

# BONDINGS

Vol. 34, No. 2

A Publication of New Ways Ministry

Summer 2014

## Pope Francis' impact visible during Pride celebrations

By Bob Shine

*Bondings 2.0*

NewWaysMinistryBlog.wordpress.com  
July 1, 2014

LGBT and ally Catholics appeared at Pride festivities around the world this month, visible signs of Pope Francis' desire for a more merciful and welcoming Church. Canadians welcomed Catholics from around the world for World Pride 2014 celebrations, while Catholics in the U.S. participated in local celebrations.

Toronto was the site for World Pride this year. All Inclusive Ministries (AIM),

to in 2012 after the Jesuit parish ended its affiliation with Dignity Toronto Dignité, which now meets elsewhere. Another church, St. Joseph's Church in Ottawa, sent a delegation to join AIM's liturgy and march in the WorldPride parade, having witnessed in their local parade for many years.

The Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association (OECTA) also marched in World Pride's parade following several months of criticism from Toronto's cardinal and others who opposed the teachers union's decision to march. OECTA President James Ryan told

the *National Post* the teachers' participation was an "internal union matter" made through a democratic process. The paper reports further:

"In March, the OECTA voted to send a contingent of more than 100 to the parade as a visible and vocal message that Catholic-school teachers in the province want students to feel supported and free from discrimination."

"OECTA is just aligning with other public unions and teachers' unions Canada-wide, said Mr. Ryan, whether Catholic or not."

"Coast to coast in Canada, pretty much every teachers' union I know of does support LGBT rights without exception," [Ryan] said. "The Canadian Teachers Federation has been very forward with its support for LGBT rights."



Parishioners from St. Francis Xavier in Manhattan in the city's Pride parade.

Catholic parishes in the U.S. marched in Pride parades in their cities, as well. In Chicago, St. Clement Church parishioners marched alongside Dignity/Chicago members for the second year in a row. The *Chicago Tribune* reported on the marchers:

"We don't want to be dictated to anymore," said Rob Svendsen, 41, a parishioner at St. Clement for nine years. "With the new pope, we've all been given a new ray of hope..."

"What St. Clement demonstrates is there are Catholics in the pews out there who think this is a time to be united and give witness to what the church's true mission is," [former Dignity president Chris] Pett said. "We are here to advance justice. We should be a church

united in justice, love and respect for one another. What's exciting about it is they come from a very affirming community."

In Boston, contingents from



Franciscans from St. Anthony's staff their Pride booth in Boston.

based at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in that city, brought "its message of faith and love to this celebration" by welcoming Catholics from around the world to their monthly Mass and gathering. AIM began with support of the Archdiocese of Toron-



London's LGBT Catholics march in Pride. (Photo by Martin Pendergast)

both Boston College and St. Anthony Shrine were present during the city's June 14th Pride festival. For their part, the Franciscan friars from St. Anthony's in Boston hoisted a banner with the pope's famous "Who am I to judge?" quote in rainbow lettering.

In San Francisco, St. Agnes, Most Holy Redeemer, and other Bay Area parishes joined together to 'show their Catholic pride' at the city's parade.

In New York City, parishioners from St. Francis Xavier Church marched, as did a collaborative contingent from various metro NYC area gay-friendly parishes, marching behind the banner of "LGBT Catholics and Friends."

In London, England, members of the Archdiocese of Westminster's pastoral outreach to LGBT people (called "Soho Masses" because of the neighborhood in which they originated) took part in that city's pride march, complete with a giant street puppet of Jesus draped in a rainbow flag.

Repeatedly, Pride participants cited Pope Francis as a reason for their witness this month and also tied their actions to the Church's standing commitment to social justice that has resulted in American Catholics' overwhelming support for LGBT equality. Earlier this month, *Bondings 2.0* suggested that marching for Pride was a key way to show solidarity for church workers under increased scrutiny for their support and involvement with marriage equality or because of their gender identity.

Additionally, many of the parishes mentioned above are on New Ways Ministry's listing of gay-friendly Catholic parishes and communities. To find a parish near you, review our list on page 7. ✚

## What our parish does about gay and lesbian relationships

By Father Peter Daly

*National Catholic Reporter*  
May 5, 2014

Pope Francis has asked our bishops to report to Rome on what is actually happening in the parishes in regard to marriage and family life. Among the many topics to be discussed are "same-sex unions between persons who are, not infrequently, permitted to adopt children."

I think that our parish is a fairly typical middle-class, mostly white, English-speaking, American parish. I also think it would be fair to say that our approach to same-sex couples, including marriage and adoption, is evolving. One might characterize our approach as public silence and private acceptance.

In public, we are silent about the fact that some of our fellow parishioners are gay, even though some people are aware of their relationships.

In private, we are accepting their relationships so long as we don't have to acknowledge them.

Such a *modus vivendi* is not really an ethical resolution to the question. In fact, it is merely a strategy for avoidance.

There seem to be two great divides in my parish over issues facing lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. One di-

vide is generational. The other divide is personal.

The generational divide is the most obvious and clear-cut, but not absolute. Older people are less accepting of LGBT relationships. Younger people see no problem. In fact, younger people often think the church should move beyond mere acceptance to affirmation. The dividing line seems to be about age 50.

This generational divide is radical and serious. For some young people, it determines whether or not they will remain Catholics. One young man left our church over the issue. As the older Catholics die off, the church will find very little acceptance of its current negative position on gay relationships. We will find ourselves culturally marginalized in countries like the United States.

The personal divide is more subtle and harder to quantify. People who know someone in their family or circle of friends who is publicly gay are much more accepting of LGBT people than people who claim they don't know anyone who is gay. Of course, the fact is, everyone actually does know someone who is gay. They just know that their friend or family member is gay but does

not admit it.

Personal experience is important. More and more people are coming out as gay. More and more people will have to accept their relationships. Our younger people nearly always know someone who is out as gay and find it very easy to accept. This is a sea change from a generation ago.

More and more gay relationships are being discussed, even in a conservative community like ours. In the past few years, at least a dozen parents have come to me to tell me that their children are gay. They are supportive of their children. They want to know how I will respond. I always encourage them to accept and love their child.

Two of my friends who go to other parishes left the Catholic church when their children came out. They simply could not accept a church that judged their children to be "intrinsically disordered." If someone is put in the position of choosing between his or her child and the church, they will obviously and quite rightly choose their child.

The hyperbolic and harsh language of the church will have to change. It is not accurate, and it is not charitable.

(Continued on page 8)

BONDINGS

Summer 2014Vol. 34, 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 the 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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Simply Loving

By James Martin, SJ  
*America* Magazine  
May 26-June 7, 2014

Everybody knows that same-sex marriage and homosexual acts are contrary to Catholic moral teaching. Yet that same teaching also says that gay and lesbian people must be treated with “respect, sensitivity and compassion.” As more states pass laws legalizing same-sex marriage, more gay and lesbian Catholics are entering into these unions. This leaves some Catholics feeling caught between two values: church teaching against same-sex marriage and church teaching in favor of compassion. In Seattle a few months back, for example, many high school students protested the ouster of the vice principal, who was removed for marrying another man.

Most people who oppose same-sex marriage say they do not hate gay people, only that the traditional understanding of marriage is important and perpetually valid. Other opponents of same-sex marriage invoke the oft-repeated mantra, “Hate the sin, love the sinner.” If that is so, then why do so many gay people say they feel hatred from members of the church?

Let me suggest a reason beyond the fact that many gays and lesbians disagree with church teaching on homosexual acts: only rarely do opponents of same-sex marriage say something positive about gays and lesbians without appending a warning against sin. The language surrounding gay and lesbian Catholics is framed primarily, sometimes exclusively, in terms of sin. For example, “We love our gay brothers and sisters—but they must not engage in sexual activity.” Is any other group of Catholics addressed in this fashion? Imagine someone beginning a parish talk on married life by saying, “We love married Catholics—but adultery is a mortal sin.” With no other group does the church so reflexively link the group’s identity to sin.

