

BONDINGS

Vol. 37 No. 4

A Publication of New Ways Ministry

Fall 2018

The witch hunt for gay priests

By Father James Martin, S.J.

America

August 30, 2018

It is not surprising that Catholics are furious about the latest sex abuse crisis, which began, most recently, with accusations of abuse and harassment against the former cardinal-archbishop of Washington, D.C., Theodore McCarrick; deepened with the Pennsylvania grand jury report detailing 70 years of abuse in the Commonwealth; and intensified with the former Vatican nuncio to the United States Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò's 11-page "testimony" accusing many high-ranking clerics, including Pope Francis, with covering up the crimes.

Catholics have a right to be angry at abusive clergy, at bishops who covered up their crimes and at the sclerotic clerical system that allowed the crimes and cover-ups to go unpunished for decades.

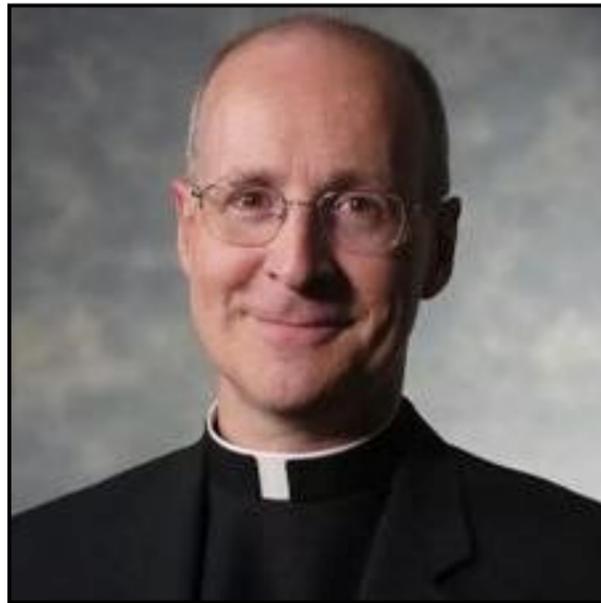
But the intensity of hate and level of anger directed at gay priests are unprecedented in my memory.

What I mean by "gay priests" is ordained priests with a homosexual orientation who are living their promises of celibacy (and in religious orders, their vows of chastity). That it is necessary even to define the term "gay priest" points out the widespread misinformation about what has become perhaps the most incendiary topic in the current discussion. A few commentators have even declared that the term "gay" implies that a priest must be sexually active. As I use the term, a "gay priest" simply means an ordained priest who has a homosexual orientation.

The long-simmering rage against gay priests and the supposed homosexual subculture or "Lavender Mafia" has been fanned into a fire that threatens to engulf not only faithful gay priests but

also, more broadly, L.G.B.T. people.

While the contempt directed at gay clergy is coming from just a handful of cardinals, bishops and priests, as well as a subset of Catholic commentators, it is as intense as it is dangerous. "It is time to



Father James Martin, SJ

admit that there is a homosexual subculture within the hierarchy of the Catholic Church that is wreaking great devastation in the vineyard of the Lord," wrote Bishop Robert Morlino of Madison, Wis. A Swiss bishop, Marian Eleganti, declared that the "networks" of gay priests in the church must be investigated before the "great purification" can begin. A bishop in Kazakhstan, Athanasius Schneider, listing remedies for clergy abuse, began with this: "cleanse uncompromisingly the Roman Curia and the episcopate from homosexual cliques and networks."

Cardinal Raymond Burke, the influential former archbishop of St. Louis, said, "There is a homosexual culture, not only among the clergy but even within the hierarchy, which needs to be purified at the root."

Michael Hichborn, president of the Lepanto Institute, takes this to its inevitable conclusion, telling the Associated Press that what is needed is "a complete and thoroughgoing removal of all homosexual clergymen in the church."

In the last few days I have seen more homophobic comments on my social media accounts than ever before. The rise in vitriol is not surprising, especially after such comments from church leaders and Catholic commentators or after headlines like these: "Pope Blames Sex Abuse on Clericalism, Leaves Out Homosexuality"; "Sex Abuse Crisis in Church is about Homosexuality Not Pedophilia"; "Homosexual Predators, not Pedophile Priests, Are Church's Deadly Cancer."

Archbishop Viganò's "testimony" was also rife with this same kind of language: "These homosexual networks, which are now widespread in many dioceses, seminaries, religious orders, etc., act under the concealment of secrecy and lies with the power of octopus tentacles, and strangle innocent victims and priestly vocations, and are strangling the entire Church." (Full disclosure: both Archbishop Viganò in his "testimony" and Cardinal Burke in a recent interview

have mentioned me by name.)

It is important to say that the majority (but not all) of the clerical abuse crimes were cases of priests preying on male adolescents and boys. Also, the majority (but not all) of the sexual harassment cases were men harassing other men or young men. Prescinding from the complex psychological questions of how much a person's sexuality has to do with abuse, how much differentials in power do and how much proximity does, we should state clearly: Many priests abusers had a homosexual orientation. That is undeniable.

But the next step is where the conversation can take a dangerous turn. That many abusers were gay priests does not mean that all or even most gay priests are abusers. It is a dangerous and unjust stereotype. Simply because a certain percentage of a group acts in a certain way does not mean the entire group or even most of the group acts in the same way.

Then why does it seem like so many gay priests are abusive? One reason is that there are no public examples of the healthy, celibate gay priests to counteract these stereotypes. Why not? Because gay priests are not willing to be as public about their identity as straight priests are. For example, in a community suffering from a spate of L.G.B.T. violence, there can be no references in a Sunday homily to knowing what it is like to be bullied for being gay. The presider cannot say, "As a boy, I was bullied, too, for being gay."

Why do gay priests feel that they cannot be public? For several reasons. First, the fear of coming out in this increasingly poisonous environment. (Ask yourself if you would come out when even bishops are calling for a "cleansing" of men like you.) Second, bishops

(Continued on page 6)

What I learned at the World Meeting of Families

By Francis DeBernardo

Bondings 2.0

Newwaysministry.org/blog

August 28, 2018

When I set out for Ireland nine days ago, I thought I was going there to report on a church conference. Instead, the experience has felt more like I was covering a revolution.

I know that is strong language, but that is how it felt. In over a quarter of a century of attending demonstrations which called for inclusion of and equality for LGBT people in the church, I have never experienced anything like the strong, confident, and resolved people that I encountered here in Dublin.

Part of the reason this week felt different was because it didn't feel like it was only a distinct group of protesters sending out a message: it felt like it was a whole nation. Taoiseach Leo Varadkar was accurate when in his address to the pope he informed the pontiff that Ireland had changed greatly since Pope John Paul had visited in 1979.

Ireland's resolve to support LGBT people is very much connected with their righteous anger at the miserable way church officials here had treated children and protected abusers for decades and decades. What seems to connect LGBT issues and clergy abuse issues in the Irish people's minds is that in both arenas, church officials refused to listen to stories of those who say that church policies have harmed them.

Church leaders should take note: ignoring people, pretending they don't exist, and not treating their stories as

valid harms people severely.

Since the early spring, the organizers of the World Meeting of Families appeared to try to shut out any public participation of LGBT families and to severely limit the discussion of LGBT issues at the event. After having spent a week in Dublin covering the World Meeting of Families as a journalist and an advocate, I have this to report about the organizers' efforts: they failed.

Far from stifling the discussion of LGBT issues, attempts to censor and exclude LGBT voices simply amplified them, if not at the WMF proper, then in the media discussion which surrounded the event. The organizers succeeded at doing the exact opposite of what they hoped to do.

The discussion of LGBT issues in news reports about the WMF helped to raise awareness that the Irish people, whose souls and culture are very Catholic, have rejected the church hierarchy's negative approach to LGBT topics. And like pro-LGBT Catholics around the world, their Catholic heritage and traditions are what inspire them to welcome and affirm LGBT people and to work for their equal treatment in church and society.

