

BANDINGS

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Spring/Summer 2015

LGBT Catholic group gets VIP treatment at the Vatican

By Phillip Pullella
Reuters
February 2, 2015

A prominent American Catholic gay rights group was given VIP treatment for the first time at an audience with Pope Francis on Wednesday, a move members saw as a sign of change in the Roman Catholic Church.

"This is a sign of movement that's due to the Francis effect," said Sister Jeannine Gramick, co-founder of New Ways Ministry, which ministers to homosexual Catholics and promotes gay rights in the 1.2 billion-member Church.

Gramick and executive director Francis DeBernardo led a pilgrimage of 50 homosexual Catholics to the audience in St. Peter's Square.

They told Reuters in an interview afterwards that when the group came to Rome on Catholic pilgrimages during the papacies of Francis's predecessors John Paul and Benedict, "they just ignored us."

This time, a U.S. bishop and a top Vatican official backed their request and they sat in a front section with dignitaries and special Catholic groups. As the pope

passed, they sang "All Are Welcome," a hymn symbolizing their desire for a more inclusive Church.

A list of participants released by the Vatican listed "a group of lay people accompanied by a sister" but did not mention that they were a gay rights organization.

"What this says is that there is movement in our Church, movement to welcome people from the outside closer to the inside," Gramick said in St. Peter's Square.

Several months after his election, Francis made his now-famous remark about how he could not judge gay people who are have good will and are seeking God.

But he so far shown no sign the Church will change its teaching that while homosexuality is not sinful, homosexual acts are.

Last October, bishops from around the world meeting in Rome to debate questions concerning family issued an interim report calling for greater acceptance of gays in the Church.

That passage was watered down in the final version of the report after con-



New Ways Ministry pilgrims in St. Peter's Square, Vatican City, February 18, 2015.

servative bishops complained. A second and final meeting on family issues is scheduled for October.

DeBernardo said Catholic gay and

lesbian couples and other non-traditional families should be invited to the meeting, known as a synod, to speak to the bishops about their faith and their sexuality. †

This Pope gives me hope

By Jeannine Gramick, SL
National Catholic Reporter
June 5, 2015

On my lap-top computer is a round decal with a blue and white picture of Pope Francis with the words, "This Pope gives me hope." On my car, next to the bumper sticker that says, "Civil marriage is a civil right," is another sticker: "I ♥ Pope Francis."

I believe Pope Francis has a lot to learn

to leave, I composed a respectful letter to the pope, introduced myself and asked him for a brief meeting, either after his general Wednesday audience, or at another time at his convenience. I mailed the letter in the U.S. post and kept hoping that Pope Francis would telephone, as he is wont to do. When I didn't hear from him, I decided to enlist some help.

Rome, Cardinal Wuerl suggested that the letter be given to the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Carlo Viganò, to send to the Pope, which I did.

During the 10 days before we left for Italy, several things occurred. First, the Apostolic Nuncio assured me that my correspondence had been transmitted to the Holy See. Second, Archbishop Cordileone's secretary phoned to say that the Archbishop had scanned and emailed my letter to the Secretary of State's office. Third, I received a letter from Archbishop Georg Gänswein, Prefect of the Papal Household and a personal secretary of emeritus pope Benedict XVI, indicating that there were reserved tickets for our group for the general Wednesday audience.

On the night before the audience, we picked up a 6" x 9" envelope with an official-looking enclosure for admittance of our 49 pilgrims. The next morning at St. Peter's Square, papal

ushers led us to the highest level near the doors of St. Peter's Basilica, fewer than 25 yards from where Pope Francis would be sitting. As the crowd in the main square looked at the Pope, our group could be seen on the same platform, but to the left — quite an appropriate place for us to be!

Because a group of pilgrims from Argentina was seated in front of us, we were not close enough to shake hands with the pope, but as he walked by our section, we called out, "We are lesbian and gay Catholics!" and sang "All Are Welcome." Our pilgrims were thrilled to see the pope up-front and personal. "A once-in-a lifetime experience," some said. Many were flashing pictures or capturing Francis on video. Several pilgrims thanked me for writing that letter. A few announced that they were going back to church.

I have my doubts about whether Pope Francis ever saw any one of my letters;

(Continued on page 6)



Pope Francis in St. Peter's Square, Vatican City, February 2015.

about lesbian and gay people, about women and about sexuality and gender in general, but it seems to me that his past life shows he is humble enough to change his views. So I'm at ease, trusting that he is steering the bark of Peter in the right direction. I'm happy that the world leader of the church I grew up in, and the church I love, speaks of Jesus and the Gospel in the homespun style that Jesus used, instead of quoting some bland or restrictive pronouncements of his predecessors.

In February, I led a pilgrimage to Rome for lesbian and gay Catholics, parents, family members, and friends to see Pope Francis. Several months before we were

In December, Francis DeBernardo, the executive director at New Ways Ministry, and I had a very cordial meeting with Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone, who is known for his strong opposition to same-sex civil marriage. We knew where we disagreed, but we met to discuss areas of agreement. I suggested that his sending my letter of request to the Pope would be a common pastoral matter.

As I did not hear from Cordileone for more than a month, I approached my local bishop, Cardinal Donald Wuerl, in Washington, D.C. Because of the shortness of time before our departure to

Gay Catholics find a new tone under Pope Francis, and from their own bishops

By David Gibson
Religion News Service
February 16, 2015

On its 15 previous pilgrimages, the Catholic gay rights group New Ways Ministry drew maybe two-dozen people to visit holy sites in places like Assisi and Rome.

This year, the number of pilgrims unexpectedly doubled to 50.

Chalk it up to the so-called Francis Effect, where the pope's open-arms acceptance is giving new hope to gay and lesbian Catholics who have felt alienated from their church for decades.

What's been even more surprising is

that both New Ways and a similar Catholic LGBT organization in Britain are finding support from the Catholic hierarchy in their efforts to meet the pontiff when they both visit the Vatican on Ash Wednesday (Feb. 18), the start of Lent, the period of penance and fasting preceding Easter.

For example, Archbishop Georg Gänswein, head of the papal household and the top aide to Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, responded to New Ways' request for a papal meet-and-greet by reserving tickets for the group at Francis' weekly public audience in St. Peter's Square. It's not a private meeting — which is tough for anyone to get — but it's not nothing.

(Continued on page 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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How did Pope Francis do on his LGBT report card?

By Francis DeBernardo

Bondings 2.0

NewWaysMinistryBlog.wordpress.com

February 27, 2015

On March 13th, the second anniversary of Pope Francis' election, *Bondings 2.0* initiated a week-long survey entitled "What Grade Would You Give Pope Francis on LGBT Issues?" We thought you might like to know about the results.

665 readers of this blog responded to the survey, and the percentages for each grade were as follows:

A—14% ["He has done more than any other previous pope."
B—34% ["He has done some great things and is on the right track."
C—28% ["He's done some good things, but he has also done some bad things."
D—11% ["He hasn't really moved the issue ahead at all."
F—2% ["He has made things worse that they were before."
Incomplete—7% ["He hasn't done enough for me to be able to grade him."
Other—4%

Since "B" received the most votes, with "C" being a close second, I think we could fairly say that our readers gave Pope Francis a "B-." Since our readers tend to be people who are deeply concerned about Catholic LGBT issues, I think that this poll reflects that segment of the population, not *all* Catholic people or *all* LGBT people.