The language of “hate the sin, love the sinner” is difficult for many gay people to believe when the tepid expression of love is accompanied by strident condemnation. And the notion that love calls first for admonishing

the loved person seems to be applied only in the case of gays and lesbians. To take another example, it would be like telling a child, “You’re a sinful child, but I love you anyway.” This can end up sounding more like, “Hate the sinner.”

Look how Jesus loved people who were hated in his day. Take the story of Zacchaeus, the diminutive man who climbs a sycamore tree to catch a glimpse of Jesus as he passes through Jericho (Lk 19:1-10). As chief tax collector, and thus head of all the tax collectors in the region, Zacchaeus would have also been seen by the Jews as the chief sinner in the area. When Jesus spies him perched in the branches, he calls out, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.” Zacchaeus then promises to repay anyone he has defrauded. “Salvation has come to this house,” says Jesus.

Notice that Jesus shows love for Zacchaeus even before the man has promised to do anything.

That is, Jesus loves him first, by offering to dine with him, a powerful sign of welcome in that time. Jesus does not say, “Zacchaeus, you’re a sinful person because you’re gouging people with taxes collected for the oppressive occupying power, but even though you’re a public sinner, I love you anyway.” He simply loves him—first.

The story of Zacchaeus illustrates an important difference between the ministry of John the Baptist and of Jesus. For John the Baptist, conversion came first, then communion. First you repent of your sins; then you are welcomed into the community. For Jesus, the opposite was more often the case; first, Jesus welcomed the person, and conversion followed. It’s not loving the sinner; it’s simply loving.

What might it mean for the church to love gays and lesbians more deeply? First, it would mean listening to their experiences—all their experiences, what their lives are like as a whole. Second, it would mean valuing their contributions to the church. Where would our church be without gays and lesbians—as music ministers, pastoral ministers, teachers, clergy and religious, hospital chaplains and directors of religious education? Infinitely poorer. Finally, it would mean publicly acknowledging their individual contributions: that is, saying that a particular gay Catholic has

made a difference in our parish, our school, our diocese. This would help remind people that they are an important part of the body of Christ. Love means listening and respecting, but before that it means admitting that the person exists. ✚

James Martin, SJ

Let me suggest a reason beyond the fact that many gays and lesbians disagree with church teaching on homosexual acts: only rarely do opponents of same-sex marriage say something positive about gays and lesbians without appending a warning against sin. The language surrounding gay and lesbian Catholics is framed primarily, sometimes exclusively, in terms of sin.

Catholic Commentary on LGBT Issues Every Day: [www.NewWaysMinistryBlog.wordpress.org](http://www.NewWaysMinistryBlog.wordpress.org)

# Could baptizing children of gay couples become a new battleground?

By David Gibson  
Religion News Service  
June 26, 2014

Despite numerous controversies over dismissing gay Catholics from church posts and the U.S. hierarchy's campaign against same-sex marriage, Catholic leaders have carefully, if quietly, avoided doing anything to block gay couples from having their children baptized.

But a move by a bishop in Wisconsin to route all such decisions through his office is raising questions about whether that neutral zone will now become another battleground, and whether the growing acceptance of gay parents will inevitably draw more attention to this practice and force church leaders to establish clearer rules.

The default position for most bishops — reiterated in a major Vatican document released on Thursday (June 26) — is that if the parents pledge to raise the child Catholic, then no girl or boy should be refused baptism.

They generally let parish priests make the final call and let them administer the sacrament, though it is usually done in a private ceremony with the biological parent — not the adoptive mother or father — listed on the baptismal certificate.

The new debate was prompted by the emergence of a memo — first reported by the Wisconsin State Journal — that was sent in early May to priests of the Madison

Diocese by the top aide to Bishop Robert Morlino.

Monsignor James Bartylla is vicar general of the Diocese of Madison. Under an administrative change enacted earlier this year, his office now handles priests' inquiries about whether to baptize children of same-sex couples. In the past, this issue was largely left up to the discretion of individual priests.

In the memo, the vicar general of the diocese, Monsignor James Bartylla, says there are "a plethora of difficulties, challenges, and considerations associated with these unnatural unions (including scandal) linked with the baptism of a child, and such considerations touch upon theology, canon law, pastoral approach, liturgical adaptation, and sacramental recording."

Bartylla says that pastors must now coordinate any decision on baptizing the children of gay couples with his office and that "each case must be evaluated individually."

A spokesman for the Madison Diocese, Brent King, said in an email that the new policy would not affect the church's openness to baptizing a child if a parent or guardian "is sincere in presenting a child for baptism" and if he or she "truly intends to raise the child in the faith and all that means."

"We want everyone to receive this most important sacrament, and we are dealing with this sensitive matter prudently, for the child's sake and the integ-

riety of this most sacred sacrament," wrote King. He added that the diocese would have no further comment.

But some suspect that Morlino, one of the more outspoken conservatives in



Carina Villaroel and Soledad Ortiz with daughter, Uma, after her baptism in Argentina

the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, will use the new policy to curb baptisms that he considers problematic.

"While this process might protect couples from the negative whims of a local pastor, Bishop Morlino has such a strong record against supporting lesbian and gay people that I worry he might be more restrictive about baptizing their children than most local priests would be," said Francis DeBernardo, head of New Ways Ministry, a leading advocacy group for gay Catholics.

If that happens, he said, it "has the potential to blow up into a pastoral disaster."

## Synod Document is First, Not Last, Word on Marriage and Family Issues

By Francis DeBernardo  
Bondings 2.0  
NewWaysMinistryBlog.wordpress.com  
June 27, 2014

One of baseball legend Yogi Berra's memorable quotations is "It ain't over till it's over."

I was reminded of the wisdom of that sentence yesterday when I first heard the news that the Vatican has issued the working paper (in Latin, the *instrumentum laboris*) for the upcoming synod on marriage and the family to take place in Rome this coming October. There have been high hopes for this meeting, especially since the Vatican has asked lay people for their opinions on various topics, and especially since several bishops have noted that lay opinion has been strongly calling for changes on certain aspects of church teaching on marriage and family.

But the content of the document released yesterday does not seem to signal any hope for change. Joshua McElwee of the *National Catholic Reporter* synthesized the document in this way:

"Struggles faced by faithful around the world in following Catholic teachings stem mainly from ineffective education in those teachings and the pervasive effect of a relativistic culture, states the guiding document for an upcoming Synod of Bishops on the family.

"The document, anticipated by many Catholics as a barometer for what to expect from the synod, also strongly reinforces church teachings regarding the indissolubility of marriage, the restriction of marriage to heterosexual couples, and that partners must be open to having children.

"At the same time, the document states, the church must respond with mercy to the struggles of families to adhere to sometimes controversial teachings — like those prohibiting divorce and remarriage, contraception, cohabitation, and same-sex marriage — and 'support her children on the path of reconciliation.'"

While it is commendable that the document is stressing Pope Francis' constant themes of mercy and of meeting people in whatever situation they are living, the troublesome part of the document is that it

views the secular world as a problem, rather than as a dialogue partner. McElwee's synthesis continued:

"Responses to the synod office's global consultation — which saw bishops' conferences around the world answer a long questionnaire on how Catholics perceive church teachings — were 'in agreement on the underlying reasons for the difficulty in accepting Church teaching,' the document states.

"Among those reasons: 'the hedonistic culture; relativism; materialism; individualism; the growing secularism; the prevalence of ideas that lead to an excessive, selfish liberalization of morals; ... [and] a culture which rejects making permanent choices.'"