Part of the revolution that occurred here last week is that doors were opened. Fr. James Martin's talk on LGBT Catholic ministry was a powerful witness and a major milestone in the movement of parishioners and pastoral ministers who have worked so hard for so long to create welcoming spaces. His talk was a good prelude for future presenters to tell their faith and family sto-



T-shirt motto at World Meeting of Families

ries themselves as LGBT Catholics.

LGBT people and supporters found creative ways to get their message across to WMF participants through song and art and witness. They participated officially at the closing liturgy of the Pastoral Congress and the papal liturgy closing the WMF. They expressed their support of LGBT people in the press and with one another at the WMF. Archbishops and Cardinals were challenged to demonstrate support for LGBT people. Church leaders were encouraged to reconcile with the LGBT community. Catholic lay leaders spoke out strongly for

equality.

The momentum for LGBT equality which built up this week will be hard to slow down. We Are Church Ireland, a pro-LGBT Catholic reform group, deserves much of the credit for planning and assisting at so many of the week's events designed to demonstrate support for not only LGBT equality, but for women's ordination, and for justice for abuse victims. Their leadership will keep things going here on the Emerald Isle, and the member groups of the Global Network of Rainbow Catholics will help to spread that momentum around the world.

On my first full day at the World Meeting of Families, I snapped a photo of a volunteer with Trocaire, the overseas development charity of the Catholic Church in Ireland (similar to Catholic Relief Services in the U.S., CAFOD in the U.K., and Caritas in many other nations). He was wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with Trocaire's motto: "Until Love Conquers Fear." (photo left) Trocaire volunteers wearing that same T-shirt were visible all over the WMF venue.

That motto is apt for the revolution that I experienced here in Dublin. It was a revolution not of weapons and power, but a revolution designed to conquer fear with love.

What did I learn at the World Meeting of Families? I learned that through creative ways, strong faith, communal cooperation, and confident voices, love will conquer fear as we build a church of equality for LGBT people. ✚

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

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

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

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A response to concerns about a retreat for gay priests, brothers, and deacons

By Rev. Bryan Massingale

NCRonline.org

August 22, 2018

As the facilitator of this retreat [see news article on page 3], I offer these observations in response to concerns that have been raised about it:

1. Permission for a retreat?

This year I marked my 35th anniversary as a priest. Over the years, I have led retreats for all kinds of groups, including Christian women, Boy Scouts, confirmation candidates, seminarians, pastoral ministers, young adults, teachers and principals, parish councils, Black Catholics, Latino Catholics, Engaged Encounter, women religious, permanent deacons, campus ministry groups, those who have left the church and seek to return, and even Catholic cat lovers (!) Never was there a suggestion that advance notification was needed to act as a spiritual guide for the people of God.

Thus, it would never occur to me that a unique communication or permission would be expected in order to lead priests, deacons and brothers in prayer. These are my brothers, men with whom I share bonds of ministry, sacrament and life commitment. Frankly, I'm amazed, and sad, that there is such deep concern over a retreat for people who have pledged their lives in service to the church.

2. Secretive?

Some insinuate that there is something "clandestine" about this retreat gathering. To the contrary, this event has been publicized for over a year both in print and on the internet. The retreat's venue and theme — "Living in Truth: The Call to Authenticity" — have not been secret or hidden. Nor is there anything covert or nefarious about the retreat's content or activities. Indeed, I would warmly welcome my archbishop if he would want to attend and pray with this group.

3. Against church teaching?

New Ways Ministry has sponsored this retreat for priests, brothers and deacons for some years. Yes, this organization has questioned the adequacy of official teaching and policies on same-sex relationships. But to say that invalidates this retreat is a leap in logic, to say the least. It implies that any association with a group implies endorsement of all its practices.

More to the point: I myself — not New Ways Ministry — wrote the retreat's description in the promotional brochure. It reads: "Inspired by the Gospel of John, Jesus' call to live the truth (John 8:32) in order to have abundant life (John 10:10) will provide the focus for this retreat. Jesus invites us to pattern our ministry and our sexuality according to his embrace of the truth. Embracing God's truth, discovered in our deepest selves, both challenges and empowers us to live more authentically in every dimension of our lives."

I cannot see how anyone can read this and conclude that this retreat is "not in line with church teaching." Such an assertion, even before it happens, is at best unfounded — and perhaps even a sin of rash judgement.

4. 'Gay?'

This is the core issue. If this was a retreat for "senior" priests, "young" brothers, "retired" deacons or "alcoholic" priests, there would be no concern or consternation. The word "gay," with the fears and prejudices it conjures in the minds of some, is what makes this gathering of God's servants problematic.

Let's name the prejudice: There is a conviction among some that where two or more gay Christians are gathered, you don't find Jesus but a branch office of Sodom. A gay retreat, then, signifies nothing but an orgy with prayers.

The insinuation is that gays and lesbians, especially gay men, are so sexually undisciplined that any gathering becomes morally suspect and spiritually dangerous. To say this theologically, two or more gay people in a room equals an occasion of sin.

In such a mentality, a gay cleric or vowed religious becomes something "other" — a walking contradiction — tainted, deviant, and "less than" his straight brothers.

(This explains the constant efforts to blame the scourge of sexual abuse on gay priests — a gross slander that also ignores the horrors inflicted upon women victim-survivors.)

Stated bluntly, gay clergy and religious are an embarrassment for some in the church. "Gay" forces an uncomfortable public acknowledgment of what many already know, namely, that there are same-sex oriented priests, brothers, deacons — and bishops — who not only are members of the church but also serve it honorably as spiritual leaders.

This is precisely why this retreat is a felt need. Gay clerics and vowed religious have unique joys and challenges that arise because they strive to serve a church where too many view their presence with suspicion, alarm and even hostility and disdain.

Thus, the need to gather and prayerfully encounter the God who loves them even as they answer the call to serve a faith community that too often denigrates their sexuality, a "fundamental component of their personality" (Catholic Congregation for Education, 1983).

5. 'A dominant marker of identity' best lived in silence?

The Milwaukee archbishop's communication quotes a brother priest who expresses the belief that:

"The best pastoral experience of the Church, as well as our consistent teachings about who we are as persons, point to the reality that it is never healthy or holy to act out on same-sex desires, even in the realm of the merely emotional. Much healthier and holier is the attitude that our sexual desires are simply one facet of who we are as persons, rather than making them our dominant marker of identity with a term such as 'gay.'"

There are many problems with this statement. First, church teachings actually encourage gay men and lesbian women to form affectionate and nurturing friendships.

To maintain that such affection must lack "emotion" in order to be holy or

healthy is unrealistic and inhuman.

More to the point: The statement that priests who use the word "gay" are making their sexual desires "a dominant marker of identity" is a gratuitous assertion. Pope Francis, in perhaps his most famous statement, used the word "gay" while speaking of someone whom he described as possessing a desire to "search for the Lord." The Holy Father recognizes that a priest can be gay and have an innermost desire to be conformed to the person of Christ. In a word, to be holy. Identifying as "gay," then, does not mean that "sexual desires" must become a man's defining or core identity.

But the fundamental issue with this statement is that it conveys a conviction that gay persons — and especially priests — should live hidden lives where their sexuality is veiled from public view and cloaked in silence. And that such a life is the best path to health and holiness. I strongly disagree.

In fact, I argue that a toxic culture of secrecy is a major contributor to the waves of sexual scandal that have plagued our church and devastated the lives of untold thousands. Silence feeds shame; and these breed sexual immaturity, abusive pathology and systemic dishonesty.

In this time of crisis, the laity don't want to hear only about a "joyful witness to celibacy," as this priest suggests. (Note how this summons ignores the existence of married priests). They want church leaders who are spiritually healthy, psychologically mature, and sexually honest.

