

BONDINGS

Vol. 39 No. 2

A Publication of New Ways Ministry

Spring 2020

German Bishops Affirm Homosexuality as “Normal,” Say Relationships Are “Hot Topic”

By Robert Shine
Bondings 2.0
NewWaysMinistry.org/blog
December 12, 2019

At the conclusion of a consultation they sponsored on human sexuality, Germany’s bishops issued a statement in which they affirmed homosexuality as a “normal” part of human development, and they labeled church teaching against same-gender sexual activity a “hot topic.”

The Commission for Marriage and Family of the German Bishops’ Conference held the consultation, “Human Sexuality – how to discuss scientifically-theologically and judge ecclesiastically?,” in early December and included several outside experts in its deliberations. In a concluding statement, the Commission summarized the consultation’s discussion of homosexuality:

“[T]here was agreement that the sexual preference of humans is expressed during puberty and assumes a heterosexual or homosexual orientation. Both belong to the normal forms of a sexual predisposition that can not be changed or changed by any specific socialization. In the Church’s thinking, this means that any form of discrimination against homosexuals must be rejected, as has long been demanded by the Magisterium, and is also explicitly emphasized by Pope Francis in the Post-Synodal letter *Amoris Laetitia*. However, the question of wheth-

er the magisterial ban on practiced homosexuality is still timely has been a hot topic, just like the question of the legitimacy of using artificial contraceptives in marriage and unmarried couples.”

This consultation is part of the German church’s Synodal Way that kicked off this Advent, which includes a working group on sexual morality that will include the consultation’s results in its deliberations set to begin next February. Berlin’s Archbishop Heiner Koch connected the December sexuality consultation to this wider process, as revealed in the public statement:

“[Koch] emphasized that the synodal path should be started without prejudice and without already fixed positions, but by no means without knowledge of the state of the sciences. There was a con-



Archbishop Heiner Koch

sensus that human sexuality encompasses a dimension of pleasure, reproduction and relationship. . . Two members of the German language group of the Roman Synod of Bishops of October 2015, Archbishop Koch and Bishop [Franz-Josef] Bode, underlined the importance of a solid discussion supported by humanities and theology and emphasized the developments that can already be observed in *Amoris Laetitia*.”

Significantly, the bishops’ statement also suggested that a sexual relationship by a Catholic who is divorced and civilly remarried is “not now qualified as a serious sin” and therefore there is “no general exclusion from the reception of the Eucharist” for such people.

In addition to outside experts, *Novena News* reported that a number of bishops participated in the consultation, including Archbishop Koch, Osnabrück’s

Bishop Bode, Görlitz’s Bishop Wolfgang Ipolt, and Mainz’s Bishop Peter Kohlgraf, some of whom serve on other committees for the nation’s episcopal conference. Several auxiliary bishops also participated.

Beginning with a January plenary, the Synodal Way process, which is binding, will take up issues under four working groups, according to a German Bishops’ Conference spokesperson, Matthias Kopp. In addition to the group on sexuality, the other working groups will be “Power, Participation, Separation of Powers,” “Priestly Existence,” and “Women in Services and Offices of the Church.” The bishops have admitted that the genesis of this process was the “dissatisfaction of many believers,” according to a statement on the Conference website.

The Synodal Way could have ramifications not only for the German church, but for the universal one. While the outcomes of this two-year process cannot, and according to Archbishop Koch, should not be pre-determined, German Catholics could see significant developments. If those participating truly listen to and learn from how the sciences understand human sexuality and relationships today, they can then incorporate such findings into theological reflection and pastoral practice. What could emerge is a groundbreaking moment for Catholic LGBTQ issues. ✚

German Laity Endorses Blessings for Lesbian and Gay Couples

By Robert Shine
Bondings 2.0
NewWaysMinistry.org/blog
December 16, 2019

Lay Catholics in Germany formally endorsed church blessings for same-gender couples, while in nearby Switzerland, bishops have chosen to remain neutral on an upcoming LGB referendum.

The Central Committee of German Catholics (ZdK, the acronym for their German name, “Zentralkomitee der deutschen Katholiken”), the nation’s top lay association, passed a resolution last

month urging their bishops to explore a “Church-mediated blessing of God” for same-gender couples to avoid “hardships” and “existential emergencies” for them. *Novena News* reported:

“That resolution formalised the position of the ZdK since at least 2015, when it first backed in principle the idea of blessings for gay couples.

“In the motion, the ZdK ‘encouraged’ the German bishops to further investigate possibilities for ceremonies for gay unions, but also for those other couples barred from Church weddings, such as divorced Catholics living in new rela-

tionships.