One interesting thing to note, however is that the number of people who gave him an "A" (14%) is almost equal to the total of those who gave him a "D" (11%) or an "F" (2%). It seems that those who think who is doing an excellent job on LGBT issues are equally balanced with those who are very disappointed in his performance on these issues.

Some of the folks who graded him "Other" wrote their comments to explain their choices. Some of their remarks:

"The 2015 Synod will be key."

"With improvement needed."

"He negates much of the positive done."

"I would give him a "C" on LGB issues, an "F" on trans issues. Very different responses."

"He needs to chip away at the flaws in the "official" theology of human sexuality."

"Actions speak louder than words. So far just a few good words."

"Same as all popes."

In my view, "B-" is a good grade, but it is one that shows there is room for improvement, as well as usually showing that the grader believes that the student actually *can* improve, if more effort and work were done. At least, that is how I always viewed "B-" grades, both when I was a teacher and a student. As a teacher, I used to use a "minus" grade as a way to encourage students to work a little harder, and to let them know that I believed that they *could* do better.

So it seems to me that people are happy with the track that Pope Francis is on regarding LGBT issues, but that they would like to see him improve, and they believe that he *can* improve. †

Gay Catholics find a new tone under Pope Francis, and from their own bishops

(Continued from page 1)

The pope's ambassador to Washington forwarded a similar request to Rome. Even San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone — point man for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' battle against gay marriage — had written a letter to the Vatican on their behalf.

Last December, Cordileone had a constructive meeting with Frank DeBernardo, executive director of New Ways, and Sister Jeannine Gramick, a co-founder of New Ways and a longtime advocate for LGBT inclusion in the church. But they were still surprised by the archbishop's willingness to write a letter for them.

Moreover, British Cardinal Vincent Nichols of Westminster sent a warm blessing to a group of LGBT Catholics from London who are joining up with New Ways in Rome. "Be assured of my prayers for each and every one of you," Nichols wrote. "Have a wonderful pilgrimage. God bless you all."

"I feel that the positive reaction that we have been getting from the hierarchy is due to the welcoming spirit of Pope Francis, who wants to welcome everyone," said Gramick, speaking by phone from Assisi, the pilgrims' last stop before heading to Rome.

"It's very heartening to people who have felt alienated and rejected for so long, so we are feeling very hopeful."

Gramick knows about rejection. In 1999, she was silenced by the Vatican for her "erroneous and dangerous" work with gay Catholics. She and the Catholic priest who co-founded New Ways Ministry in 1977 had "caused confusion among the Catholic people and have harmed the community of the church," said the office headed by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, who would later be elected Benedict XVI.

The ministry's work was called "doctrinally unacceptable." A year later, Gramick was barred from even speaking of the 11-year probe of her work, an order she refused. As late as 2010, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops referred to New Ways as having "no approval or recognition from the Catholic Church."

Now, the group is hoping the Vatican will include them among the list of official pilgrimage groups read aloud at the audience. They'd also love to get close enough to the pope to shake his hand and maybe pose for a picture as he passes through the crowds.

If those sound like small steps, LGBT Catholics say they would, in fact, represent a huge leap forward considering how they were treated under the papacies of Benedict and St. John Paul II.

Francis, on the other hand, has clearly shifted the tone of the conversation, even if substantial changes remain elusive.

The shift began with one of Francis' signature lines, from an in-flight press conference a few months after his election in 2013, when he was asked about whether a gay man could be a priest. "If someone is gay and he searches for the Lord and has good will, who am I to judge?" Francis famously said.

He even used the English word "gay," something no pope had ever done, as most bishops prefer the more clinical term "homosexual."

A few months later, Francis personally responded to an appeal from a gay Catholic group in Florence, telling them he enjoyed and appreciated their letter and assuring them of his blessing.

Then last month, it emerged Francis met with a transgender person from Spain who had written to the pope — with assistance from his bishop — after feeling rejected by his parish because of his sex-change operation. It was a moving moment for Diego Neria Lejarraga, and many LGBT Catholics.

"This man loves the whole world," he told CNN, referring to Francis. "I think there's not — in his head, in his way of thinking, discrimination against anyone. I'm speaking about him, not the institution."

Francis also encouraged discussions of the church's outreach to gay and lesbian Catholics at last October's summit of top cardinals and bishops on family life — discussions that produced some remarkable, even unprecedented, praise from church leaders to the faith and witness of LGBT Catholics.

At the same time, Francis has frequently reiterated the church's teaching that marriage is only between a man and a woman, and he has ripped what he calls the "ideological colonization of the family" by the West, language that refers in part to efforts to promote gay marriage and other issues in developing countries. He has also blasted "gender theory," which for many is a suspect buzzword of secular culture.

Still, the New Ways leaders and many gay Catholics see real reasons for hope, and not just for themselves.

Since the start of his papacy, Francis has sought to shift the hierarchy's focus away from what he said is an "obsession" with sexual issues and toward a greater concern for the poor and all those rejected by the church and society, a social justice priority that many gay Catholics also share.

In addition, LGBT Catholics see the shift toward open discussion of a range of topics as good for the church, and themselves.

"While LGBT Catholics hope for changes, they are realistic enough to know that Francis may not make those changes," said DeBernardo. "But he is doing things that will help their spiritual lives."

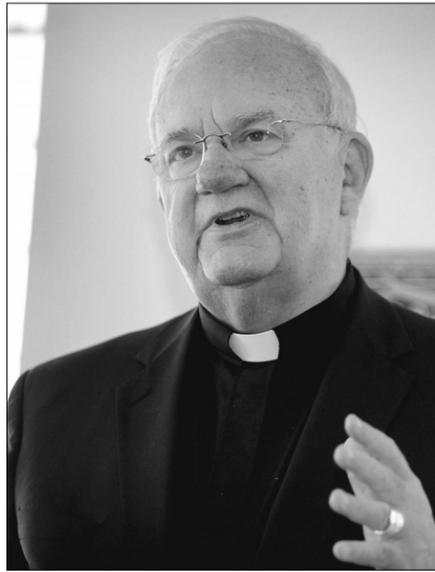
DeBernardo said many gay Catholics are not looking for approval from the church as much an acknowledgment of their existence and a willingness to "treat them as human beings."