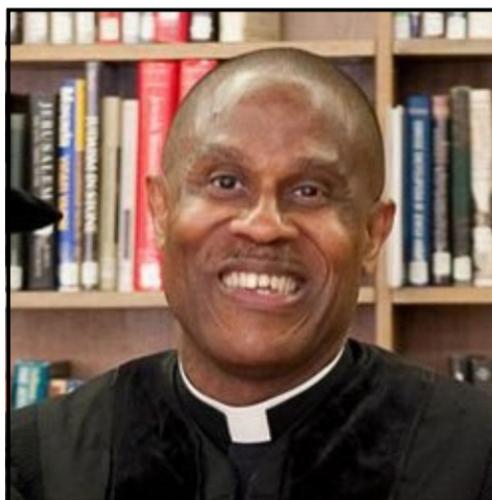
Above all, they want bishops of integrity who prioritize the welfare of the faithful over the reputation of the institution.

I believe that this retreat, which prayerfully considers the joys and challenges of "living in truth and authenticity," is one way of creating a "healthier and holier" climate in our church and a safer environment for all of God's people.

In conclusion, it is sad that a group of people who want to pray arouses such concern and even hysteria. Especially a prayerful assembly of ministers who serve Christ's church.

I am honored to lead this retreat. I believe it will be an occasion of grace, not only for those who attend, but also for the church we serve and love. ✚

*Fr. Bryan Massingale is a theology professor at Fordham University in New York. He is the author of *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*.*



Fr. Bryan Massingale

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info@NewWaysMinistry.org

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Archbishop questions retreat for 'gay priests, brothers, and deacons'

By James Dearie
NCRonline.org
August 22, 2018

A retreat for gay priests, brothers and deacons in Wisconsin scheduled to take place for the fourth year in a row is coming under fire from conservative Catholic media and the local archbishop.

"Living in Truth: The Call to Authenticity" is planned Oct. 2-4 at the Siena Retreat Center in Racine, in the Milwaukee Archdiocese. It is sponsored by New Ways Ministry, and Fordham professor of theology Fr. Bryan Massingale is slated as the retreat leader.

The retreat became a matter of controversy in early August, when articles began appearing in conservative Catholic media criticizing the retreat and calling on Catholics to contact Milwaukee Archbishop Jerome Listecki about it.

In an August 9 letter to parishes in the diocese also posted online, Listecki said that "With so many inquiring if this retreat is directly connected to the Archdiocese, which it is not, I felt obligated to clarify. ... This event is not in line with Catholic Church teaching and is in no way connected to or endorsed by the archdiocese, and New Ways Ministry is not a Catholic organization."

New Ways Ministry executive director Francis DeBernardo told NCR that the bishop's letter was the first time the diocese had expressed an objection to the retreat, now in its fourth year.

In his letter, Listecki recommended an article about the retreat by Fr. Nathan Reesman hosted on the archdiocese's website. In the article, Reesman, the archdiocese's chaplain for Courage and EnCourage, organizations that promote abstinence among Catholic LGBT people, says that "More often than not, a man or woman who chooses to define himself or herself as 'gay' is doing so because they believe their same-sex inclination is their defining attribute, and this belief allows them to live a lifestyle that normalizes same-sex relationships, either on a merely emotional level or also on the physical level."

Reesman also said that holding the

retreat now, as "we are living through the horror of frequent headlines about the deviant behaviors by male clergy with younger men or boys, was "very poor timing."

"In such a delicate climate, one wonders why any extra attention should be drawn to the reality of same sex attraction in the Catholic clergy under such an ambiguous title as this upcoming retreat for 'gay' priests," he said.

New Ways Ministry responded to the bishop's letter with a statement Aug. 17, saying one of the "primary goals" of such retreats is "to help men who have made a promise or vow of celibacy to live out that commitment in healthy and holy ways. Few programs such as these exist in our church. We encourage church leaders to provide programs to help these men avoid frustrated lives, deal with their sexual feelings in a healthy way, and integrate their sexuality with their spirituality."

The group also took issue with Reesman's characterization of LGBT identity.

"The term 'gay' does not mean that individuals make their sexual orientation the dominant marker of themselves, any more than calling someone Italian or Polish makes that attribute the dominant marker of the individual," New Ways Ministry said.

"The retreat participants have often reported that their primary identity marker is as a member and minister of the Catholic Church," the group added, asking

given the information that had been made public on the event, what "led the Archbishop to conclude that the retreat 'is not in line with Catholic Church teaching'?"

"The part not in line with Catholic teaching would be the part sponsored by New Ways Ministry, as clearly articulated by His Eminence Francis Cardinal George (May he rest in peace)," Jerry Topczewski, Listecki's chief of staff told NCR, referencing a document by the Chicago archbishop when he was president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2010, which said, "... New Ways Ministry has no approval or recognition from

the Catholic Church and that they cannot speak on behalf of the Catholic faithful in the United States."

Massingale, a Milwaukee Archdiocese priest since his ordination in 1983 who disputes the characterization of the retreat as being at odds with Catholic teaching, issued his own statement on the matter, published today on NCR.

Fr. Fred Daly, a priest of the Syracuse Diocese who attended a retreat by New Ways Ministry last year, told NCR that he found the retreat to be a time of

'wreaking great devastation in the vineyard of the Lord,' " quoting from a letter by Bishop Robert Morlino released last week that blamed a "homosexual subculture" for the abuse scandal in the church. The email encouraged readers to contact the Siena Retreat Center to request that the retreat be cancelled.

Nevertheless, the retreat is set to go forward, and DeBernardo says the group will "definitely" continue to put on similar events in the future.

"Each year that we've done [the retreats], as the word spreads, more and more priests, brothers and deacons register. So there really is need for gay priests to develop their spirituality, and develop friendships with one another, mainly because of so much negative messaging they receive from the Vatican, from members of the hierarchy, or even Catholics in the pews."

In a statement emailed to NCR, the Racine Dominicans said that "All are welcome" at the retreat center "as long as their purpose is not contrary to the uplifting mission and vision of the retreat center... A retreat that supports gay priests, deacons and brothers to live authentically the vocation to which they have been called aligns well with the mission and philosophy of the retreat center, which is to nurture a healing and holistic spirituality in an environment of joy, peace, and beauty."

"New Ways Ministry invites Archbishop Listecki to dialogue with us and with the gay priests who live and serve in his Archdiocese," New Ways Ministry's statement says at its conclusion, "so that he can learn more about the pressures these men experience and about the blessings that they bring to the community through their priesthood." †



Archbishop Jerome Listecki

contemplation and prayer shared between priests facing many of the same issues. "What could the objection be to that?" he said.

Listecki said in his statement that he cannot stop the retreat, but there is still an effort to force its cancellation. An email from Men of Christ Aug. 21 said that the retreat "implicitly endor[s] mortal sin," while "that very mortal sin is

New Zealand Catholic bishops 'humbly acknowledge shortcomings' with LGBT

By Chris Reed
The New Zealand Herald
Auckland, New Zealand
June 21, 2018

Leaders of the Catholic Church in New Zealand say they "humbly acknowledge" their shortcomings, especially with regards to groups such as the LGBT and migrant communities.

The comment was in a statement by Cardinal John Dew, Catholic Archbishop of Wellington and vice-president of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference (NZCBC), in response to new research showing a sharp decline in the percentage of New Zealanders who identify as Christian.

Dew said the NZCBC, national body for the heads of the six Catholic dioceses, "humbly acknowledge our shortcomings, especially with regards to particular groups in society, such as the LGBT community who have felt a very real sense of rejection through the Church, or perhaps in falling short in fully meeting the needs of our recent migrant communities".

"We hear too the call of those who want to see our actions speak louder than our words, by living out the values that Jesus represents. . . .

The research is in a report titled Faith and Belief and New Zealand and commissioned by the Wilberforce Foundation, a Christian organisation based in Auckland. . . .

The "Church's teaching on homosexuality" is the biggest blocker to New Zealanders engaging with Christianity, the report says. Dew's reference to the LGBT community chimes with a column by the Catholic Bishop of Auckland, Patrick Dunn, published last year.