I've no doubt that some of these factors affect the way some people approach church teaching, however, I have met far too many people who disagree with church teaching on matters of marriage, sexuality, gender, and family who are motivated, instead, by a deep faith. Their positions were arrived at after much study, reflection, discussion, and prayer. Their disagreements grow out of their lived and examined faith, not some worldly "monsters" that this document discusses.

This is the same kind of thinking that was evident in the International Theological Commission's document "Sensus Fidei" in the Life of the Church," which was published on the Vatican's website. You can read the summary of that document here, and you can read an excellent commentary by seasoned religion journalist Ken Briggs here.

If the bishops of the world ignore the reality that disagreement comes out of a deep faith, they do so at great peril to themselves and to the church.

On LGBT issues, the document is not totally problematic. For example, Reuters' news story on the document focused on the fact that there seems to be some agreement already that children of lesbian and gay couples should not be prohibited from baptism. The story quotes the document:

"... when people living in [same-

sex] unions request a child's baptism, almost all the responses emphasize that the child must be received with the same care, tenderness and concern which is given to other children."

Some other sections are half-good, half-bad. For instance, there is a recognition that the Church must engage with the scientific world on the issue of homosexuality:

"Many responses and observations call for theological study in dialogue with the human sciences to develop a multi-faceted look at the phenomenon of homosexuality."

That's good. That's a difference from the 1986 Vatican document on homosexuality which said the Church did not need science.

Yet this good statement is undercut by the statement which immediately follows it, which says that the dialogue with science should be conducted through Vatican offices:

"Others recommend collaborating with specific entities, e.g., the Pontifical Academy of the Social Sciences and the Pontifical Academy for Life, in thoroughly examining the anthropological and theological aspects of human sexuality and the sexual difference between man and woman in order to address the issue of gender ideology."

It's hard to think that Vatican officials will learn anything new if they conduct their inquiries with a closed or biased mindset.

There is also a recognition that Church leaders have not always been good at developing pastoral ministry with gay and lesbian people, particularly those in committed relationships:

"On the whole, the extreme reactions to these unions, whether compromising or uncompromising, do not seem to have facilitated the development of an effective pastoral programme which is consistent with the Magisterium and compassionate towards the persons concerned."

Yet, a few paragraphs later, the document states:

"The great challenge will be to de-

(Continued on page 5)

Officials at the USCCB said these decisions are left to local church leaders, and indicated there are no plans to formulate a national directive beyond the guidance offered in a 2006 statement on ministering to gay people. That document says that baptizing the children of gay parents is "a serious pastoral concern" but that the church should not refuse them access to the sacrament.

Since the bishops passed that document, however, an ongoing wave of victories for same-sex marriage advocates has continued to push the issue into the public arena. As more gay Catholics can marry, and can be open about their relationship, more gay couples may be presenting their children for baptism.

"The question with gay couples is whether their opposition to the church's teaching on marriage means that they do not in fact intend to raise the child in the faith," said Rita Ferrone, the author of several books about liturgy and a consultant to U.S. dioceses on liturgical matters.

"Gay parents may or may not be ideologically opposed to church teaching, but chances are they do not merely disobey but also reject the various norms they have transgressed," Ferrone said.

DeBernardo said the problem with a policy that focuses specifically on gay parents is that it "stigmatizes lesbian and gay couples as being more suspect than any other parents."

"It is very likely that no parents that present a child for baptism are perfectly following all church rules," he said. "Why single out only lesbian and gay parents for further scrutiny?"

Countering any trend to curb baptisms, however, is the long-standing presumption, in church teaching and among even conservative church leaders, that no child should be denied baptism.

That welcoming stance was given a powerful boost with the election of Pope Francis, who as an archbishop in Argentina castigated priests who refused to baptize the children of unwed mothers. "The child has absolutely no responsibility for the state of his parents' marriage," he also said.

As pope, Francis has continued to promote that view.

Last September he said that while the church has the right to express its opinions it cannot "interfere spiritually" in the lives of gays and lesbians. In January he personally baptized — in the Sistine Chapel — the child of a couple married civilly, not in the church. And in May he said in a homily the church should baptize little green men from Mars if they asked for it.

Some bishops are taking a cue from Francis.

In Mexico, Bishop Raul Vera Lopez personally baptized a 16-month-old raised by a lesbian couple. He did that in May, just two weeks after meeting in Rome with Francis and discussing his ministry to gay people with him.

"If I find the natural daughter of one of two women, how can I deny her baptism? If the parents seek it, it's because there is a Christian faith," Vera Lopez explained. "The pope has the same attitude as Christ did."

In Argentina in April, the archbishop of Cordoba also defended the decision to baptize the child of a lesbian couple during a service in the city's cathedral, and said he cleared it with the Vatican.

"Baptism is a right of every human person, and I think that the Holy Father as well, ever since he was archbishop of Buenos Aires, always advocated for great openness in administering these sacraments," said Archbishop Carlos Nanez.

And just this week, a major document published by the Vatican to guide future discussions on family life stressed that almost all the world's bishops would greet requests to baptize children living with gay couples "with the same care, tenderness and concern which is given to other children." ✦



# Letter to Pope Francis from Catholic educators

*In May 2014, the Human Rights Campaign, a national LGBT equality organization, organized a letter which they mailed to Pope Francis on behalf of nine people recently fired from Catholic institutions. The letter's text follows:*

Your Holiness,

We write to you today with humility to request a Papal audience. With loving eloquence you have explained that the role of the Church is to restore what is broken and unite what has been divided. In this spirit of wholeness and reconciliation, we hope you will agree to meet with us and our families to hear our stories.

We have devoted years, some of us even decades, to serving our communities as teachers, leaders and role models. We have made a conscious choice to work within the Catholic Church because we strongly believe that a Catholic education prepares our young people to be responsible citizens, men and women for others. For each and every one of us, our employment was far more than just a job – it was a reflection of core Catholic values.

Unfortunately, we are a group bonded together not just by Catholic values. We are a group of teachers, administrators and lay people who have all lost our jobs simply because of who we love. We are good teachers and role models. The economic hardships and emotional impact we have experienced from losing our jobs, not for inability or lack of dedication, but for who we love, is devastating.

After each termination, school and Church officials have told us we violate Catholic Church teachings on homosexuality. Yet, such directives have not only caused great harm to our families, but also

contradict your pastoral priority for the Church to reflect the beauty of God in ways that attract and entice rather than alienate.

Your Holiness has said that "[u]nless we train ministers capable of warming people's hearts, of walking with them in the night, of dialoguing with their hopes and disappointment, of mending their brokenness, what hope can we have for our present and future journey." We agree and we respectfully submit that it is time for our Church to reflect on how it treats lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Catholics, and the family members who embrace them. Love thy neighbor as thyself is at the foundation of the gospel and the Church's social teaching, and yet we are not treated as neighbors.

All of us are called to lovingly serve one another. The founder of the Society of Jesus, Saint Ignatius of Loyola teaches us "love is shown more in deeds than in words." Yet how are we to fulfill the words of St. Ignatius if we are barred from showing our love through our deeds? We are eager and willing to do the work of educating our youth, yet we have been denied the opportunity to do so by the very Church that has instilled in us an understanding of the sacred dignity of work. Rather than evaluating our abilities based on our job performance, the Church has instead turned a blind eye to its own founding values and denied those who would lovingly serve an opportunity to do so.

Too many LGBT Catholics and their loved ones feel abandoned by the Catholic Church, unwelcome and judged by Church regulations that simp-

ly do not align with the Catholic values that we strive to live our lives by. This must end. While Catholics are among the most welcoming and embracing of all people of faith, the hierarchy is doing an incredible amount of damage by emotionlessly wielding discriminatory policies against faithful Catholics.

All of us were fired for whom we love – whether it be for committing ourselves to one person, and one person only, for the rest of our lives, or for embracing and supporting our own children unconditionally. Love is one of the greatest gifts God bestows upon us, and we can think of nothing more sacred than loving another human being through challenges, sicknesses and times of distress.