A photo-op or shout-out at Wednesday's audience might be one such acknowledgement. "We take the long view," Gramick said, "and every step is progress." †

Church needs patience, humility in light of same-sex marriage

By Bishop Robert N. Lynch
Tampa Bay Times
January 6, 2015

In light of the judicial decision that legalized same-sex marriage in Florida as of Tuesday, I wish to lend an additional voice to the discussion regarding the challenges we in the Catholic Church face as we strive to preserve the traditional sacramental understanding of marriage even as the law now accommodates couples of the same sex. The Catholic Church upholds marriage, one of our seven sacraments, as an indissoluble relationship between a man and a woman committed to mutual consolation and open to procreation. Such a view is rooted not only in the church's long-standing theological understanding of married life, but in the church's understanding of Christian anthropology as well, which views the conjugal and com-



Bishop Robert N. Lynch

plementary relationship between a man and a woman as part of God's providential design whereby human beings are able to be co-creators of life with God. Therefore, any dialogue which reaffirms such a view of marriage and which seeks to ensure that such a view continues to be respected and enabled to serve and edify both the church and the wider society is to be commended and supported. However, together with Pope Francis and in light of the discussions at the recent Extraordinary Synod on the Family held in Rome, I also recognize that the reality of the family today, in all its complexities, presents the church with pastoral challenges as the church strives to accept people in the specific circumstances of their lives and support and encourage them in their search for God and their desire to be members of the church. Therefore, I do not wish to

lend our voice to notions which might suggest that same-sex couples are a threat incapable of sharing relationships marked by love and holiness and, thus, incapable of contributing to the edification of both the church and the wider society. In the midst of changing societal definitions and understandings of marriage, there may no doubt be some confusion. However, with patience and humility, our church must continuously strive to discover what the spirit is saying and respond to the Synod Fathers' suggestion to discern what pastoral response faithful to church teaching and marked by respect and sensitivity might be appropriate for same-sex couples, even as God's creative designs for and the church's sacramental understanding of marriage are affirmed. †

Bishop Robert N. Lynch leads the Roman Catholic Diocese of St. Petersburg, FL..

New Ways Ministry and U.S. Catholics Rejoice at Supreme Court Marriage Equality Decision

June 26, 2015

The following is a statement of Francis DeBernardo, New Ways Ministry's Executive Director, on the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to enable marriage equality to be enacted throughout the nation.

New Ways Ministry rejoices with millions of U.S. Catholics that the U.S. Supreme Court has decided in favor of marriage equality for lesbian and gay couples! On this historic day, we pray in thanksgiving that justice and mercy have prevailed and that the prayers and efforts of so many have combined to move our nation one step closer to fairness and equality for all.

With this Supreme Court victory, Catholics recommit themselves to working to make sure that all LGBT people are treat-

ed equally in both church and society. While we are delighted with this victory, there is still much work to be done to ensure those goals.

Catholics have been at the forefront of working for equal marriage rights for lesbian and gay couples. The overwhelming majority of U.S. Catholics have consistently been in favor of marriage equality, and have put their support into action in legislative, judicial, and electoral campaigns.

Their Catholic faith has inspired them to make sure that their lesbian and gay family members, friends, neighbors, and co-workers receive equal treatment by society. The Supreme Court's decision embodies the Catholic values of human dignity, respect for differences, and the

strengthening of families.

While the U.S. Catholic bishops have consistently opposed marriage equality measures on all fronts, Catholic people in the pews have had a different perspective from their leaders. The lived faith of Catholic people has taught them that love, commitment, and sacrifice are the essential building blocks of marriage and family. Their daily experiences interacting with lesbian and gay couples and their families has taught them that these relationships are identical to heterosexual marriages in terms of the essential qualities needed to build a future together, establish a family, and contribute to social stability and growth.

The U.S. bishops now need to reconcile themselves to the new social reality

of marriage equality, as it is poised to spread to all 50 states. They can do so by entering into a dialogue with lesbian and gay Catholics to learn more about the reality of their lives and how their faith inspires their relationships. The bishops should declare a moratorium on firing lesbian and gay church employees who have married legally. These firings have been a scandalous trend with effects that are harmful not only to the people involved, but to the life of the Church.

Today begins a time for Catholic supporters and Catholic opponents of marriage equality to reconcile with one another and work to build up their local faith communities so that together they can work for a world Pope Francis envisions: one of justice and mercy. †

Bishops' statements after the Supreme Court decision on marriage equality



Archbishop Blase Cupich

From Archbishop Blase Cupich, Archdiocese of Chicago:

"...[T]he United States Supreme Court has ruled that two persons of the same sex have a constitutional right to marry each other. In doing so, the Court has re-defined civil marriage. The proposed reason for the ruling is the protection of equal rights for all citizens, including those who identify themselves as gay. The rapid social changes signaled by the Court ruling call us to mature and serene reflections as we move forward together. In that process, the Catholic Church will stand ready to offer a wisdom rooted in faith and a wide range of human experience.

"It is important to note that the Catholic Church has an abiding concern for the dignity of gay persons. In fact, the Catechism of the Catholic Church says: 'They must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided.' (n. 2358). This respect must be real, not rhetorical, and ever reflective of the Church's commitment to accompanying all people. For this reason, the Church must extend support to all families, no matter their circumstances, recognizing that we are all relatives, journeying through life under the careful watch of a loving God."

(*Bondings 2.0*, www.NewWaysMinistryBlog.wordpress.com, 06/30/2015)

Archbishop Cupich made noteworthy follow-up comments in an interview with the *National Catholic Reporter* about the statement. He said:

"My concern is that we don't lurch in one direction or another in terms of reaction, but that we really have a sense of serenity and maturity and keep ourselves walking together.

"I think that's the most important thing," the archbishop said, using the example of a family that discusses issues they face together.

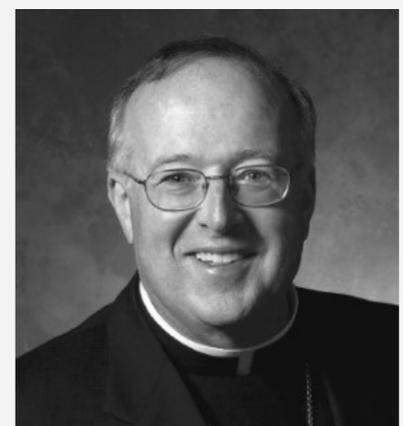
"When they have [a] crisis, when they have something new happening, a good, mature, serene family says, 'OK, take a breath, everybody. We're all in this together. We're going to help each other,'" he said."

(*Bondings 2.0*, www.NewWaysMinistryBlog.wordpress.com, 07/10/2015)

From Bishop Robert W. McElroy of San Diego:

"The Catholic community of San Diego and Imperial counties will continue to honor and embody the uniqueness of marriage between one man and one woman as a gift from God - in our teaching, our sacramental life and our witness to the world. We will do so in a manner which profoundly respects at every moment the loving and familial relationships which enrich the lives of so many gay men and women who are our sons and daughters, our sisters and brothers, and ultimately our fellow pilgrims on this earthly journey of life. And commanded by the Gospel of Jesus Christ we will continue to reach out to families of every kind who are encountering poverty, addictions, violence, emotional stress or the threat of deportation, and to attempt to bring them faith and care, service and solidarity."