In a piece titled "Building a bridge, our gay brothers and sisters" and published by NZ Catholic, he wrote that he, like many others, has gay friends and family members.

"For some years I have been troubled by the sense of rejection they often feel with regard to the Church," he wrote. "Could we find some new way to converse with the LGBT community?"

He goes on to say: "Compassion calls us to 'listen' to people. What is it really like growing up as a gay boy, or a lesbian girl, or a transgender person?"

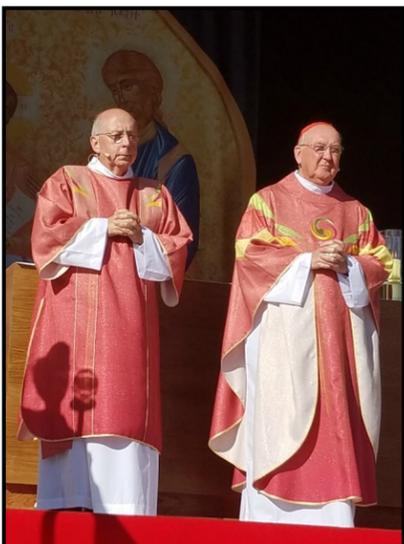
"Deeply embedded in Catholic Church teaching is the call to stand by all who feel marginalised or threatened.

"Sensitivity prompts us to be alert to the 'feelings' of others, but we cannot know their feelings unless we are their friends.

"Devout Catholics may say that our first responsibility is to tell people to stop sinning.

"But that was generally not the approach taken by Jesus. He was more often the butt of criticism for dining with sinners and clearly enjoying their company." †

Deacon/Father of Trans and Bi Daughters Assists at World Meeting of Families Closing Mass



Deacon Ray Dever, who is the father of a transgender daughter and a bisexual daughter, and who has written eloquently on *Bondings 2.0*, New Ways Ministry's blog about his family and ministerial roles, served liturgically at the closing Mass of the Pastoral Congress portion of the World Meeting of Families (WMF) in Dublin.

Deacon Dever and his transgender daughter, Lexi, were panel speakers on LGBT family issues at New Ways Ministry's Eighth National Symposium in April 2017. He serves pastorally at St. Paul parish, Tampa, Florida.

LEFT: Deacon Ray assists Cardinal Kevin Farrell, head of the Vatican Dicastery for Marriage, Family, and Life. RIGHT: Deacon Ray proclaims the Gospel. †

Photos credit: Francis DeBernardo

In Ireland, Catholic agency helps gay couples

By Ellen Coyne
The Times
London, UK
July 18, 2018

A state-funded Catholic marriage counselling service will offer help to same-sex couples for the first time.

Accord, the counselling service run by the Irish Catholic Bishops, had a formal policy of not accepting gay and lesbian couples on religious grounds.

Earlier this year, *The Times* disclosed that the government was threatening to withdraw funding from any organisations that discriminated against people because of their sexual orientation. The agency has now agreed that it will not turn away same-sex couples.

Accord has had to sign a new service level agreement and if it is caught discriminating against anyone it could lose its funding or be shut down. †

Catholic student councils back Philippine gay rights bill

By Leonel Abasola
UCAnews.com
August 13, 2018

MANILA—Support for the passage of a bill designed to end discrimination on the basis of gender and sexuality in the Philippines has gained support from student leaders at Catholic schools in the country.

Senators have also expressed support for the proposed Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression Equality bill in Congress.

Student councils of several Catholic schools are also supporting the proposed law, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of a person's sexual orientation.

Ignoring possible sanctions from their schools, student councils from seven Catholic schools in Manila released a joint statement on Aug. 10 expressing support for the proposed measure.

The students called on legislators to move for the bill's approval, saying that "brought up on the Christian values of love and acceptance ... we must forge a society grounded on equality."

The Lower House of Congress has already passed its version of the proposed measure but debated the bill a record 26 times.

"Every day with discrimination, people of diverse [sexual orientation and gender identity] get thrown out of their

schools and homes, outed and ridiculed in the streets, barred from full employment and deprived of access to healthcare," read the students' statement.

am College, St. Scholastica's College and the College of St. Benilde cited their "Christian upbringing" in pressing for the passage of the measure.

ports the proposed measure, said it would be a "great legacy" of the Senate "if we are able to pass the anti-discrimination measure during our watch."

"The state should protect the rights of all its citizens, which include members of the [lesbians, gays, bisexual, transgender] community," said Legarda, adding that no person should be discriminated on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.

The Catholic bishops' conference issued a statement supporting a proposed anti-discrimination law back in 2015.

The bishops, however, made it clear that they do not encourage choosing one's gender or performing homosexual acts, among other things.

The prelates said an anti-discrimination law is a "gesture of charity" if discrimination means that certain individuals, because of sexual orientation or gender identity, are systematically denied fundamental human rights. †



Philippine Catholic students show their support for the passage of the proposed Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression Equality bill in Congress during a press briefing.

The student councils of the Jesuit-run Ateneo de Manila, the Dominican University of Santo Tomas, San Beda University, De La Salle University, Miri-

The bill was sponsored by Senator Risa Hontiveros on Dec. 14, 2016, but has faced an uphill battle in the Senate. Senator Loren Legarda, who sup-

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

Orange:

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

Colorado

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

Connecticut

Guilford: St. George's
Hartford: St. Patrick-St. Anthony

Delaware

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

District of Columbia

Holy Trinity, St. Matthew Cathedral

Florida

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

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 Lourdes, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Old St. Patrick
Clarendon Hills: Notre Dame
Country Club Hills: St. Emeric
Evanston: St. Nicholas
Inverness: Holy Family
Johnston City: St. Paul
Morton Grove: St. Martha
Oak Park: Ascension, St. Catherine of Sienna-St. Lucy, St. Giles
Schaumburg: St. Marcelline

Indiana

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

Iowa

Coralville: St. Thomas More
Des Moines: Holy Trinity

Kentucky

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

Louisiana

New Orleans: St. Augustine

Maine

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

Maryland

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

Massachusetts

Amherst: Newman Catholic Center of UMass
Boston: St. Joseph, Paulist Center, St. Anthony Shrine, St. Cecilia
Buzzard's Bay: St. Margaret's/St. Mary's
East Longmeadow: St. Michael
Newton: St. Ignatius
Provincetown: St. Peter
Sharon: Our Lady of Sorrows
Springfield: Sacred Heart
Whitinsville: St. Patrick

Michigan

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

Minnesota

Minneapolis: St. Frances Cabrini, St. Joan of Arc
St. Paul: St. Thomas More

Missouri

Kansas City: Guardian Angels, Holy Family, St. James

(Continued on page 5)

Overcoming Welcome-ish: A Challenge to LGBT-Friendly Parishes

By Cristina Traina

Bondings 2.0
Newwaysministry.org/blog
September 10, 2018

Readers of *Bondings 2.0* probably know how an ambivalent welcome feels. Last month's World Meeting of Families in Dublin just magnified our everyday experience in the Church. On one hand a family involved in Dublin's monthly "All Are Welcome" Mass for LGBT folk and allies was invited to help carry the offering at the closing papal Mass of the WMF; Deacon Ray Dever, father of out bisexual and transgender daughters, assisted at the closing Mass of the WMF conference. On the other hand, LGBT Catholic organizations were denied exhibit space even though there was no shortage of space in the exhibit hall. LGBT folk and their allies are welcomed, but not fully welcome: "welcome-ish."

Earlier this summer Nathan Kennedy, who writes at *The Bookish Bear Blog*, reflected on why LGBTQ people often have this experience even in "welcoming" churches. Rainbow flags don't keep most churches from being "overwhelmingly cisgender, heterosexual spaces," he argues. More inclusive theology is a start, but. . .

"You're going to have to change the very atmosphere of the church itself. You're going to need to look at the language, preaching, unspoken yet strictly

enforced social norms—practically every aspect of your church's life—and address how they might exclude LGBTQ+ persons."