The Church celebrates this type of sacred commitment. But for some reason, it rejects that same commitment when it's between loving LGBT people.

For some reason, it rejects that love when a mother embraces her LGBT child.

Our families are hurting. We feel scorned by our church, which we have dedicated our lives to. From coaching sports teams, to leading canned food drives, to going to Church every single Sunday – we feel abandoned by the Catholic Church. We know God has not abandoned us. Our friends, loved ones, and many others in our community have not abandoned us. But we feel the hierarchy of our Church is denying us the pastoral care and love they are called to do.

We take hope from your messages of acceptance and see in your pastoral leadership the possibility for the Church to correct these hurtful injustices. We ask for a Papal audience with our families, so that you may hear our personal stories firsthand and see the impact the Church's actions have had on us all.

Respectfully,

Tippi McCullough  
Mount St. Mary's  
Little Rock, AR

Nicholas Coppola  
St. Anthony's Catholic Church  
Oceanside, NY

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Brian Panetta  
Sandusky Catholic High School  
Cleveland, OH

Molly Shumate  
Cincinnati Archdiocese  
Cincinnati, OH

## Gay-friendly Catholic Colleges and Universities



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

### Alabama

*Mobile:* Spring Hill College

### California

*Belmont:* Notre Dame de Namur University  
*Goleta:* St. Mark's University  
*Los Angeles:* Loyola Marymount University, Mount Saint Mary's College  
*Moraga:* St. Mary's College  
*Oakland:* Holy Names University  
*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, Trinity University

### Florida

*Miami Gardens:* St. Thomas University  
*Miami Shores:* Barry University

### Hawaii

*Honolulu:* Chaminade University

### Illinois

*Chicago:* DePaul University, Loyola University, St. Xavier University  
*Joliet:* University of St. Francis  
*River Forest:* Dominican University in Illinois  
*Romeoville:* Lewis University

### Indiana

*Notre Dame:* Holy Cross College, St. Mary's College, Univ. of Notre Dame

### Iowa

*Davenport:* St. Ambrose University  
*Dubuque:* Loras College

### Kentucky

*Louisville:* Spalding University, Bellarmine University

### Louisiana

*New Orleans:* Loyola University

### Maryland

*Baltimore:* Notre Dame of Maryland University, Loyola University of Maryland

### Massachusetts

*Boston:* Emmanuel College, Chestnut Hill: Boston College  
*Chicopee:* Elms College  
*Easton:* Stonehill College  
*North Andover:* Merrimack College  
*Weston:* Regis College  
*Worcester:* Assumption College, College of the Holy Cross

### Michigan

*Detroit:* University of Detroit Mercy  
*Grand Rapids:* Aquinas College

### Minnesota

*Collegeville:* St. John's University  
*Duluth:* College of St. Scholastica  
*Minneapolis:* College of St. Catherine  
*St. Joseph:* College of Saint Benedict  
*St. Paul:* St. Thomas University  
*Winona:* St. Mary's University of Minnesota

### Missouri

*Kansas City:* Avila University, Rockhurst University  
*St. Louis:* Fontbonne University, St. Louis University

### Montana

*Helena:* Carroll College

### Nebraska

*Omaha:* Creighton University

### New Hampshire

*Manchester:* St. Anselm College  
*Nashua:* Rivier College

### New Jersey

*Caldwell:* Caldwell College  
*Jersey City:* St. Peter's College  
*South Orange:* Seton Hall

### New York

*Albany:* College of Saint Rose  
*Brooklyn and Patchogue:* St. Joseph College  
*Bronx:* Fordham University, Manhattan College  
*Buffalo:* Canisius College  
*Loudonville:* Sienna College  
*New Rochelle:* College of New Rochelle, Iona College  
*Poughkeepsie:* Marist College  
*Riverdale:* College of Mount St. Vincent  
*Rochester:* St. John Fisher College  
*St. Bonaventure:* St. Bonaventure University  
*Sparkill:* St. Thomas Aquinas College  
*Syracuse:* LeMoynes College  
*Queens:* St. John's University

### Ohio

*Cincinnati:* Xavier University  
*Cleveland Heights:* John Carroll University  
*Dayton:* University of Dayton  
*Pepper Pike:* Ursuline College  
*South Euclid:* Notre Dame College  
*Sylvania:* Lourdes College

### Oregon

*Marylhurst:* Marylhurst University  
*Portland:* University of Portland

### Pennsylvania

*Cresson:* Mount Aloysius College  
*Dallas:* Misericordia University  
*Erie:* Mercyhurst College  
*Greensburg:* Seton Hill University  
*Philadelphia:* Chestnut Hill College, LaSalle University, St. Joseph's University  
*Pittsburgh:* Carlow University, Duquesne University  
*Radnor:* Cabrini College  
*Reading:* Alvernia University  
*Scranton:* Marywood University  
*Villanova:* Villanova University

### Rhode Island

*Newport:* Salve Regina University  
*Providence:* Providence College

### Texas

*Austin:* Saint Edward's University  
*San Antonio:* University of the Incarnate Word, Our Lady of the Lake University

### Vermont

*Colchester:* Saint Michael's College

### Washington

*Lacey:* St. Martin's College  
*Seattle:* Seattle University  
*Spokane:* Gonzaga University

### West Virginia

*Wheeling:* Wheeling Jesuit University

### Wisconsin

*De Pere:* St. Norbert College  
*Madison:* Edgewood College  
*Milwaukee:* Alverno College, Cardinal Stritch University, Marquette University

### Canada

*Toronto:* Regis College

# Catholic teacher backs gay son, quits to protest contract

By Michael D. Clark  
*The Enquirer* (Cincinnati)  
 May 10, 2014

Veteran Catholic teacher Molly Shumate stared at the Cincinnati Archdiocese contract for next school year and thought of her son.

She remembered when a nervous Zachery Shumate, a teenager at the time, approached her and revealed his homosexuality.

His revelation prompted the first-grade teacher to give him a hug, telling her boy she would always love and support him.

So when the new teachers' contract – strictly forbidding public support of homosexuality – was handed to her earlier this year, she was torn.

The employment contract – exclusively obtained and reported by *The Enquirer* in March – continues to divide huge sections of the region's Catholics. The "morality" clauses – though not unique among Catholic schools nationwide – were a first for the 19-county Archdiocese school system.

Poll: Would you sign the contract?

It ignited a raging public battle, including a protest march Downtown and online petitions signed by thousands. And this week, 12 billboards opposing the contract dot the area. As the controversy grows, so too does interest around the country.

For Molly Shumate, the battle lines have surrounded her family.

Though a lifelong Catholic and devoted teacher, the lengthy contract's starkly detailed restrictions on her personal life – and the freedom to publicly support her now 22-year-old son – stunned her.

"In my eyes there is nothing wrong with my son. This is what God gave me and what God created and someone I should never be asked to not support," she said from her Butler County home.

"If my son were to say to me, 'will you go somewhere with me that is sup-



Molly Shumate and her son, Zachary

ported or run by gays and lesbians,' I would have to tell him no, according to that contract. And if my picture was taken, what would happen?" she said.

So for the first time in 14 years of teaching, Shumate will not be signing the Archdiocese's teacher employment contract for next school year. And when the last class bell at her Hamilton County school rings out the finish of the school year later this month, it will also toll the end of her Catholic teaching career.

She is the first Archdiocese teacher to make a public stand but those opposing the contract predict more will step forward once the school year ends later this month.

"For me to sign this (contract), I feel like I would be telling my son I've changed my mind, that I don't support him as I did. And I won't do that," she said.

Archdiocese officials remain steadfast in their support of the new contract.

Moreover, they contend some of the protests, which have attracted ancillary campaigns for private teacher employment rights, school unions and critics of the church's policies are based on misun-

derstandings. Officials say much of the opposition is based on over reactions to the newly detailed personal morality provisions and how, in some circumstances, they may lead to teacher firings.