“In the resolution passed Saturday, the ZdK insisted that the current Church ban on blessing gay couples is outdated, and not worthy of the Catechism’s call to respect homosexuals ‘with respect, compassion, and sensitivity’.

“The ZdK also urged priests and bishops not to focus on the alleged deficiencies of gay Catholic couples, but instead celebrate the love and longing for God inherent in their desire to have the Church recognise their partnership.”

Earlier this year, two German church leaders, Osnabrück’s Bishop

Franz-Josef Bode and Hamburg’s Archbishop Stefan Hesse, joined their voices to the call for greater pastoral welcome to LGBTQ people. *Novena News* reported that Hesse, an adviser to ZdK, echoed that call at the group’s assembly. It also reported that the archbishop “called for a deeper theological investigation into how the Church can better accompany gay couples, so that any future blessing rites are properly anchored in the Church’s theology.” ✚

Spanish Archbishop Proclaims Respect for Same-Sex Families

By Mada Jurado
NovenaNews.com
January 8, 2020

A Spanish archbishop has proclaimed his respect for same-sex families, adding moreover that “the Gospel never condemns” these relationships.

“Today the family structure has ceased to be limited to what we understood as a nuclear family, composed of parents and children, to give way to a diversity of forms that range from living together between men and women without marriage certificates (*de facto* couples), the single parent family, couples with different homes for husband and wife or families between people of the same sex with legal recognition,” Archbishop of Tarragona Joan Planellas wrote in an article in Spanish paper *La Vanguardia* December 29, reflecting on that day’s Feast of the Holy Family.

“Talking about the family currently means talking about families, because the forms they have acquired are diverse, from a social and legal point of view,” Planellas declared.

“The family is the object of great hope throughout the world, but today, at the same time, it has become very fragile,” the archbishop affirmed, denounc-



Archbishop Joan Planellas

ing among the causes of that fragility the “complicated” economic conditions, excessive work demands and the unemployment that “demoralises young people and destabilises homes.”

On top of those practical reasons for the fragility of the family today, Planellas said, “mentalities evolve.”

“There are new relationships in the family, in addition to the new role of women in society,” the prelate observed.

But why this diversity today in families which historically have taken the

form of father, mother and children? Planellas answered that, in the first place, the modern increase in life expectancy “has contributed to marriage ceasing to be a life-long project in favour of becoming a life project with an unpredictable duration, and to divorce becoming very important.”

“In a world where separations and divorces become more frequent every day, family relationships are subject to endless processes of family reclassification,” Planellas recognised.

“It is also necessary to underline provisionality, which has become one of the dominant social values; that contrasts sharply with what happened in other times, in which stability was the obligatory reference of social systems.

“For many, the family has become a ‘transitional phase of life’ or a ‘part-time community,’” Planellas acknowledged.

The point of the archbishop’s sociological analysis of the family today was to stress the point that “it is not that the family as such is in danger of disappearing, but simply that a certain family model is no longer accepted by a signifi-

cant number of members of our society.”

“The family is and will be the framework where the human being carries out his and her first and fundamental experiences, the laboratory where humans live the creative and humanizing possibilities of our species,” Planellas said, certain that “the future of the family seems assured.”

“The Gospel never condemns.”

However, given this ever-changing nature of the family, the Church must remember that its contribution to the family can only have sense and meaning if it is “a call to live love and give oneself with all the magnanimity, delicacy and stringency that implies.”

That on the Church’s part supposes a “critical” but also a “respectful attitude,” Planellas recalled.

“There is no perfect family realisation. The Gospel never condemns, but assumes, encourages and corrects, in order to grow in the one Spirit. This is how the Gospel saves not only people, but also human groups, and especially the family,” Planellas concluded. ✚

BONDINGS

Spring 2020Vol. 39, No. 2

Francis DeBernardo, *Editor*

Board of Directors

Jeannine Gramick, SL, Chair
Dr. Jerry Fath
Ryan Sattler
Cristina Traina

Board of Advisors

Robert Brady
Rev. Peter Daly
Jeremy Dickey
Brian Flanagan
Rev. James Kiesel
Elizabeth Linehan, RSM
Anne Marie Miller, RSM

Staff

Francis DeBernardo, Executive Director
Matthew Myers, Associate Director
Robert Shine, Associate Director
Dwayne Fernandes, Staff Associate

Co-Founders

Sr. Jeannine Gramick, SL
Rev. Robert Nugent, SDS

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.