He also reminds us how difficult it is for many LGBTQ folks even to enter a church. For them, church often is a place not of safety but of trauma, thanks to the condemnation they have experienced there. For anyone who has "suffered chronic abuses in religious communities," thus "any religious setting or language has the potential for causing a triggering event."

This script is a special case of what Kennedy calls "the pastoral gaze," defined as "the subtle but constant pressure to be something or someone different" that can pervade church communities. The message is that we accept you as you are, but of course we expect that you'll gradually shed your old allegiances and behaviors and conform your life to one of a few recognizable scripts.

In that regard, some of Kennedy's most challenging words have to do with sex. He hints that, elevating celibacy and monogamous marriage, Christian communities are afraid to think honestly about the forms sexual behavior and desire that people both inside and outside the community may find meaningful:

"Even among progressive Christians, the ground of ethical reflection isn't on the sexual lives and desires people actually have, but on some script of how they should be. Very few churches

have the conceptual, pastoral, or theological space necessary to support the non-monogamous, polyamorous, or BDSM aligned relationships, nor to explore the significance of non-platonic, non-romantic relationships."

He urges churches not to condemn these practices out of hand but to use them as a starting point: "[LGBTQ folk] want and need to integrate our sex lives with our religious lives." Do we invite and learn from everyone's prayerful reflections on the connection between their meaningful intimate lives and their faith? Are we brave enough to reflect on our own experience in the same way?

After all, he notes, both LGBTQ and straight, cis people tend to find community and spiritual encounter not by putting their bottoms in seats every Sunday but through "online communities, fandoms, and social movements." In particular, churches need "to take seriously and be aware of [LGBTQ] vehicles of meaning" and "be fundamentally non-judgmental about them." Churches can take a few pointers from the ways these spaces function, too.

Finally, he says, theoretical support for LGBTQ folk does not always result in actual inclusion. It's one thing if a church allows LGBTQ folk to be ordained in theory; it's another if a church actually calls out LGBTQ folks to key pastoral positions and, further, accepts out LGBTQ pastors with same-sex partners or other family arrangements. We

might add, it's one thing if a parish baptizes the children of same-sex parents, it's another if it welcomes those parents as religious education teachers or school volunteers.

Kennedy's post is not for the faint of heart. You may think that some of the experiences and systems of value to which he wants Christians to be open are beyond the Christian pale. To be sure, not every possible relationship, not every possible behavior, is life-giving.

Still, if you've made it this far in today's blog, you'll have realized that most of Kennedy's plea to suspend judgment and listen hospitably apply equally well to the way to treat non-LGBTQ folk. They too can be "church-traumatized," overwhelmed by the "pastoral gaze," and unsure that they can safely reveal their whole history.

The bottom line of his challenging argument is that Christian churches are often hypocritical and "holier than thou." But as Pope Francis has said, "a guest" should not be preached at but "listened to." If being a Christian really is about welcoming people as they really are and listening to them with compassion, our behavior needs to match our words.

It wouldn't hurt to start with being honest about where we really are, in our own non-conformity and brokenness. ✦

Cristina Traina is a member of New Ways Ministry's Advisory Board.

(Continued from page 4)

St. Joseph: St. Francis Xavier
St. Louis: St. Cronan, St. Margaret of Scotland, St. Pius V

Montana
Billings: Holy Rosary, St. Pius X

Nebraska
Omaha: Holy Family, Sacred Heart

Nevada
Las Vegas: Christ the King, Guardian Angel Cathedral

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

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

New Mexico
Albuquerque: Holy Family,
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
Ithaca: St. Catherine of Siena
Manhattan: Ascension, Blessed Sacrament, Holy Name of Jesus, St. Francis deSales, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Francis Xavier, St. Ignatius Loyola, St. Paul the Apostle
Pittsford: Church of Transfiguration
Rochester: Blessed Sacrament, St. Mary (Downtown), St. Monica
Saratoga Springs: St. Peter
Schenectady: St. Luke
Syracuse: St. Lucy, All Saints

Utica: Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Historic Old St. John's
Wading River: St. John the Baptist
Wantagh: St. Frances de Chantal
West Islip: Our Lady of Lourdes
Westbury: St. Brigid

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

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

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

Pennsylvania
Danville: St. Joseph
Latrobe: St. Vincent Basilica
Philadelphia: Old St. Joseph, Old St. Mary, St. John the Evangelist, St. Vincent DePaul
Wilkesburg: St. James

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

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

Texas
Austin: Univ. of Texas Catholic Center
Colleyville: Good Shepherd
Dallas: Holy Trinity
El Paso: All Saints
Houston: St. Anne, St. Teresa
Odessa: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
Plano: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

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

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

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



Canada
Montreal: Holy Cross, Saint-Pierre-Apôtre,
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
Orange: Koinonia
Pleasanton: Catholic Community of Pleasanton
San Diego: Mary Magdalene Catholic Community

District of Columbia
Communitas

Florida
Tampa: Franciscan Center

Iowa
Coralville: Full Circle Small Faith Community

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

Michigan
Grand Rapids: Marywood

Kalamazoo: Lambda Catholics

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

Ohio
Dayton: Living Beatitudes Community

Oregon
Portland: Journey and Koinonia Catholic Community

Pennsylvania
Drexel Hill: St. Mary Magdalene Community
Pittsburgh: Dignity/Pittsburgh

Virginia
Arlington: NOVA Catholic Community

Washington
Lacey: Holy Wisdom Inclusive Catholic Community

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

Judge denies Catholic discrimination claim in foster care case

By Julia Terruso
Philly.com
July 132, 2018

Philadelphia can require its foster care agencies to adhere to its nondiscrimination policies, a federal judge said Friday in a decision that could have national repercussions.

U.S. District Court Judge Petrese B. Tucker found that the city did not violate the religious liberties of Catholic Social Services (CSS) when it suspended its contract with the agency for foster-care services after discovering that the agency would not work with same-sex couples.

The Department of Human Services had a legitimate interest in ensuring "that the pool of foster parents and resource caregivers is as diverse and broad as the children in need of foster parents," Tucker wrote in a decision Friday denying CSS's request for a temporary restraining order to resume its work for the city.

The city welcomed the news. "As the court found, the city has a legitimate interest in ensuring that when we employ contractors to provide governmental services, that those services are accessible to all Philadelphians who are qualified for the services," spokeswoman Deana Gamble said in a statement. "Regrettably, by refusing to certify same-sex couples, CSS is ruling out qualified families who are willing to provide care for children in

need, who can be certified, and who have roots in this community."

DHS has said that it will not remove children already in CSS-certified families, and has and will continue to make exceptions in some cases, including placing a child with a sibling already in a CSS home.

Attorneys for CSS, who filed the lawsuit along with three foster parents, said they would appeal.

"Foster children deserve loving homes, and foster parents like Ms. Fulton and Mrs. Paul have been waiting with open arms to welcome them," said Lori Windham, senior counsel at Becket Law. "But the city has put politics above the children, and today the court allowed the city's discriminatory actions to continue — a decision we will immediately appeal." Cecilia Paul, a foster parent through CSS for 46 years, and Sharonell Fulton, another foster parent, were among those filing the suit and testified on behalf of CSS in last month's hearing before Tucker.

The case stemmed from an instance last year in which a same-sex couple interested in fostering were turned away from Bethany Christian Services after the agency learned they were gay. Their story appeared in March in the *Inquirer* and *Daily News*. The story also noted that Bethany and CSS had policies preventing staff from working with same-sex couples.

At the time, the city said it was un-

ware of the discriminatory policies, and stopped foster-care referrals to both agencies following the report. Bethany has since changed its policy and will resume work with the city, according to court testimony.

CSS sued, arguing over three days of testimony that requiring the organization to abandon its religious beliefs in order to care for kids infringed on its religious freedoms, and that the suspension put children in need of good homes at risk. Staff from CSS testified that the organization had about 30 certified homes going unused. . . .