The contract – double its predecessor's size – includes provisions that for the first time details prohibited practices such as gay "lifestyles" or public endorsements of homosexuality, out-of-wedlock relationships, abortions and fertility methods that go against Catholic teachings.

Each of the Archdiocese's more than 2,200 teachers must sign the contract before the end of the school year if they want to remain employed. The employment agreement explicitly orders them to refrain "from any conduct or lifestyle which would reflect discredit on or cause scandal to the school or be in contradiction to Catholic doctrine or morals." It also bans public support of the practices.

"It's a bit frustrating to us that some of the organized opposition to our new contract language has misstated its intentions and its implications," said Cincinnati Archdiocese spokesman Dan Andriacco.

"First of all, nobody who signed this year's contract or last year's contract should hesitate to sign the 2014-2015 agreement. All say the same thing – that the teacher will not publicly act or speak against the teachings of the Catholic Church," said Andriacco.

Catholic School Superintendent Jim Rigg has previously defended the "homosexual lifestyle" section of the latest contract.

Rigg has stated "our culture is changing rapidly in this area, and many of our school employees, including me, have family members who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. The contract does not stipulate that relationships of love for LGBT relatives should be severed.

"As Christians, we are called to love and serve all people ... while the Church's stance on homosexual marriage is well known, this does not mean that our teachers will be asked to cast away loved family members," said Rigg.

But that is exactly what teachers are being asked to do, complains Tim Garry Jr., a local attorney who opposes the contract language.

In April Garry met with Archdiocese officials in an attempt to get them to modify the contract, to no avail.

Garry provided *The Enquirer* with the latest response from church officials to his request to meet and review his suggestions on altering the wording of the contract.

"The Archbishop does not believe that any further meeting regarding the teacher ... contract is warranted," according to a May 1 letter from Robert Reid, director of human resources for the Cincinnati Archdiocese.

Garry said the lack of discussion is frustrating.

"We're attempting to help the teach-

ers to have a voice in their contract," he said.

"I doubt there is a more important contract in the Archdiocese, impacting more people, teachers, students and parents, than this contract with 2,200 or more teachers, 43,000 or so students and their parents."

But he adds "the leadership of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati is not a democracy, and there has been little to no indication that it will voluntarily respond favorably to any request for change to their Catholic School teachers' contract, no matter how reasonable or modest those changes might be."

The 12 billboards were paid for by the Cincinnati Voice of the Faithful, which for more than a decade has criticized the church's alleged lack of transparency and accountability regarding the sexual abuse of children.

The group's coordinator, Kathy Weyer, said "we believe that the Cincinnati Archdiocese is being dishonest with the teachers by suggesting that the changes to the wording and job description of the teacher ... contract are not that much different from past years. What is really happening is that the church is protecting itself from possible future lawsuits."

Zachery Shumate drapes an encouraging arm on his mother's shoulder and praises the "courage" of her public stance as one of the first teachers to quit in protest.

"It's hard to put into words how proud I am of her," he said. "For her to step into the public eye like this and go against the (church) ... because she has a gay son speaks volumes about the kind of person she is." ✦

## Synod Document is First, Not Last, Word on Marriage and Family Issues

(Continued from page 3)

velop a ministry which can maintain the proper balance between accepting persons in a spirit of compassion and gradually guiding them to authentic human and Christian maturity. In this regard, some conferences refer to certain organizations as successful models for such a ministry."

If by "authentic human and Christian maturity," the bishops are saying that ministry should help gay and lesbian people develop a healthy acceptance of their sexuality and the formation of their adult consciences, I'd be all for it. Yet, sadly, I don't think that is what they mean.

All of this brings me back to "It ain't over till it's over." Let's remember that this document is the first word on the synod, not the last word. It's true that it doesn't get off on a positive note, but I believe that there will be some interesting debate in October and that we won't know the final outcome until the meeting closes. Let's remember that this synod will most likely be very different from those held under Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI when the *instrumentum laboris* was often written by the Vatican Curia, and bishops in synod were simply asked to rubber-stamp it. Pope Francis has already shown that he wants more discussion and collegiality from bishops.

More harmful than the specific remarks on lesbian and gay people, though, are the remarks that the reason that Catholics don't agree with church teaching is because they have succumbed to a secular mindset. We've heard that remark time and again from U.S. bishops, especially in the context of same-gender marriage, but it is simply not the whole truth. It's very convenient to have a scapegoat. It's much more challenging to face up to the reality that faithful Catholics are calling for change. ✦

## Trans Students Celebrate Openly During Catholic Graduations

By Bob Shine

*Bondings 2.0*

NewWaysMinistryBlog.wordpress.com  
 June 22, 2014

Two moments this graduation season highlighted the positive gains being made in Catholic education for transgender students, forgoing the controversies of past years for moments of celebration instead.

Immaculate Heart High School in Los Angeles, an all-girls institution run by the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, allowed a transgender young man to graduate using his preferred gender identity. A post in the Facebook group for the class of 1970 includes the following caption for the above picture:

"Meet our alumni brother. This was not an easy decision for the administrators to make, but they did the right thing as Immaculate Heart does. {He} is the first transgender graduate but probably won't be the last. He loves the school as much as the rest of us and that's all that matters. 'Every loyal daughter and son...'"

Congratulations to this young man and to the Immaculate Heart Class of 2014, as well as the administrators for ensuring every student's day could be one of celebration! Last year, a controversy at a New Mexico Catholic high school tarred commencement ceremonies when a transgender student was given the choice either to wear attire inconsistent with his gender or skip graduation altogether. He chose the latter.

At the Catholic University of Ameri-

ca in Washington, DC, a transgender woman was chosen by her peers to address the graduating class of social workers. Andy Bowen spoke openly to an audience at the US bishops' national university about her identity as a trans woman engaged to another woman and addressed her fellow students on the social worker's duty to seek justice. She said, in part:

"Maybe it is because I'm a transgender woman who is engaged to another woman and I've had to come out of the closet like three or four times, but I've always been attracted to the principle that all human beings have inherent human dignity..."

"If you center your moral universe on the idea that all human beings have inherent dignity, you have to work against injustice in all its forms because someone much smarter than me, living many decades ago pointed out how injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

Congratulations to Andy and the CUA class of 2014!

While these two examples show progress, there is still a lot of work to be done on Catholic campuses concerning transgender people. LGBT advocate and musician Joanna Blackhart recently spoke with HuffPost Live about her isolating experience attending St. Mary's College in Texas as a transgender woman.

Let's hope the examples of increased welcome and acceptance for trans inclusivity on Catholic campuses continue to spread! ✦

# Laity & Nuns Cause High School to Reverse Decision Against Lesbian Alumna

By Bob Shine

*Bondings 2.0*

NewWaysMinistryBlog.wordpress.com

June 16, 2014

Proving that Catholic religious and lay people have the power to effect change in our Church, a Maryland high school has reversed its decision to deny same-gender couples recognition in the alumnae newsletter.

In January, news broke that Notre Dame Preparatory School, Baltimore, had



Sarah Rupert-Sullivan, left, with wife, Molly

rejected 2003 alumna Sarah Rupert-Sullivan's announcement about her marriage to wife, Molly, from the school's "Class Chatter" notes in the alumnae newsletter. The administrators of Notre Dame Preparatory, which is run by the

School Sisters of Notre Dame, cited a conflict with Church teaching as the reason for the decision, but over 1,600 people signed a petition in support of Rupert-Sullivan and her wife.