New Ways Ministry
4012 29th Street
Mount Rainier, Maryland 20712
(301) 277-5674
Info@NewWaysMinistry.org
NewWaysMinistry.org

TO SUBSCRIBE COMPLETE AND RETURN THE FORM BELOW

Enclosed is:

_____ \$25.00 in the US or Canada

_____ \$35.00 outside US or Canada

_____ I wish to receive *Bondings*,
but cannot donate at this time.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____
DayPhone _____
Night Phone _____
Cell Phone _____
Email _____

Please make check payable to “New Ways Ministry”. Outside the US, please use *only* checks drawn on a US bank in US dollars or go to www.newwaysministry.org.

Mail to:
New Ways Ministry
4012 29th Street
Mount Rainier, MD 20712

Deacon’s Homily on LGBTQ Issues: This Is My Beloved

By **Deacon Ray Ortman**
St. Victoria Parish, Victoria, Minnesota.
Delivered January 12, 2020.
Posted on *Bondings* 2.0 January 16, 2020

The following is the text of a homily preached by Deacon Ray Ortman at St. Victoria Parish, Victoria, Minnesota, on Sunday, January 12, 2020, the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord (Gospel text: Matthew 3:13-17).

Some background material can help set the context of this message. In September 2014, Archbishop John Nienstedt (now retired) demanded that Jamie Moore, the parish’s music director, resign because of his upcoming marriage to his fiancé. Many parishioners and pastoral staff were devastated. Deacon Ortman, who is also the parish business administrator, was ministering there at the time. The following homily provides news about the parish related to the firing.

Hugs, tears, emails, applause, and other expressions of support were offered for the simple message that all are loved by God unconditionally, and that all are welcome. Several parishioners even came back to Mass a second time to hear the message again, some bringing loved ones or children that they thought really needed to hear that simple enduring message that lies at the heart of the Gospel.



Deacon Ray Ortman

“This is my beloved Son.” My beloved. What a joy to hear those words! What child does not want to hear those words, need to know that they are loved? Jesus needed to hear that from His Father, too. A declaration of unconditional love. Coming at the Baptism of our Lord, before Jesus began His ministry, those words convey the truth that God’s love did not depend on anything Jesus had done. He hadn’t done anything yet! Rather, God loved His Son for who He was: His Son, his child. Could it really be that simple?

Over the years, I have been blessed to have baptized hundreds of children. Each time I see the love that their parents have for them. So full of pride and joy. Their babies haven’t done anything yet either, except maybe smile and coo delightfully. But it doesn’t matter! They love their children unconditionally, and they would do anything for them. Anything so that they would know love. Their love. God’s love. That’s why they come to the Church. Isn’t that why we all come to the Church? To experience and to receive God’s love and the warmth of the family of God? And to love God and each other in return? We are all God’s children! We are all infinitely lovable and loved. I think we all know this. But sometimes we forget. I know I do.

Sometimes I think I have to earn God’s love, that I’m never good enough. That I’m not worthy of such amazing love. That it comes with an asterisk or a loophole that leaves me out in the cold. But that’s not true! We know that God loves us no matter what because “while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us!” [Romans 5:8] Sometimes I think we also forget that God loves everyone else too. That we are invited to love everyone with the same kind of love with which God loves us. Unconditionally. Regardless of what we’ve done or haven’t done. Regardless of who we are or who we aren’t.

Often we dwell on incidentals, things that tend to separate us from each other. We judge, we fear, we do not understand the things that make us different — oftentimes the very things that make us special, unique and precious. That make us ourselves. We would remake our brother or sister in our own image, rather than in the image of God who

calls all of us beloved. Sometimes these things which divide us are easy to spot, like white or black, thin or fat, English- or Spanish-speaking. Sometimes they are not that obvious: the scars and hurts that we bear from life’s journey, including the struggles that too often come to define us **but that are not us**: poverty, disease, addiction or a criminal record.

The Church opens wide her doors to all of these. Indeed, she is dedicated and compelled to seeking them out preferentially in the name of Jesus. Ours is and must be a mission of welcome, compassion, healing and love, because we share in the mission of Jesus. The same Jesus who gave us just one command in John 13: “Love one another!” Here in our parish, we have many wonderful outreach ministries to the poor, to the sick, to the homeless and those in prison. This is Christ’s love in action! This is beautiful. It is already changing the lives of God’s children for the better. And ours too. I’ve seen the smiles that grace the faces of many a cheerful giver.