In testimony, James Amato, who heads CSS's foster care program, said conducting a home study to certify a family "is essentially a validation of the relationships in that home." He said that because a same-sex couple's relationship "is not one that is acceptable in terms of church teaching," to certify such a couple would violate the organization's religious beliefs. . . .

CSS has several other contracts with the city that remain unaffected, including a contract with DHS as one of 10 community umbrella organizations that work with children and families already in the foster-care system. CSS has additional contracts with the Office of Homeless Services, the Department of Public Health, Planning and Development, and the Office of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disability Services, that are unaffected by the ruling.

In her decision, Tucker agreed with the city's assertion that CSS's policy against

working with same-sex couples violated Philadelphia's Fair Practices Ordinance, which forbids city contractors from discriminating on the base of sexuality.

She noted that testimony indicated that CSS could be in violation of another aspect of the ordinance, one unaffiliated with this case. CSS's Amato had testified that his organization requires a letter from a clergy member from all interested foster parents. The denomination of the sender does not matter but Tucker called the condition problematic. . . .

The ACLU of Pennsylvania, which filed a brief in support of the city, celebrated the decision as the first of its kind in the nation and said it could have a bearing on similar cases pending in Michigan and Texas.

"When faith-based agencies choose to receive taxpayer dollars to provide public child-welfare services, their religious beliefs cannot trump the best interests of the children in their care," said Leslie Cooper, deputy director of the ACLU's LGBT and HIV Project. "The court saw it was not only permissible for the City of Philadelphia to prohibit discrimination by its contract agencies, but that allowing the use of religious screening requirements in the public child welfare system would likely violate the Constitution." ✦

Recognizing, Understanding, and Affirming Asexual People

By Catherine Buck
Bondings 2.0
NewWaysMinistry.org/blog
July 19, 2018

There's a small change in one of the definitions of Fr. James Martin's second edition of *Building a Bridge: How the Catholic Church and the LGBT Community Can Enter into a Relationship of Respect, Compassion and Sensitivity*. The change may be minor, but it makes a world of difference to a particular group of people who are often forgotten.

The 2016 recipient of New Ways Ministry's Bridge Building Award, Fr. Martin has been speaking around the U.S. about LGBT issues since the publication of his book last year. The change in the second edition of his book grew out of a conversation with a member of the audience at one of his appearances.

In *The Asexual* online journal, Grace Gist recounts her experience asking Fr. Martin to revise his definition of the 'A' in the LGBTQ+ acronym to indicate asexuals, rather than allies. Gist first read the initial version of *Building a Bridge* leading up to one of Fr. Martin's talks:

"He recognizes that LGBTQ and LGBTQ+ are common, but in explaining the latter he listed the A to mean ally. I was disappointed, but not terribly surprised—the A gets left out and mis-

identified often enough that us ace folks begrudgingly expect it, but that doesn't mean the mistake doesn't sting."

Following the lecture she attended, Gist approached Fr. Martin at the book signing. She thanked him for his

"openness in learning" more about the subjects he writes on, and then made her correction about the 'A' definition listed.

"He thanked me for this information. He pulled out a small notebook, wrote this down, and told me he was glad to know. He didn't just listen to what I had to say—he heard me, properly and genuinely."

The experience of being heard by Fr. Martin individually was to the author "a most remarkable joy" of being seen "without question." Then, beyond this initial personal connection, when the second edition of the book was released, the definition was there with an update. Gist writes:

"Asexuality isn't a focus of the book, but to have the word there in black and white, however small, is a powerful,

joyful thing."

Public representation among the asexual community is small but growing. The Asexuality Visibility and Education Network (AVEN) explains asexuality:



"It's a lack of sexual attraction. Asexuals are generally very different from one another: some experience romantic attraction, some don't. Some experience arousal, some don't. Asexuality is not celibacy — celibacy is a choice to abstain from sexual intimacy while asexuality is an orientation which results in lack of sexual attraction."

Among their FAQs, AVEN further contrasts asexuality and celibacy, where the former is a sexual identity characterized by lack of sexual attraction, and the former an intentional lifestyle choice often celebrated in the Catholic church and practiced by members of the clergy and vowed religious communities. AVEN also draws a distinction between sexual and romantic attraction:

"Asexuals may regard other people as aesthetically attractive without feeling sexual attraction to them. Some asexual people also experience the desire of being affectionate to other people without it being sexual."

A good proportion of asexuals get crushes on others and fall in love. Emotional and romantic attraction are separate from sexual attraction for them. For some people these forces are connected, but they are not joined for asexual people. Many asexuals talk about having a 'romance drive'. They need to be intimate with another special person, it's just that the intimacy they desire isn't sexual."

While there may not be clear reasons for conflict between the church and asexual individuals, it is important to continue to affirm their existence as real and valid, and one worth including fully in conversations about how to fully serve all members of the church. ✦

The witch hunt for gay priests

(Continued from page 1)

and religious order superiors fear that their men (again, celibate and chaste priests) could be targeted by the media or homophobic websites. Third, an underlying shame about their sexuality. Fourth, an innate desire for privacy about a personal aspect of one's life. Fifth, the fear that in the absence of other "out" priests one might become the "poster boy" for the group.

Such reasons mean that the example of the many hardworking, healthy and celibate gay priests (and chaste members of religious orders) is almost entirely absent from both the church's consciousness and the public eye. There are exceptions, like the Rev. Gregory Greiten of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and the Rev. Fred Daley of the Diocese of Syracuse, priests who have come out publicly as gay. But Fathers Greiten and Daley are two of only a handful of clergy like this. And until bishops and religious superiors support gay priests in their

desires to be more public about who they are, and gay priests are willing to pay the price of honesty, the situation is unlikely to change.

Consequently, the stereotype of the "gay priest abuser" now predominates. To use another example, imagine if the only stories aired about members of an ethnic, social or religious group were of those who had committed crimes. Further, imagine that no positive stories about their law-abiding members were made public. Eventually, the negative stereotype would dominate: "All members of this group are criminals." (Sadly, this is not a hard scenario to imagine: Many ethnic groups face the same kinds of stereotypes.)

This fear leads to a cycle of secrecy: Fewer celibate gay priests in the public eye means more stereotyping. More stereotyping leads to more fear. More fear leads to more secrecy.

Other malign stereotypes are also being peddled, for example, the idea that

homosexuality inevitably leads to abuse. This is contradicted by almost every study, including the John Jay Report, an exhaustive study of sex abuse in the Catholic Church between 1950 and 2010. Most abuse happens in families. And no one, as far as I know, suggests that heterosexuality promotes abuse.

Beyond these reasons is a perhaps more important explanation: the intense homophobia that still exists in some quarters of the church. And this must be named for what it is: hate. A few days ago, a gay priest texted me this astute observation: "We are so used to gay people being mistreated in the church that we can internalize the homophobic bigotry that we are now seeing, and that Viganò expressed in his testimony, and fail to call it out. It's deeply hateful. And if he were making similar attacks against another ethnic or religious group, there would be a far different reaction—probably even from within the church. But because gay priests have been so

conditioned to play the scapegoat we are too ashamed to speak out."

Is there a "gay subculture" in the church? I have never worked in the Vatican, so I cannot comment on that workplace. But in my 30 years as a Jesuit, I have seen that gay priests in U.S. dioceses, as well as in religious orders, work well with their straight counterparts—as well as with straight lay people: pastoral associates, parish council members, parishioners, as well as principals, administrators and teachers. In religious life, they live peaceably with their straight brothers.

More to the point, I know hundreds of gay priests, and I can say with honesty that all of them strive to keep their promises of celibacy and vows of chastity, none of them conspire with other gay priests, and yet many of them are demoralized by this increasingly hate-fueled witch hunt. ✦

Can the Catholic Church 'Evolve' on L.G.B.T. Rights?