Having learned of the news, alumna Pat Montley, a former School Sister of Notre Dame herself, wrote to the administrators about her own negative experience with the same situation. A decade ago, her own same-gender wedding announcement was rejected, and each class note submitted since that had any reference to her partner was expunged. Writing to the School Sisters of Notre Dame's Mid-Atlantic provincial team, Montley stated, in part: "I am sending the letter to you now in the hope that you will find it persuasive in reversing this policy. You would not be alone among local Catholic schools in having a more open policy..."

"My teachers at Notre Dame Prep played an immeasurably important role in my life—not just in helping me develop and pursue a life of the mind but in the formation of my conscience and habits of the heart. I will always be grateful for that training and feel an immense affection for many of

those teachers. Though most are no longer living, I am still in touch with and have visited most who are...and am happy to say they have embraced Sally as my partner/spouse and rejoice in our marriage. I hope that you can do the same, and that this embrace can be reflected in SSND schools' publication policy..."

"Over the years, I have repeatedly submitted entries to class notes that included a mention of Sally, as schoolmates have done with their spouses...Sadly, each time, her name and any references to her were expunged. I implore you to try to understand how hurtful this is, what it feels like to have the primary, sustaining relationship in my life rejected and unacknowledged by my alma mater—which, ironically, provided the spiritual values that have made me capable of and desirous of having such a loving and long-lasting relationship in the first place. It breaks my heart."

Sr. Jeannine Gramick, co-founder of New Ways Ministry, who was a School Sister of Notre Dame before transferring to the Loretto Community, wrote her own letter to the provincial leadership. In it, she stated:

"This unfair policy makes me feel sad because SSND supported me in lesbian/gay ministry from the early 1970s to the late 1990s. Three SSND General Superiors and three SSND provincial leaders supported this ministry for



Patricia Montley, left, with wife, Sally Wall, and granddaughter Alexa

many decades—at a time when lesbian/gay issues were very unpopular. These leaders believed in the human rights of lesbian and gay people, despite the opposition of some church leaders.

"It is distressing that SSND is now maintaining a reactionary stance in its schools when the tide of public opinion has shifted dramatically. According to a number of recent polls, most U.S. Catholics today now support same-sex marriage (53% according to the 2014 survey from the Public Religion Research Institute)..."

"The basic principle of the Church's social teaching is that all human beings have dignity and worth and should be treated fairly and equally. In school publications, administrators would not treat males and females differently by publishing information about males, but not females, or vice versa. Administrators would not treat people of color differently by publishing information about white students, but not about Black students. Similarly, administrators need to treat people uniformly, whatever their sexual orientation.

"I urge you to change all SSND policies that discriminate against sexual minorities. To do otherwise is not worthy of us as women religious who profess to follow Jesus' Gospel of love, service, and care for all God's people."

These two missives accompanied letters from many alumnae and community members, who have now been notified of a new policy regarding class notes that respects LGBT people and their relationships. In an email, Sister Patricia McCarron, headmistress, writes:

"After much thoughtful and prayerful discernment regarding concerns expressed about the content of 'Class Chatter,' Notre Dame Preparatory School has arrived at a policy which we believe respects individuals and upholds the school's Catholic identity.

"Class Chatter," or information submitted by alumnae of Notre Dame Preparatory School, exists for the purpose of alumnae-to-alumnae communication.

"Publication does not signify endorsement by Perspectives or its sponsoring bodies, Notre Dame Preparatory School and the School Sisters of Notre Dame. Notre Dame Preparatory School is an independent, Catholic school for girls which upholds the teachings of the Catholic Church."

This incident, and the positive outcome that emerged from a poor decision against a lesbian couple, is proof that Catholics, lay and religious united, can indeed respond to school and parish level actions which do not reflect a more inclusive and welcoming tone which even Pope Francis demonstrates. Through sharing personal stories and wisdom with Church officials decisions can be reversed. This kind of dialogue can help to build up policies more in keeping with the Catholic tradition of justice and mercy. ✚

## Bisexuals and Faith Communities: A New Resource Helps to Bridge the Gap

By Francis DeBernardo

*Bondings 2.0*

NewWaysMinistryBlog.wordpress.com

June 25, 2014

A new resource to help faith communities understand bisexuality and bisexual people has been published today by The Religious Institute, a multi-faith ministry which deals with the topics of sexual morality, justice, and healing.

The 95-page booklet, entitled *Bisexuality: Making the Invisible Visible in Faith Communities*, is authored by Marie Alford-Harkey and Rev. Deb Haffner. As stated in the Introduction to the work, the text is divided into three sections:

"Part One of the book, 'Bisexuality Basics,' begins by naming the harm that many bisexual people suffer, and includes definitions of terms, models to help understand sexual orientation, research on bisexuality, information on the prevalence of bisexuality in the United States, and myths and facts about bisexuality.

"Part Two, 'Sacred Texts and Religious Traditions,' introduces theological issues related to bisexuality, and includes a discussion of sexuality in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, essays authored by theologians from different traditions, and the few denominational policies that exist on bisexuality.

"Part Three, 'Creating a Bisexually Healthy Congregation,' presents information and strategies for faith communities and religious leaders to become more welcoming and affirming of bisexual persons and others who are attracted to people of more than one sex or gender. Sections include welcoming and affirming bisexual persons, bisexually healthy religious professionals, worship resources, pastoral counseling, youth,

social action, and a call to action."

The authors have long been involved in research and ministry concerning religion and sexuality. Alford-Harkey is the Deputy Director of The Religious Institute and Haffner is the Co-Founder and President of the same organization. The new publication emerged from an interfaith colloquium on bisexuality the Institute sponsored in April 2013. There are two Catholic contributors to the report. In the section on sacred texts and religious traditions, Dr. Kate Ott, professor of Christian Social Ethics, Drew Theological School, New

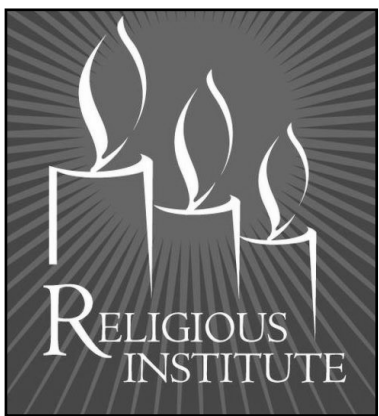
Jersey, wrote "A Roman Catholic Perspective on Bisexuality." In that reflection, she notes:

"Correlations can be made to expand the concept of sexual orientation as a 'natural' part of one's createdness to include bisexuality as an orientation or perhaps even more accurately to consider each individual as having an orientation that is as unique as their personality. . . .

"Although the Catechism also refers to homosexual acts, unfortunately, as 'intrinsically disordered,' I have hope that the Church will continue to re-examine this issue in light of a more loving, inclusive tradition."

The second Catholic contribution comes from Lacey Louwagie, co-editor of *Hungering and Thirsting for Justice: True Stories by Young Adult Catholics*. In the section on developing a welcome for bisexual people in religious congregations, Louwagie tells part of her story:

"Finally, I confronted the reality



that somehow, both of these attractions did exist within me. I was truly attracted to men...and to women. I sat alone in the stairwell outside my bedroom, my head held in my hands, when the thought entered my consciousness for the first time: maybe I was bisexual. As soon as I'd named it, a homophobic solution came on its heels: I would just decide not to pursue my attraction to women. Ironically, this is pretty much exactly what the Catholic Church tells me to do....I thought I'd arrived at a prudent solution: I could inwardly acknowledge who I really was while also pursuing only love that I could declare publicly, only love that didn't entail the risk of being cast out of my community. But the solution must not have been too great after all, because I fell into the worst depression of my life."

Although the publication is not specifically geared to Catholic, or even Christian, faith communities. I think that Catholic parishes and schools can gain immensely from it. The basic information on bisexuality is clear, understandable, thorough, and authoritative. The suggestions for how to affirm and welcome bisexual people in religious contexts are excellent, and something that every Catholic parish can do. There are even suggestions for preaching and public prayer, as well as guidance for bisexual people in professional ministry on how to disclose their sexuality to others.