(*Bondings 2.0*, www.NewWaysMinistryBlog.wordpress.com, 06/29/2015)



Bishop Robert McElroy

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Visit our daily blog: NewWaysMinistryBlog.wordpress.com

New Marianist booklet helps Catholic educators discuss LGBT issues with youth

By Francis DeBernardo

Bondings 2.0

NewWaysMinistryBlog.wordpress.com
February 25, 2015

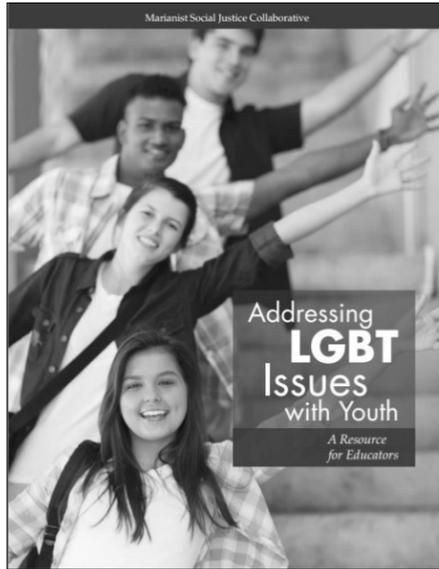
A new resource to help Catholic educators discuss LGBT issues with students has been published by a committee of the Marianist community.

Addressing LGBT Issues With Youth: A Resource for Educators is an 11-page PDF booklet which provides “strategies for assuring that our institutions and ministries promote understanding, respect and acceptance for all young people, regardless of their sexual orientation,” according to the LGBT Initiative page of the Marianist Social Justice Collaborative website. The Collaborative describes itself as “a joint initiative of the Marianist Lay Network of North America, the Society of Mary (brothers and priests) and the Marianist Sisters... It is a network that provides mutual support, resources, leadership for peace and justice, and links to other peace and justice groups.”

The document stresses the importance of creating safe space for LGBT students and provides a number of suggestions for educators can become “caring and supportive adults who will talk with them and guide them.”

The need for such a resource is described in the booklet’s first section:

“LGBT youth need reassurance from people who represent their faith if they are to integrate their self-understanding into their faith commitment. Catholic teaching often is misrepresented or misunderstood,



which can cause turmoil for those who may conclude that God doesn’t love them...

“While bullying affects a wide range of students, LGBT students or those perceived to be LGBT endure particular ridicule...”

“If adults don’t support their students, if they ignore bullying, if they remain silent when they should speak up, what is an LGBT youth to conclude? That he or she is not loved and valued, a flawed human person.”

The booklet situates its message within the Catholic tradition of non-

discrimination towards LGBT people, which is taught in the Catechism. Additionally, the rationale for their approach is supported by various bishops’ documents calling for pastoral care of LGBT people. The Marianist charism itself is also referred to as a source of backing. One of the “Characteristics of Marianist Education” that is quoted states:

“Educate persons to accept and respect differences in a pluralistic society. As the people of the world come increasingly into contact with one another, differences among them become more apparent. If the world of the future is to be peaceful, students of today must learn how to appreciate cultural difference and how to work with people unlike themselves.”

The booklet provides tips for how teachers can show support to LGBT students, but it also adds suggestions for how to educate the entire school community—administrators, faculty, parents—about sensitivity to LGBT people. One significant section offers practical answers for how to answer critics who would oppose this type of approach.

The resource suggests a variety of practical ways to transform a school into a safe space, including updating the curriculum, adopting inclusive policies, establishing support groups, and ways of talking about LGBT issues in the classroom.

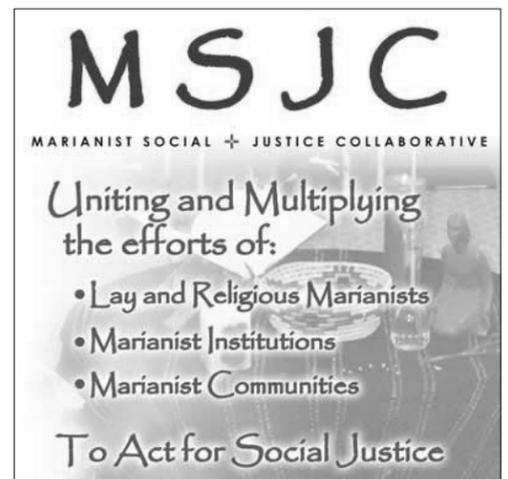
The booklet neither condones nor condemns sexual relationships, but does

note that this topic is not connected to the idea of creating a safe space:

“Supporting LGBT students does not condone sexual activity any more than supporting heterosexual students condones sexual activity. Your care and support simply honors the dignity of each person and provides a place where he or she is accepted and valued.”

Connected to this topic of sexual relationships is an important concluding section on the Catholic Church’s call to all individuals to develop and follow their consciences.

Many Catholic educators can benefit from the suggestions offered in this resource. If all Catholic schools adopted such an approach, our church and its educational system would be a much more welcoming place for LGBT students. †



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.



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

Pope Francis reported to have met with transgender man at the Vatican

By Antonia Blumberg
The Huffington Post
January 27, 2015

Pope Francis reportedly held a private audience with a transgender man on Saturday, in what would be another first for his papal record.

Diego Neria Lejárraga, who underwent sex-reassignment surgery and was subsequently rejected by his religious community, claims he reached out to Francis in December and received a call from the pontiff on Christmas Eve, Spanish newspaper Hoy reported. On Saturday, Lejárraga and his fiancée told the paper they met with the pope in his residence at the Vatican.

"After hearing him on many occasions, I felt that he would listen to me," Lejárraga told Hoy.

Fr. Manuel Dorantes, Assistant to the Director at the Press Office of the Holy See, said he did not have any information about the alleged meeting as of Monday afternoon.

Francis DeBernardo, Executive Director of New Ways Ministry which advocates for LGBT Catholics, said he wondered at the Vatican's silence on the reported meeting.

"The Vatican's reluctance to verify the meeting is another indication of why I don't think their attitude can yet be called 'acceptance,'" DeBernardo told *The Huffington Post* by email.

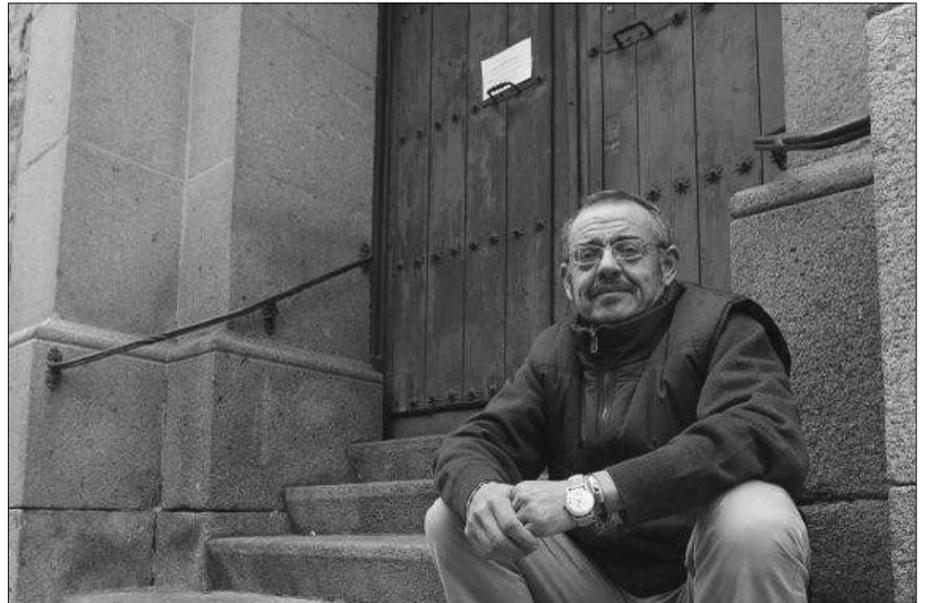
Even so, he said it would not surprise him if the meeting had taken place.