By John Gehring
The New York Times
July 5, 2018

A growing number of Americans now broadly support equal rights for gay, lesbian and transgender people. It's tempting to view this as inevitable, but less than a decade ago many Democrats, including Barack Obama, didn't even publicly support same-sex marriage. The speed at which L.G.B.T. rights became a mainstream issue, including for many religious denominations, represents nothing less than a dizzying cultural transformation.

What does this revolution mean for the Catholic Church, an ancient institution that thinks in centuries, and holds a view of human sexuality at odds with the shifting cultural winds?

Well, last week, the Vatican used "L.G.B.T." for what is believed to be the first time ever in a document prepared for a major gathering of bishops and young people in October. "Some L.G.B.T. youth," it reads, want to "benefit from greater closeness and experience greater care from the church." The document also acknowledges that many young Catholics disagree with the church's teaching on same-sex marriage.

Not exactly breaking news, you might argue. But adopting "L.G.B.T." is emblematic of an emerging shift in the church's posture toward gay, lesbian and transgender people. Catholic teaching documents have typically used "homosexual" or referred to those with "homosexual tendencies," which reduce a person's multidimensional humanity to the mechanics of sex. Using the L.G.B.T. descriptor, often preferred by many gay, lesbian and transgender people, is a sign of respect.

Pope Francis has opened space for a deeper, more authentic conversation about how the church can keep one foot planted in Catholic tradition without being afraid to step into the lived experiences of others. When Pope Francis

gave the most famous papal sound bite in history five years ago — "Who am I to judge?" — even his colloquial use of the word "gay" caused a stir in traditional Catholic circles. While the pope has strongly defended church teaching on marriage as exclusively between a man and a woman, he prioritizes listening and personal encounter over finger-wagging denunciations. He's met with transgender people, and when he spoke privately last month with a Chilean clergy sexual abuse survivor, the pope told him that God made him gay and loved him. . . .

The pope's emphasis on encounter and engagement is trickling down to influence other church leaders. Cardinal Joe Tobin of Newark welcomed a pilgrimage of L.G.B.T. Catholics to the city's cathedral last spring. In this month's issue of *U.S. Catholic* magazine, a deacon in the diocese of St. Petersburg, Fla. [see page 3], wrote movingly about his transgender daughter, and challenged the church's notion of "gender ideology," a term that has been used to discredit the push for transgender rights.

Despite this progress, the Catholic Church must do far more not only to acknowledge the humanity of L.G.B.T. people, but also to recognize most want the same committed, loving relationships as straight couples. After the Supreme Court's 2015 decision legalizing same-sex marriage, Cardinal Blase Cupich of Chicago called for "real, not rhetorical" respect for gays and lesbians.

The court decision, which he opposed, still offered an opportunity for "mature and serene reflections," the cardinal wrote.

"Although 'marriage for all' differs clearly from the church's concept of marriage, it's now political reality," the bishop said. "We have to ask ourselves how we're encountering those who form such relationships, and are also involved in the church, how we're accompanying them pastorally and liturgically."

The church's own language toward L.G.B.T. people is a stumbling block to its professed commitment to human dignity. While the Catholic catechism, which details church teaching, forbids any violence or "unjust discrimination"

toward people who are gay or lesbian, it also describes sexual intimacy between them as "intrinsically disordered." Before he became pope, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger wrote in 1986 that homosexuality represents a "strong tendency ordered toward an intrinsic moral evil." Many L.G.B.T. Catholics are

also forced to live in what the Rev. Bryan Massingale, a Fordham University theologian, calls "the open closet." This is particularly true at Catholic schools, where in recent years more than 70 L.G.B.T. church employees and Catholic schoolteachers have been fired or lost their jobs in employment disputes. L.G.B.T. Catholic employees have their lives subjected to moral scrutiny in ways heterosexual Catholics never do.

Straight Catholics are not fired for using contraception, for example, or having sex before marriage. Why not judge Catholics for not welcoming immigrants, feeding the hungry or visiting the sick? In the Gospel of Matthew, failing to do that earns you a ticket to damnation.

Five years into the Francis papacy, a pope who emphasizes mercy and strikes a more welcoming tone toward L.G.B.T. people is helping to rescue the church from a culture-war Christianity that drives people away. But until the Catholic hierarchy can find more tangible ways to institutionalize a commitment to the rights of gay, lesbian and transgender people, the exodus of Catholics will continue. Surveys show most Catholics support same-sex marriage, and the church's opposition to L.G.B.T. rights drives young people away.

Those who are raised Catholic are more likely than those raised in any other religion to cite negative religious treatment of gay and lesbian people as the primary reason they leave, according to the nonpartisan Public Religion Research Institute. Firing L.G.B.T. Catholics and using degrading language such as "intrinsically disordered" erode the church's credibility to speak about justice, love and human dignity.

If the first step toward change is listening, Bishop John Stowe of Lexington, Ky., had it right when he addressed a national gathering of L.G.B.T. Catholics last year. "In a church that has not always valued or welcomed your presence, we need to hear your voices and take seriously your experiences," he said.

It's time to make sure that is more than just an applause line. †

John Gehring is Catholic program director at Faith in Public Life and author of The Francis Effect: A Radical Pope's Challenge to the American Catholic Church.

Catholic leaders in the United States should consider studying a proposal made by Bishop Franz-Josef Bode, the vice president of the German bishops' conference, who has encouraged a thoughtful discussion on whether Catholic clergymen might offer a type of blessing for Catholics in same-sex relationships.

LGBT-friendly Catholic Colleges and Universities



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

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|--|--|---|---|
| <p>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, Clarke University</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, Marygrove College
<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's College
<i>Bronx:</i> Fordham University, Manhattan College
<i>Buffalo:</i> Canisius College
<i>Loudonville:</i> Siena College
<i>New Rochelle:</i> College of New Rochelle, Iona College
<i>Poughkeepsie:</i> Marist College
<i>Rochester:</i> St. John Fisher College
<i>St. Bonaventure:</i> St. Bonaventure Univ.
<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>Immaculata:</i> Immaculata University
<i>Philadelphia:</i> Chestnut Hill College, LaSalle University, St. Joseph's Univ.
<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 Univ.</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</p> <p>Canada
<i>Toronto:</i> Regis College</p> |
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Ethicist says Church teaching on gender 'not incompatible' with accepting transgender identity

By Charles Camosy
CruxNow.com
July 26, 2018

To say that David Albert Jones enjoys a "certain standing" within the field of Catholic bioethics would almost certainly be putting things mildly. Since 2010 he's directed the Anscombe Bioethics Centre at Oxford in the UK, one of most influential think tanks on such matters in the world.

Jones is also a key adviser to both the English and the European bishops. He's a member of the Health and Social Care Advisory Group and the Department of Christian Responsibility and Citizenship of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, and is also a member of the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the EU (COMECE) Working Group on Ethics in Research and Medicine.

Of late Jones's interests have taken a turn into matters of gender identity, reflecting a new surge of attention fueled, to a great extent, by larger social and cultural developments. The following is a transcript of his exchange with *Crux* [edited from the original for space purposes].

Camosy: Until now your work has mainly been in Catholic bioethics, on issues such as abortion and euthanasia. Why did you decide to engage with the issue of gender identity?

Jones: On the basis of what I had written, I was asked to help develop pastoral and theological resources in this area. This gave me the opportunity to seek out transgender people who were practicing Catholics to ask them about their experiences and what they felt would be helpful. I also spoke to canon lawyers, educationalists, and priests with experience accompanying transgender people but the most important thing for me was to listen to people who were seeking to live their faith while accepting their deep-rooted sense of gender identity.

Despite the very personal nature of the journey that each had made, I found a great willingness to talk and an appreciation of my attempts to listen, as one person said to me, "thank you for speaking to us and not just about us."

What have you found from your research? What does the Church teach about gender identity and about gender reassignment surgery? Why have Catholic hospitals sometimes refused to perform such surgery?