This publication will be of great help to any Catholic parish that wants to educate its parishioners fully on sexuality or that wants to do outreach to the LGBT community. Bisexual people are often the "forgotten" group in the LGBT rainbow, and this publication is a great step to remedying that omission.

Copies of the publication are \$15.00 each, and can be ordered from The Religious Institute by calling 203-222-0055. ✚





PARISHES

**Alabama**  
*Decatur:* Annunciation of the Lord  
*Montgomery:* St. Bede

**Arizona**  
*Chandler:* St. Andrew  
*Glendale:* St. Thomas More  
*Mesa:* St. Bridget  
*Phoenix:* St. Matthew  
*Scottsdale:* St. Patrick  
*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  
*Carlsbad:* St. Patrick  
*Claremont:* Our Lady of the  
Assumption  
*Diamond Bar:* St. Denis  
*El Cajon:* St. Luke  
*Encino:* Our Lady of Grace  
*Escondido:* St. Timothy  
*Fremont:* St. Joseph - Mission San  
Jose  
*Goleta:* St. Mark Univ. Parish  
*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. Agatha, 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  
*Pasadena:* Assumption of the B.V.M.  
*Ross:* St. Anselm  
*Sacramento:* St. Francis of Assisi  
*San Carlos:* St. Charles  
*San Diego:* Ascension, St. Jude Shrine  
*San Francisco:* Most Holy Redeemer,  
Old St. Mary Cathedral, St. Agnes,  
St. Dominic  
*San Jose:* St. Julie Billiard,  
St. Martin of Tours (Emmaus  
Community)  
*San Luis Obispo:* Old Mission of  
San Luis Obispo  
*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 Stan-  
ford 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  
*Littleton:* Light of the World,  
St Frances Cabrini

**Connecticut**  
*Hartford:* St. Patrick-St. Anthony

Gay-friendly Catholic Parishes & Communities

Below is a list of known “gay-friendly” Catholic parishes and intentional Eucharistic communities. Thank you for helping us add to this growing list! If you are aware of a parish or community that is known as welcoming to lesbian/gay Catholics, 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. Parishes are listed first and intentional Eucharistic communities follow. For links to many of these parishes’ websites, go to NewWaysMinistry.org.

**Delaware**  
*North Wilmington:* Holy Child  
*Wilmington:* St. Joseph

**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  
*Kissimmee:* Holy Redeemer  
*Naples:* St. John the Evangelist  
*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 Celle  
*Chicago:* Immaculate Conception,  
St. Clement, St. Gertrude,  
St. Gregory, St. Peter, St. Sylvester,  
St. Teresa of Avila, St. Thomas the  
Apostle, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel,  
Old St. Patrick  
*Country Club Hills:* St. Emeric  
*Evanston:* St. Nicholas  
*Johnston City:* St. Paul  
*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**  
*Coralville:* St. Thomas More

**Kentucky**  
*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  
*Prince Frederick:* St. John Vianney  
*Severn:* St. Bernadette

**Massachusetts**  
*Boston:* Paulist Center, St. Anthony  
Shrine, St. Cecilia  
*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  
*Kalamazoo:* St. Thomas More  
*St. Ignace:* St. Ignatius Loyola  
*Westland:* Ss. Simon and Jude

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

**Missouri**  
*Kansas City:* Guardian Angels,  
St. Francis Xavier, 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**  
*Lawrenceville:* St. Ann  
*Long Beach Island:* St. Francis of  
Assisi  
*Maplewood:* St. Joseph  
*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, Immaculate 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:* Holy Name of Jesus,  
St. Francis Xavier, St. Paul the  
Apostle, Church of the Ascension,  
St. Francis of Assisi  
*Pittsford:* Church of the  
Transfiguration  
*Rochester:* Blessed Sacrament,  
St. Mary (Downtown), St. Monica  
*Syracuse:* St. Lucy, All Saints  
*Utica:* Our Lady of Mount Carmel,  
Historic Old St. John’s  
*Wading River:* St. John the Baptist  
*Wantaugh:* St. Frances de Chantal  
*Westbury:* St. Brigit

**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 the  
Gesu  
*Westlake:* St. Ladislav  
*Wooster:* St. Mary of the Immaculate  
Conception

**Oregon**  
*Beaverton:* Mission of the Atonement  
*Portland:* St. Andrew, St. Francis of  
Assisi, St. Phillip Neri, Down-  
town Chapel (St. Vincent de Paul)

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

**Rhode Island**  
*Providence:* St. Francis Chapel,  
St. Mary’s  
*Wickford:* St. Bernard

**Tennessee**  
*Memphis:* Cathedral of the  
Immaculate Conception

**Texas**  
*Dallas:* Holy Trinity  
*El Paso:* All Saints  
*Houston:* St. Anne

**Virginia**  
*Arlington:* Our Lady Queen of Peace  
*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. Joseph, Prince of Peace  
Newman Center  
*Tacoma:* St. Leo

**Wisconsin**  
*Madison:* Our Lady Queen of Peace,  
*Menomonee Falls:* Good Shepherd  
*Milwaukee:* Good Shepherd,  
Prince of Peace, Trinity-Guadalupe  
*Wauwatosa:* St. Pius X

**Canada**  
*Montreal:* Holy Cross  
*Ottawa:* St. Joseph  
*Toronto:* Our Lady of Lourdes

**England**  
*London:* Church of the Immaculate  
Conception (Mayfair)

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*Scottsdale:* Franciscan Renewal  
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**California**  
*Pleasanton:* Catholic Community of  
Pleasanton

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*Tampa:* Franciscan Center

**Iowa**  
*Iowa City:* Full Circle

**Maryland**  
*Catonsville:* 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

**Oregon**  
*Portland:* Journey and Koinonia  
Catholic Community

**Washington**  
*Olympia:* Holy Wisdom Inclusive  
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**Wisconsin**  
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# Fortunate Families Founders Feted for Ministry to Catholic Parents of LGBT People

By Francis DeBernardo

*Bondings 2.0*

NewWaysMinistryBlog.wordpress.com  
May 11, 2014

When the history of the Catholic LGBT movement is written, a major chapter of it must be devoted to Mary Ellen and Casey Lopata, a pair of Catholic parents of a gay son, whose journey of understanding and acceptance led them to ministry with other parents, and eventually the founding of a national network called Fortunate Families. Last weekend, Catholics from around the country gathered in the Lopatas' hometown of Rochester, New York, for a dinner celebrating their retirement from leadership in Fortunate Families, as well as the 10th anniversary of this network of Catholic parents of LGBT people.

During the event, the history of the Lopatas' ministry was recounted, going back to 1992 when they attended New Ways Ministry's Third National Symposium on Lesbian/Gay Issues and Catholicism, in Chicago. The couple attended the meeting with six other pastorally involved people from Rochester, and they returned home fired with enthusiasm to start pastoral outreach to LGBT people, and particularly, their parents. Their efforts eventually led to the establishment of the Diocese of Rochester's Catholic Gay and Lesbian Family Ministry.

A few years later, the Lopatas were instrumental in helping to establish the National Association of Catholic Diocesan Lesbian and Gay Ministries (NACDLGM), and in 1998 they organized and hosted the group's national conference in Rochester, one of the most successful meetings the organization has ever

had. (NACDLGM is now known as the Catholic Association for Lesbian and Gay Ministry.) Throughout the 1990s, the Lopatas were tireless in their education, support, and advocacy ministry for families. They served as consultants on the U.S. bishops' 1997 pastoral letter, *Always Our Children*.