"This pope, through his many gestures of meeting with those who society and the church treat as outcasts, has made it his mission to lead by example, and to send a strong message of welcome and hospitality to all people, regardless of their state in life," DeBernardo said.

Many advocates have criticized the church for failing to welcome LGBT members of their communities. Sister Monica, a nun who ministers to transgender people, goes by a pseudonym in her public communications for fear of reprisal by Catholic authorities.

"While there is no public, official position of the Catholic Church regarding people who are transgender," Sister Monica wrote in a blog on *HuffPost*, "it would be safe to say that the hierarchy of the Church would likely forbid this ministry."

DeBernardo argued that the pope may have a genuine interest in opening the



Diego Neria Lejárraga

doors to the transgender community, however, as Saturday's reported meeting would suggest.

"Pope Francis is an intellectual who values discussion," DeBernardo said. "I

think that his meeting with the transgender man was a gesture not only of pastoral care, but of genuine interest in learning about the transgender experience from a firsthand source." †

A new theology of the transgendered body

By Sidney Callahan
America
January 15, 2015

Why not write a gender autobiography to help understand the emerging LGBT movement? We can remember our own growing up, and imagine how it might have been different—or even tragic if we did not conform to the reigning group norms.

In the *New York Times* (1/6/15) Jennifer Finney Boylan, a transgendered advocate and professor writes an Op-Ed piece describing the case of Leelah Acorn; Leelah was a transgendered teenager who felt so unsupported by her religious family that she committed suicide. Boylan mourns this young person's death and recounts her own story to give hope to others who suffer.

Reports in the news have described new educational, legal, healthcare and ethical-theological challenges faced by transgendered persons. Should women's colleges such as Barnard and Wellesley accept applicants who are transitioning to male identities? Can birth certificates be changed and legal marriages performed? Bioethical questions of fertility treatments also arise. Closer to home are the hard decisions facing parents in response to a child who insists that their "real" gender identity is different from that assigned at their birth. Leelah's suicide note reported her parents' arguments that she was just going through a phase and to accept that "God doesn't make mistakes."

By contrast, three supportive families I know have enabled their children to transition from male to female gender identity. As another sign of the times, this year at my granddaughter's college orientation, students were asked which gender pronoun they wish to be addressed by. (At a "cooler" campus she visits, other students refuse to answer to any binary gender pronouns.) Beyond these youthful cases, I was surprised when a middle aged ex-colleague, a distinguished philosopher, recently transitioned from male to female identity and published an article on the bioethical issues involved. After reading this essay I plunged into some of the many autobiographical books detailing the psychological and social processes of gender transitions. As with Jennifer Finney Boylan's story, there was a great deal of psychological, physical and social suffer-

ing involved. Boylan recounts a difficult, but successful transition from being a married father with two sons to a happily reconfigured family with two maternal figures. It's also true that other accounts of gender change do not end well.

Part of the uncertainty for parents and individuals is that there isn't any certain knowledge or agreed upon consensus on how gender identity emerges. Personal narratives differ; respected scientific authorities disagree. Every individual case is unique, and personal consciousness can constantly change. Is an experience of misery with one's assigned birth identity (labelled gender dysphoria) irreversible? Or can it perhaps mask depression or other disorder? Inevitably, the different perspectives adopted on causality will influence judgments on treatments.

Supportive parents are in a bind because the earlier a gender transition, the better the outcome in the long run. But fears can arise of premature medical interventions, or of prolonging a child's suffering, or risking a suicide. Andrew Solomon in his monumental book on

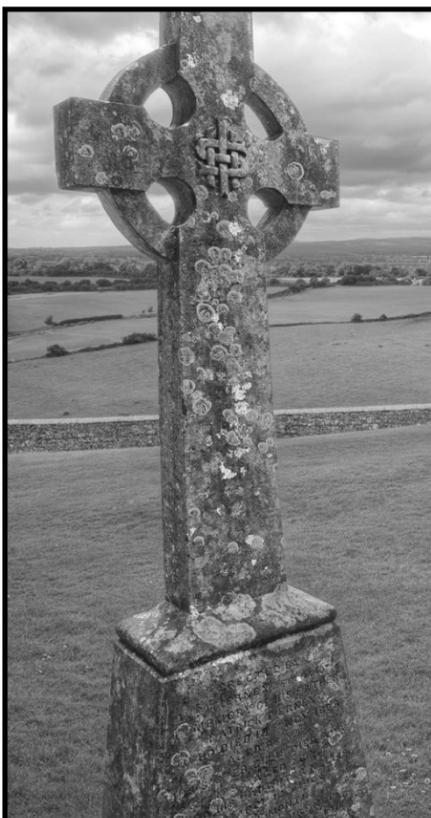
unusual parenting challenges, *Far from the Tree*, provides an excellent chapter on transgender dilemmas. The cases he examines include horrible depictions of children and families subjected to rejection, prejudice and persecution. Sexuality remains such a high-anxiety domain that deviations from the norm provoke violence—even suicide and murder. Society does not universally agree with Jennifer Boylan's affirmation, "The world abounds with all sorts of ways of being human."

Yes, it's true. And when we reflect on our own developmental history we can better see the various complexities involved. So much happens beneath and before conscious awareness. Gender identity emerges, I now conclude, from an interrelated interplay of genes, biochemical influences in the womb, infant and child personal experiences and social pressure. The brain seems hard-wired early, perhaps in different degrees. But undoubtedly, random chance events determine individual developmental outcomes. While God does not make mistakes, God works through secondary causes such as evolution's ran-

dom mutations and variations.

Fortunately, Christians do not have to wait for scientific consensus to understand and affirm religious truths. We know that God commands us to treat each human life with justice and love. In particular we must protect the vulnerable and relieve suffering. Moreover, the embodied person's whole identity, deeds and character are more important than gender identity.

Autobiographical reflections confront us with the mysterious question, "How does the self-conscious 'I am' relate to the 'me' of my body changing through time?" I'm now an old married woman who has experienced seven pregnancies, seen my children change from infancy to middle age and have physically declined with my aging spouse. I thank God that Christians value and protect every stage and condition of embodied life. We value embryo, fetus, infant, child, adult, aged, disabled and the dying. And we've been promised the gift of transitioning to resurrected life as members of Christ's body. Can we hope now for an expanded theology of the body and person, to better understand gender and transgendered persons? †



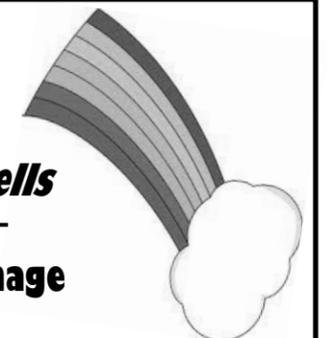
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Land of Rainbows & Wedding Bells

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Phone: 301-864-3604



Though welcoming, inclusive parish can be a tough sell to LGBT community

By Thomas C. Fox
National Catholic Reporter
March 10, 2015

This is the second in a five-part series about San Francisco's Most Holy Redeemer Church.

