive Director, Francis DeBernardo, explained why they felt it was important for the pope to hear the messages of lesbian and gay people. He noted Benedict's former role in shaping Church teaching. "As Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith under John Paul II, this churchman was the prime architect of policies and new teachings which were responsible for turning back from a more positive and accepting Catholic approach toward lesbian/gay people that had begun to develop in many dioceses and church institutions in the US and throughout the world," he said.

DeBernardo explained that New Ways Ministry has long advocated for Church leaders to initiate a dialogue with lesbian and gay people, so that Church teaching could be developed from a more informed and enlightened position.

"We hope that the personal experiences described today by our panelists will not only provide much needed information and insights for Catholic leaders, but will model the type of dialogic Church we envision," he said.