They published several resources including a book, *Fortunate Families: Catholic Families with Lesbian Daughters and Gay Sons*, and a manual entitled *Seeds of Hope: Compassionate Ministry with Gay and Lesbian Catholics and Their Families*. In 2004, they established Fortunate Families as a nationwide resource and networking ministry to, for, and with Catholic parents of LGBT people. In the following year, New Ways Ministry presented them with its Bridge Building Award, "for compassionate ministry, personal witness, and national leadership to promote justice for lesbian/gay Catholics, their parents, and families."

Fortunate Families is a member of the Equally Blessed Coalition, which also includes Call To Action, DignityUSA, and New Ways Ministry. Representatives from each of these three other coalition partners were on hand in Rochester to praise and thank the Lopatas at their retirement party. Jim FitzGerald, executive director,

represented Call To Action; Marianne Duddy-Burke, executive director, represented DignityUSA; Francis DeBernardo, executive director, represented New Ways Ministry. Sister Jeannine Gramick, co-founder of New Ways Ministry, and Father James Schexnayder, founder of NACDLGM were unable to attend in person, but they



Casey and Mary Ellen Lopata peruse a memory album presented to them by Fortunate Families Board President Deb Word at their retirement dinner.

each sent video testimonials about the Lopatas' contributions to the Catholic LGBT movement.

Emails and letters from parents and pastoral ministers, as well as testimonies from Fortunate Families board mem-

bers, were also part of the evening's festivities. Fortunate Families Board President Deb Word presented the Lopatas with a memory book, and New York State Assemblyman Harry Bronson gave them a resolution from the legislature in honor of their contributions.

The Lopatas are leaving an indelible mark on our church because they have helped to affirm and empower so many parents, and LGBT people, as well. Catholic parents are among the most passionate and persuasive advocates for LGBT people in the church. Their natural love for their LGBT children motivates them to work to make sure that they are treated in the same way as their heterosexual children are treated.

For some parents, it takes some time to adjust to the new information that their children are LGBT. Support from other parents who have gone through the same experience is often the biggest help for those who are just learning about a child's sexual orientation or gender identity.

Parents of LGBT children are a true gift to the church. The journey of love and acceptance that Catholic parents go on is the same journey that the entire church eventually will need to experience. So, all in the church, particularly pastoral ministers and bishops, can learn a lot from these people that God has made so fortunate. ✦

## What our parish does about gay and lesbian relationships

(Continued from page 1)

Our purpose as a Christian church is to remain faithful to the teaching of Jesus Christ. It is significant that Jesus had nothing to say about gay relationships. If homosexuality had been important to Jesus, he would have said something about it. After all, he told us his views on divorce and adultery and many other ethical issues. But Jesus said nothing about it. Maybe it was not important to him.

Clearly, the most important thing to Jesus was love. The night before he died, he said to his disciples, "I give you a new commandment, love one another" (John 13:34). Love is the key and the measure of his followers. So long as gay relationships are truly loving and committed, I cannot see how they are intrinsically disordered.

So how do we respond to people in same-sex relationships in our parish?

First, I try to see the whole person.

This is what Pope Francis said he tries to do when he spoke with the Jesuit magazine *La Civiltà Cattolica*. He tries to see the "whole person" because people cannot be reduced to just one aspect of their lives. Certainly, no one is defined only by their sins. As the pope said, "If they accept the Lord and have good will, who am I to judge them?"

Seeing the whole person has practical consequences in pastoral life.

Our parish motto is "All Are Welcome." We really mean it. That includes LGBT people, too. We welcome them to the Eucharist if they are Catholics. We baptize their children. We register the children in our activities and programs, just like any child. Welcome means welcome.

I am not the bedroom police. I do not quiz people on their private lives. I do not know who is sleeping with a boyfriend or girlfriend. I do not know who is cheating on a spouse. But one thing I know for sure: One hundred percent of the people who come to Communion at every Mass in the history of the world are sinners;

redeemed sinners.

In a conservative parish like mine, the presence of LGBT people is not generally a big issue, but it does exist. We have a few same-sex couples in our parish. At least two couples have been married civilly. They live quietly, devoutly and humbly.

Maryland legalized gay marriage a little over a year ago. So far, it has not caused even so much as ripple in our parish. It simply does not affect us. Sacramental heterosexual marriages are not threatened by the civil law's recognition of gay marriage. We are much more threatened by no-fault divorce, which came into the law 50 years ago.

It is my view that we should get out of the civil aspects of marriage altogether, just as they do in France and Mexico and many other countries. People who want to be married in the eyes of the law should go to the courthouse. People who want to be married in the eyes of the church should come to us. Church and state should be free to have their own definitions.

Welcoming gay parishioners does have some limits. We do not perform gay marriages. We teach only about sacramental marriage in our religious education classes. We do not host wedding receptions for same-sex weddings.

(Our parish avoids this conflict by limiting our wedding receptions to weddings that take place in our parish church. We are not a hiring hall for weddings.)

Recently, I was asked to bless the home of a gay couple. Judging from the crucifixes and holy pictures, they have a very traditional piety. Apart from the fact that they are gay, it was a pretty Ozzie-and-Harriet relationship.

In the United States, gay marriage is now legal in 17 states and the District of Columbia. As a legal issue, I think the debate is all over but the shouting. There will still be serious disagreements within society, of course. There will even be

disagreements within families. Just look at the recent smack down between the Cheney sisters over gay marriage.

Civil society will still have to work out a new *modus vivendi* on such things as open housing, the wording of school textbooks, legal adoption policies, fringe benefits for spouses, and access to government programs. Even the church will have to adjust. Religious liberty, like all of the rights in the Bill of Rights, is a qualified right, not an absolute right.

But I don't think the sacramental definition of marriage as taught by the church will change. We will still limit marriage to one man and one woman.

It seems to me that so long as we are free to celebrate our weddings in our own way and live our understanding, we should not be threatened by same-sex marriages. Indeed, we may come to see them for what they really are: a rather conservative movement that pushes the gay community toward sexual restraint and stability. It may cut down on overall promiscuity in society. Surely, that is a good thing.

I have to say frankly that I have changed my view over the past 20 years. Like vice presidents Dick Cheney and Joe Biden, I am evolving. Perhaps the Catholic church should evolve, too.

When gay marriage passed by referendum in Maryland, our local bishops were notably quiet. Perhaps it was because it passed by a vote of the people and not by a court decision or legislative action. Maybe our bishops are evolving, too.

Most of my parishioners are military or civil servants. They vote Republican. One man, who identifies himself as a tea party Republican, told me that the son of a friend came out to him.

"What did you say to him?" I asked.

"I told him it was OK to be gay. Just don't become a Democrat."

For more than 40 years, the language of the magisterium said that all

same-sex acts are "intrinsically disordered" and may never be approved in any way. But that certainly is not my experience as a pastor of souls.

Almost a decade ago, I got to know a gay couple in our parish. They had been together 35 years. Both are dead now. Richard was a retired school teacher. George was a retired architect.

When George was dying of cancer, Richard came to see me to ask if I would anoint his friend. Once at their house, I realized they were a couple. Richard was nursing George through his final illness. He had also helped George's parents.

After George died, Richard came into the parish office to plan the funeral. The rest of the family refused to come, but they did telephone to say, "We don't want it mentioned that our brother was gay and we don't want that man mentioned."

At the funeral, I began the homily by saying, "I want to thank Richard for being such a great friend to George over more than 35 years. Your relationship was the defining relationship of his life and a real sign of love and friendship."

Richard was grateful. For the first time in 35 years, he started coming back to the church. Three years later, it was Richard who was dying of cancer. I went to see him in the hospital in Delaware. I anointed him and gave him Communion. He asked me to say his funeral Mass, just as I had done for his partner.

Since neither of them was buried in our parish cemetery, I put up a plaque for them on our wall of remembrance, as is our custom. On the plaque, I quoted Sirach 6:14: "A faithful friend is a sturdy shelter, he who finds one finds a treasure."

Their relationship was not perfect, but it was certainly not intrinsically disordered. ✦

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