Most Holy Redeemer parishioners take some pride in being a Francis-like parish well before Francis. The pastoral approach to gay and lesbian lifestyles has been the approach of choice for at least three decades. Parish literature calls MHR a "spiritual home to all," young and old, singles and families, "straight, gay, lesbian, and transgender." The same literature says the parish ministers to "the healthy and the sick, particularly persons with HIV disease."

Most Holy Redeemer makes a point to welcome strangers at every Sunday Mass. At the beginning of each service, visitors from outside the Bay area are asked to stand and identify themselves, and they are welcomed with applause. Before they leave the church, they are handed a slick brochure that states the parish mission and outlines its various ministries.

"Once you walk in and say hello to everyone, you feel like you are with friends," parishioner Dennis Callahan said about that welcoming spirit. "You feel like you're at Christmas, when the whole family meets for dinner or for New Year's, or for somebody's birthday. You have that feeling of celebration whenever you walk into the church."

MHR has one main exit door. As worshippers leave the church, they end up mingling outside. They also more naturally funnel into the lower church hall after Mass, where refreshments are served on Sundays.

Liturgies are enhanced by the church's emphasis on good music. Pastor Precious Blood Fr. Jack McClure hired a new music director, who some have said has helped integrate a wider range of music. Over the years, the parish has also been graced by professional San Francisco opera singers and musicians.

Gathering around a piano to rehearse before a 10 a.m. Sunday Mass, Sabrina Romero, a young cantor, remarked she had sung at several parishes but has never had more active positive feedback than she receives at MHR. Her solo rendition of the "Ave Maria" the Sunday before Christmas moved several worshippers to reach for their handkerchiefs.

Weekday Masses are, on the other hand, low-key. Following these services, most worshippers cross 18th Street heading for La Taza, a local coffee shop, where they sit at small tables to share stories and catch up on the day's events. On Fridays, the rectory opens its doors after Mass for coffee, tea and doughnuts.

"This is our community and has been for years," said Ikuko Hotta, a Japanese convert. She joked that she is an exception within the group as she is "married, Japanese and straight."

Most Holy Redeemer was dedicated in 1902, when the neighborhood was still on the outskirts of San Francisco. It survived the 1906 earthquake and fires, which never reached the church. During the 20th century, MHR served the families of working-class Scandinavian, German and Irish immigrants.

The Golden Gate Bridge was completed in 1937, opening San Francisco to the north. In the decades that followed, but particularly in the 1960s, Catholics patterned wider U.S. migrations and moved to the suburbs, where land was cheap and new homes were sprawling.

The 1970s marked the awakening of gays and lesbians across the nation. Soon, many were looking for safer havens in which to proclaim their emerging self-confidence and identities. San Francisco became a draw, especially the depleted Eureka Valley neighborhood filled with empty Victorian-style homes and where Most Holy Redeemer Parish sat.

Those years were marked by conflict

as LGBT ranks grew, along with gay-owned enterprises, including restaurants and bars that catered to the new arrivals. Tensions peaked in 1978 with the murder of the city's first openly gay San Francisco supervisor, Harvey Milk. By then, the neighborhood was commonly called "the Castro," after the main street that runs through it.

Today, the Castro seems tamer. Its "gay" notoriety draws many tourists, some traveling on double-decker tour buses, snapping photos as vehicles cross Market and Castro. The Castro area, while commercially secure, is now graying as well, as rocketing real estate prices have prevented younger settlers -- gay or straight -- from finding affordable housing.

As a parish, Most Holy Redeemer reflects the wider Castro demographics. It, too, is graying -- with a difference. Younger Catholics come from around the Bay, making up much of the parish. The very diversity that once moved some Catholics to flee MHR now seems to draw others, especially younger ones who feel at home and want to help prepare their children to live in an increasingly diverse world.

Tough sell

Jim Stockholm, a parishioner for 18 years, is on the parish communications committee. Part of his job is outreach -- to "sell" MHR to the wider audience. He married his partner, Oliver Galupo, a Filipino, one year ago.

Galupo, an artist, works with Stockholm, drawing posters and signs for the parish and its Facebook page. The communication committee's budget runs \$20,000 a year, with much of the money going into advertising in the local newspapers, including what some in the parish refer to as "the Castro rags."

Asked to name his biggest challenge, Stockholm replied squarely: "It's the Catholic faith. It's got a bad rap in the LGBT community. We have an archbishop who helped fund and led the charge against same-sex marriage. All that translates down to, in some way, our parish. We're in the Castro, in the community, and so we have the challenge to overcome that, to say we are welcoming."

Is Most Holy Redeemer seen as an exception or part of the problem?

"I think both," Stockholm answered. "They see our ministries. They see our Wednesday suppers. They see us feeding the homeless, but when something comes down from Rome or from the archdiocese, they have to scratch their heads and say, 'There are these Catholics. Aren't they following what the archbishop has said?' So it's a little bit of both. We can't separate ourselves from Rome or from the archdiocese of San Francisco."

MHR was vandalized in 2008 and 2009 as protesters drew large swastikas on the church. Their anger was triggered by the archdiocese's support of Proposition 8, a referendum that sought to overrule a court order legalizing gay marriages. (The proposition passed, but was eventually ruled unconstitutional.) Gay groups quickly denounced the MHR defacing, saying the anger had been misplaced.

Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone was appointed to San Francisco in October 2012. He heads the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage, and, from that perch, he has led a campaign against same-sex marriage, which has been at the top of the gay rights agenda for the past decade.

The U.S. bishops have been very visible in their opposition to same-sex civil marriage, though their efforts seem to have done little to stem the tide in favor of such unions. Thirty-six states (and the District of Columbia) now allow same-sex marriage. What the bish-

ops see as morally offensive, gay rights activists see as a human right.

In a move viewed as a particularly strong attack against gays and lesbians, Cordileone appeared at a June 2014 rally in Washington organized by some of their harshest critics. Among the rally's co-sponsors was the Family Research Council, which the Southern

their widely celebrated Wednesday suppers. He waited on tables without fanfare, requesting no photographs be taken. He is also planning to celebrate one of the parish's morning Masses, McClure said.

MHR parishioner attitudes toward their archbishop vary. They are generally subdued and respectful. He's characterized in the parish as a shy person who has to



Most Holy Redeemer Church, San Francisco, California.

Poverty Law Center has listed as a hate group because of the way it spreads misinformation about LGBT people.

Catholic gay activists were among the 80 religious and political leaders who pleaded with the San Francisco archbishop to stay away. But he chose to go and speak anyway.