My investigation of the issue of gender identity has revealed to me how little I understood this aspect of human existence. It is not simple and if you think it is simple you are probably misunderstanding it. It also reminded me how we all carry with us unexamined cultural assumptions through which we express Christian doctrine or frame scientific and philosophical enquiry.

I began the task of teasing apart what is true and authoritative in the Catholic tradition regarding sex and gen-

der and what is unwarranted cultural assumption. At the same time, I sought to attend carefully to the voices of those whose experience of gender identity challenges these assumptions. . . .

One practical issue for Catholic hospitals is whether they should offer gender reassignment surgery. I examined this question in an article recently published in *Theological Studies*. Though gender reassignment surgery has been practiced in Europe since the 1950s and in the United States since the 1960s it has never been mentioned in any official teaching document of the Church. It has not been mentioned explicitly in any papal address or encyclical. It is not mentioned in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* nor in any statement by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

In the absence of any official teaching most Catholic moral theologians, where they have considered the question, have taken one of two views. Some have characterised such surgery as mutilation, direct harm to the body, and therefore as incompatible with Catholic medical ethics. Others have argued that such surgery could be considered justifiable, if it helps alleviate the extreme distress of gender dysphoria. However, typically, this second group of theologians have cast doubt on whether such surgery is effective in providing long-term relief. . . .

Pope Francis and Catholic bishops in many countries have taught that a gender ideology has emerged that is harmful to society in general and to children in particular. Do you agree?

In their reflections on the equal but in some ways distinct roles of men and women in the family and in society, Pope Francis and several bishops' conferences have called attention to some contemporary ideas that are potentially harmful. Chief among these are a denial of the complementarity of male and female, a failure to recognise the goodness of the body and the unity of body and soul, a radical separation of the concepts of sex and gender, finally, the idea that gender identity is or ought to be a matter of personal choice.

These errors, grouped together under the term "gender theory" (*teoria del gender*) or "gender ideology" (*ideologia del genere*), can be traced back to certain strands of feminism. Nevertheless, to recognise these as errors is not to reject feminism as such, "If certain forms of feminism have arisen which we must consider inadequate, we must nonetheless see in the women's movement the working of the Spirit for a clearer recog-

inition of the dignity and rights of women" (Pope Francis *Amoris Laetitia*).

It is also important to note that the focus of this papal teaching is on various errors of a theoretical kind and the way these errors have been promoted by governments and educational bodies. It is not directed at the situation of people who experience a consistent, persistent and insistent sense of identity incongruent with their natal sex.

In this regard, it is worth quoting a recent statement by the LGBT+ Catholics Westminster Pastoral Council:

"Being transgender does not mean that someone wishes to abolish gender or sexual difference; in fact many transgender people report feeling great joy and peace once their bodies and gender identities are aligned. The argument that gender is purely a social construct is often used to delegitimize, rather than support, transgender identities. Gender is not a matter of individual choice for transgender people any more than it is for cisgender (i.e. not transgender) people.

Although it is currently not known why some people are transgender, current research suggests that genetics, hormones and environment all play a role."

The very idea of transitioning from male to female (or vice versa) does not contradict but rather presupposes the existence of a gender binary. Hence, while it is important to accept the positive teaching of the pope and bishops on gender complementarity, it should not be assumed that this teaching is necessarily incompatible with affirming the gender identity of trans people.

You've written that gender transition could be compatible with a Catholic anthropology, but one might ask how denying your own God-given sexual identity can be compatible with a Catholic understanding of the body, marriage, and the Divinely created complementarity of male and female?

When we try to make sense of diverse expressions of gender identity it is natural to reach for analogies with other issues. . . .

Legal or social changes of gender identity are also like (and unlike) the legal and social practice of adoption. An adopted son or daughter is a true son or daughter, by adoption (and this true relationship is invoked in Scripture as a model for our relationship with God by grace - Galatians 4.5). An adopted child does not deny the reality of his or her natal biological identity, but he or she is assigned a new identity that has a social and legal reality in order to address his or her needs. Sophie-Grace Chappell, an academic philosopher sympathetic to the

Catholic intellectual tradition, who is herself trans, has also made use of this analogy (while acknowledging its limits).

If you're an adoptive parent, you're a parent for most purposes and no one sensible scratches their head over it - they don't decree that you can't sit on school parents' councils, or see it as somehow dangerous or threatening or undermining of "real parents" or dishonest or deceptive or delusional or a symptom of mental illness or a piece of embarrassing and pathetic public make-believe... "transwomen are to women as adoptive parents are to parents."

How, in your view, can faithful Catholics show respect and pastoral concern for trans people while also honoring what they believe to be true about sex and gender?

No pastoral approach is sustainable if it is not honest and informed by a commitment to seek what is true and good. . . .

In the case of divergent gender identity, we should not assume, as perhaps the question seems to assume, that someone expressing a deep-seated sense of gender identity is doing something sinful or objectively disordered. On the contrary, the person may be accepting his or her gender identity as something given by God.

There are difficult moral issues related to incongruent gender identity, issues concerning marriage, sexual ethics and surgery. Moral discernment is needed to know what can be endorsed, what cannot be endorsed but might, in certain circumstances, be tolerated, and what should be challenged.

However, prior to discernment comes accompaniment. Pope Francis, talking about the pastoral support of trans people said, "for every case welcome it, accompany it, look into it, discern and integrate it. This is what Jesus would do today." Pastoral guidance in this area, if it is to be wise and helpful, will be the fruit of accompaniment and informed by the experience of the people the guidance exists to support. It should arise from "speaking with" and not just be "speaking about" Catholics with a divergent sense of gender identity.

A final pastoral reflection: Pope Francis, who more than any other pope has called attention to the dangers of "gender theory," consistently uses gender pronouns that reflect the person's sense of identity. He refers to a person who was born a girl as a "man," as "he," and as "he, who had been she, but is he."

Catholic pastoral practice must begin with welcome and the first sign of welcome is how we address someone. There is nothing un-Catholic about the use of names and pronouns that reflect a person's sense of identity. †

Professor David Albert Jones is Research Fellow at St Mary's University, Twickenham and director of the Anscombe Bioethics Centre in Oxford.



David Albert Jones

India's Cardinal Supported Striking Down Gay Ban Before Court Did

By Francis DeBernardo
Bondings 2.0
Newwaysministry.org/blog
September 11, 2018

Last week's wonderful news that India's Supreme Court decriminalized consensual sex between adults, in effect decriminalizing lesbian and gay relations, has rightly been received by accolades from around the globe. *The New York Times* reported that the gay ban was one of the oldest in the world and that the court declared it "irrational, indefensible and manifestly arbitrary." The court's decision also ordered that gay and lesbian Indians receive all of the protections of the nation's Constitution.

Unmentioned, though, in all of the

responses is the fact in 2013 when the court had declared lesbian and gay sexual activity as a "crime against nature," setting off the recent debate, the only religious leader in India who spoke out for the rights of these sexual minorities was Cardinal Oswald Gracias, archbishop of Bombay, who at the time was also president of the Indian Catholic bishops' conference. (He was re-elected president in February 2018.) *Bondings 2.0* reported on Gracias' support at the time, quoting his statement:



Cardinal Oswald Gracias

"[T]he Catholic Church has never been opposed to the decriminalisation of homosexuality, because we have never considered gay people criminals. As Christians, we express our full respect for homosexuals. The Catholic Church is opposed to the legalisation of gay marriage, but teaches that homosexuals have the same dignity of every human being and condemns all forms of unjust discrimination, harassment or abuse."

That wasn't Gracias' only intervention. In 2015, he stated in an interview

with *The Hindu Times*:

"For me it's a question of understanding that it's an orientation. . . I know there is still research being done whether it's a matter of choice or matter of orientation and there are two opinions on this matter. But I believe maybe people have this orientation that God has given them and for this reason they should not be ostracised from society."

He continued:

"I had been reflecting on the question of whether the church should be more welcoming towards members of the LGBT community for some time. I met some groups and associations of LGBTs and I had an understanding for them. I don't want them to feel ostracized. †