Last month, he updated the faculty handbook for archdiocesan high schools to include 15 "affirm and believe" statements on church teaching, with a heavy emphasis on sex and sexuality. It also defined teachers as "ministers." A good number of teachers, parents and students found the amended handbook coercive and discriminatory and have resisted its implementation.

But there appears to be another side of Cordileone, a softer, more pastoral side. MHR parishioners credit him for showing up four times to serve food at

work at being sociable. "I cut him a lot of slack," Callahan said. "After all, he gave us our current pastors."

Late in 2014, Cordileone fulfilled a promise he made in the midst of the rally controversy to meet with some of his opponents. On two different occasions, he met with leaders of two gay Catholic groups, DignityUSA and New Ways Ministry. Each organization has for many decades received harsh criticism from U.S. episcopal ranks for advocating on behalf of LGBT Catholics.

According to a New Ways Ministry statement, Cordileone expressed his genuine concern about church teaching, while not wanting to harm lesbian and gay people. "Leaders of both organizations felt that he had been warm and friendly and showed sincere respect for each person throughout their time together," the statement said. ✦

This Pope gives me hope

(Continued from page 1)

however, those at the Secretariat of State and in the Papal Household who did see my letter knew that we were a group of lesbian and gay Catholics and their allies. The letter also stated that I had had previous difficulties with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF). In fact, I had met Georg Gänswein at the CDF a dozen years ago. The officials also knew that this request was being made through high-level U.S. churchmen.

We received exceptional treatment because the papal winds have changed. During the previous two pontificates, there was not even any recognition for the lesbian and gay pilgrims I brought to papal audiences, let alone VIP seating. The special handling we received this time illustrates the Francis effect. His desire to welcome the marginalized has begun to permeate church structures and is causing movement in our church -- movement at the Vatican level and

movement among some U.S. bishops who now feel free enough to dialogue with lesbian and gay people and those censured under other papacies. There is a new spirit in the church, a spirit of bringing people from the outside closer to the inside, a spirit that all persons have value, even those whom some have labeled sinful or dissident.

My colleague, Francis DeBernardo, says that papal audiences are all about gestures and symbols. The public symbolism of this papal audience was the honor and recognition given not only to our group but also to all lesbian and gay Catholics and their allies. Behind the scenes, were gestures of dialogue among those who work for the good of the church, but who sometimes come from different, or even opposing, directions.

Every day I thank God for Pope Francis and pray for his continued good health. I am unabashedly one of his multi-billion+ fans. This Pope gives me hope! ✦

Want to keep up to date with LGBT Catholic news?

Subscribe to our daily blog: NewWaysMinistryBlog.wordpress.com

BELONG TO A GAY-FRIENDLY PARISH?

Let us know to list it on the opposite page!



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.



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 Billiart, 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 Stanford University
South Pasadena: Holy Family
Valinda: St. Martha
Vernon: Holy Angels Catholic Church of the Deaf
Walnut Creek: St. John Vianney
West Hollywood: St. Ambrose, St. Victor
Whittier: St. Mary of the Assumption

Colorado

Arvada: Spirit of Christ
Avon: St. Edward
Colorado Springs: Sacred Heart
Denver: St. Dominic, Christ the King, Our Lady of Mount Carmel
Lafayette: Immaculate Conception
Littleton: Light of the World, St. Frances Cabrini

Connecticut

Hartford: St. Patrick-St. Anthony

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. 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, St. Francis de Sales
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. Brigid

North Carolina

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

Ohio

Akron: St. Bernard
Cincinnati: St. George-St. Monica, St. Robert Bellarmine
Cleveland: Blessed Trinity, St. Malachi, St. Martha
Columbus: St. Thomas More Newman Center
Fairlawn: St. Hilary
Mentor: St. John Vianney
University Heights: Church of 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, Downtown 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)

INTENTIONAL EUCHARISTIC COMMUNITIES

Arizona

Scottsdale: Franciscan Renewal Center

California

Pleasanton: Catholic Community of Pleasanton

Colorado

Colorado Springs: Benet Hill Monastery

District of Columbia

Communitas

Florida

Tampa: Franciscan Center

Iowa

Iowa City: Full Circle

Maryland

Catonville: 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

Virginia

Arlington: NOVA Catholic Community

Washington

Olympia: Holy Wisdom Inclusive Catholic Community

Wisconsin

Madison: Holy Wisdom Monastery

To add your faith community to our list, please contact New Ways Ministry at info@newwaysministry.org or call 301-277-5674.



Unraveling the church ban on gay sex

By Gary Gutting
New York Times
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Last month, Salvatore Cordileone, the archbishop of San Francisco, made controversial changes to a handbook for Catholic high school teachers in his jurisdiction. The changes included morals clauses, one of which forbids those teachers from publicly endorsing homosexual behavior. There are plausible legal and educational objections to this move. But there is a deeper issue, one that raises fundamental questions about Catholic teachings on homosexuality and other sexual matters.

The archbishop has justified his decision on the grounds that homosexual acts are “contrary to natural law.” Unlike many religions, Catholicism insists that its moral teachings are based not just on faith but also on human reason. For example, the church claims that its moral condemnation of homosexual acts can be established by rigorous philosophical argument, independent of anything in the Bible.

The primary arguments derive from what is known as the “natural-law tradition” of ethical thought, which begins with Plato and Aristotle, continues through Thomas Aquinas and other medieval and modern philosophers, and still flourishes today in the work of thinkers like John Finnis and Robert George. This tradition sees morality as a matter of the moral laws that follow from what fundamentally makes us human: our human nature. This is what the archbishop was referring to when he said that homosexual

acts are contrary to natural law. This has long been a major basis for the church’s claim that homosexual acts are immoral — indeed “gravely sinful.”

The problem is that, rightly developed, natural-law thinking seems to support rather than reject the morality of homosexual behavior. Consider this line of thought from John Corvino, a philosopher at Wayne State University: “A gay relationship, like a straight relationship, can be a significant avenue of meaning, growth, and fulfillment. It can realize a variety of genuine human goods; it can bear good fruit. . . . [For both straight and gay couples,] sex is a powerful and unique way of building, celebrating, and replenishing intimacy.” The sort of relationship Corvino describes seems clearly one that would contribute to a couple’s fulfillment as human beings — whether the sex involved is hetero- or homosexual. Isn’t this just what it should mean to live in accord with human nature?

Natural-law ethicists typically don’t see it that way. They judge homosexual acts immoral, and claim that even a relationship like the one Corvino describes would be evil because the sex involved would be of the wrong sort. According

to them, any sexual act that could not in principle result in pregnancy is contrary to the laws of human nature because it means that each partner is using it as a means to his or her pleasure. Only a shared act directed toward reproduction can prevent this ultimate selfishness. The awkward talk of “an act that could not in principle result in pregnancy” is necessary since those who put forward

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this argument want to maintain that heterosexual unions in which one (or both) of the partners is sterile are still moral. There’s nothing unnatural about their intercourse because it’s the sort of act that in general can lead to reproduction.

Just trying to formulate the argument shows how strained it is. There are, of course, numerous subtle distinctions employed to defend it, requiring equal subtlety to respond. And many would see the argument as proving too much, since proponents also use it to show the immorality of birth control, masturbation and even non-reproductive sexual acts between heterosexuals.

Most important, however, the argument has no satisfactory response to two crucial questions. First, why, even if nonreproductive sex were somehow less “natural” than reproductive, couldn’t it still play a positive role in a humanly

fulfilling life of love between two people of the same sex? Second, why must non-reproductive sex be only for the selfish pleasure of each partner, rather than, as Corvino put it, a way of building, celebrating, and replenishing their shared intimacy?

The natural-law argument might make some sense to those who see homosexuals as dominated by an obsessive desire for pleasure, to which they subordinate any notion of fidelity or integrity. The courageous uncloseting of many homosexuals has revealed them as people like most everyone else, searching for and sometimes achieving a fulfilling human life through rich and complex relationships. Since the official church, under Pope Francis, is more than ever open to this sensible view, the time is overdue for a revision of its philosophical misunderstanding of homosexual acts.

But should the failure of the natural-law case against homosexual behavior bother Catholics, who, after all, can also appeal to the Bible’s denunciations of homosexual behavior? Here another aspect of Catholic thought becomes crucial: The church accepts that there are two distinct sources of truth: divine revelation and reason unaided by revelation (for example, the “natural reason” of scientists and philosophers). But it also holds Thomas Aquinas’s view that there can never be a genuine conflict between these two sources. Therefore, any apparent conflict results from our failure to understand what either God or reason is saying.

Most important, there is no assumption, in any given case, that we must resolve the conflict by revising the apparent conclusion of reason. For example, the church (eventually) decided that the scientific claims of Galileo and Darwin were correct and required revisions in teachings based on biblical passages suggesting otherwise. It is, therefore, an open question whether to accept the reasonable conclusion that homosexual acts need not be immoral and reject the view that this is what the Bible says.

There is considerable discussion among biblical scholars on this issue, with many suggesting that the passages that seem to condemn homosexual acts in general actually refer only to certain cases such as homosexual rape or male prostitution. But even if the biblical view is that any homosexual act is immoral, the Bible’s support for this view is no stronger than its support for the morality of slavery. Christian scholars argue that the acceptance of slavery (even in the New Testament, by Paul) merely reflects the limited perspective of the Bible’s human authors (similar to their belief in geocentrism or six-day creation) and does not reflect God’s revelation.

The condemnation of homosexuality could plausibly be treated in the same way. The argument would then be that rational reflection strongly supports the claim that homosexual acts are not in general immoral, while there’s no need to conclude that God’s revelation says otherwise. This points the way to the church’s acceptance of homosexual acts as part of a morally fulfilling human relationship.

I understand that an archbishop is not politically in a position to deny what is still an official church doctrine. But there is nothing that requires him to vigorously enforce a teaching that is so dubious even in terms of the church’s own view on the two sources of truth. This, after all, is exactly the path most clergy, including some bishops, have taken regarding birth control — a teaching supported by the very same sort of natural-law argument as that against homosexual acts.

More generally, the church needs to undertake a thorough rethinking of its teachings on sexual ethics, including premarital sex, masturbation and remarriage after divorce. In every case, the old arguments no longer work (if they ever did), and a vast number of Catholics reject the teachings. It’s time for the church to realize that its sexual ethics are philosophically untenable and theologically unnecessary. †

Sacrificing profits to avoid discrimination and protect religious freedom

By Francis DeBernardo
Bondings 2.0
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For a person like myself who cherishes both religious freedom and LGBT equality, the recent discussions over state laws designed to allow religious people and institutions to discriminate against LGBT people are somewhat vexing.

Let me state outright that I do not believe laws should allow this type of discrimination. That said, I have to admit that I feel sympathy for people who feel that their religious principles are compromised. As someone who opposes the death penalty and military intervention on religious principles, I feel that my U.S. tax dollars are being used against my religious principles when a federal prisoner is executed or when our government has cavalierly become involved in overseas military expeditions.

A recent New York Times news article caught my eye and interest on this topic. The headline: “To Keep Free of Federal Reins, Wyoming Catholic College Rejects Student Aid.” A small, conservative Catholic school in Wyoming has rejected federal funding so that they do not have to comply with regulations on social issues which they disagree with because of their beliefs. The story reported:

“Citing concerns about federal rules on birth control and same-sex marriage, the school decided this winter to join a handful of other religious colleges in refusing to participate in the federal student-aid programs that help about two-thirds of students afford college. For students here, the decision means no federal loans, work-study money or grants to finance their

annual \$28,000 tuition, which includes housing in gender-segregated dorms and three meals in the school’s lone dining hall.”

While, of course, I disagree with this institution’s beliefs about same-gender marriage, for one thing, I admit that I find this decision to be an intriguing answer to the current religious liberty question.

What has bothered me for a long time about conservative religious freedom advocates is that they often want it both ways. They want to be able to have government aid or contracts, but not to live up to the obligations that come with such support. So I have a certain amount of admiration for religious people who are willing to sacrifice something because of their beliefs.

This Wyoming decision reminds me of the many Catholic peace advocates that I have admired over the years who have resisted paying federal military taxes. Sometimes such peace people keep a low income so that their federal tax obligation is minimal to nil. Sometimes, they have done jail time for their beliefs. Until hearing of this Wyoming case (and the examples of several other religious colleges, Catholic ones included, which the Times article cites), I have not seen a similar interest in sacrificing for principle on the part of conservative religious individuals or groups.

At the business level, one way the religious freedom question plays out is that establishments such as photographers or bakers want the ability to deny service to same-gender couples’ weddings. It seems that one recourse they can have to live out their religious prin-

ciples is to refrain from not providing business services for any weddings.

The logic behind such a suggestion is that since same-gender marriage has become the law in many locations, it is incumbent on businesses licensed in a locale to provide services for all people. After all, the state is providing the business with the opportunity to exist within its borders; it is reasonable to expect that the business would follow the state’s laws, including non-discrimination laws. If, for religious reasons, a business does not feel they can follow the law of the land, they could simply refuse to provide that service to any one.

Of course, such a decision would involve sacrifice on their part. Weddings, in particular, are big moneymakers. Yet, abstaining and sacrificing are appropriate religious responses to situations where people are motivated by faith principles. Discrimination is not.

Such decisions will not solve the religious freedom questions that our nation faces. It doesn’t solve the problem of what to do about legitimately identified religious organizations (churches, for example) and how they conduct their employment policies. But the route of sacrifice looks like it could be a viable alternative for conservative religious leaders who feel they are being harassed by doing business transactions which they feel violate their beliefs.

Another alternative would be what I do for issues like the death penalty and military intervention, for which I have religiously principled objections. I follow the laws while I do what I can through civil channels to influence them. Is my religious freedom impinged upon? Yes, but I also recognize that we do not live under a religiously-based government, so I have to find the best way to be in dialogue with those with whom I disagree. The strategy of dialogue is also a valid religious response. †