From our parish survey last Fall we also know that you want to do even more to welcome and to love unconditionally those who feel unwelcome by the Church or alienated from God’s love or from ours, especially our gay brothers, our lesbian sisters, our bisexual and transgender neighbors and loved ones, and anyone else who identifies as LGBTQ. If we cannot look them in the eye and say “I love you” without condition, without “if this” or “but that,” then we have work to do.

If we cannot believe and declare that God names each of them “beloved” just as much as any of God’s other children, without “if this” or “but that,” then we have work to do. I think we do have work to do. But it is a joyful labor, a labor of love.

And if love is really at its heart, it is not really a labor at all, it is a joy!

Each of us is precious and unique, worthy of understanding and worthy of love. We are all Beloved. But when we withhold that love (or worse), we cause hurt, we inflict pain, and we sow alienation. For many years, our sign outside has read, “All Are Welcome.” Until now that message has been mainly just an aspiration for the welcome that LGBTQ persons deserve, and we have experienced firsthand the hurt when we have fallen short.

So let’s commit together that we will keep working on this. We have learned much already about love, and we have so much more to learn. And there is no better way to learn more deeply about love than by giving it away. So let’s begin by making it a priority to offer unconditional love to all who feel marginalized in our church, and especially to our LGBTQ brothers and sisters. For some of us, this may be something we are already doing. For others it may be a challenge. That’s okay. To be open-minded and to search deeply with a heart of love is a good start.

According to your survey responses, that same invitation of love and welcome should also be extended more expansively to divorced persons. How could anyone deny access to God’s love to those who feel so keenly unloved? It doesn’t have to be complicated. Really, it’s just as simple as “I love you.” That doesn’t mean it is easy. Family is never easy. Right? But it’s worth it.

That’s why Jesus came in the flesh in the first place, to inaugurate a great Family Reunion! It wasn’t easy, but He did the hard part. Not, as Isaiah reminds us, with shouting or fanfare. Nor with anger or imposing change upon anyone. But rather with gentleness and patience. With God holding us “by the hand,” gently assuring us that all of us are welcome and that all of us are beloved. ✚

Former Ambassador to Vatican Blames Religious Rejection for LGBTQ Youth Homelessness

By **Miguel Diaz**
National Catholic Reporter
January 14, 2020

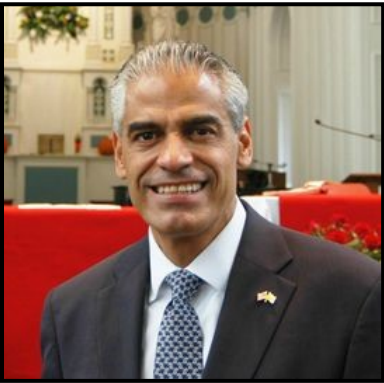
Miguel Diaz, a theologian and a former U.S. ambassador to the Holy See, has taken up Pope Francis’ exhortation to care for internally displaced persons by connecting it with the problem of homelessness in the U.S. today. In particular, Diaz highlighted the plight of LGBTQ people, especially youth, who are housing insecure.

He wrote in the *National Catholic Reporter*:

“While homelessness impacts persons from all walks of life, some populations are more vulnerable than others. For instance, in any given year, an estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults experience homelessness. Moreover, 40% of our nation’s homeless youth are members of the LGBTQ community. LGBTQ persons, too often, may already be experiencing

‘displacement’ from familial relationships. Those that come from socially marginalized racial and ethnic communities (e.g., black and Latinx) experience this kind of displacement at a much higher rate than the rest of their peers. They also suffer more regularly the physical and emotional threats to life that come with homelessness.

“The lives of the LGBTQ young men and women I have interacted with in Chicago, who are members of this homeless body, certainly reflect this heartbreaking reality. Sadly, I must say, religion and religious perspectives play a contributing role in the displacement of these marginalized youth. Those who accompany LGBTQ youth made homeless observe, ‘The cause may be the family’s poverty. Sometimes it is because of their parents’ mental illness or drug addiction. But the reason we hear most frequently is religious rejection — parents whose religious beliefs cause them to reject their LGBTQ children.’” ✚



Miguel Diaz

As Welcome, Bishop Introduces Gender-Neutral Language for Baptism Certificates

By Robert Shine

Bondings 2.0

NewWaysMinistry.org/blog
December 16, 2019

The bishop charged with handling questions of canon law in France has encouraged his episcopal colleagues to use gender-neutral language on baptismal certificates in an effort to be more welcoming to LGBTQ parents.

Bishop Joseph de Metz-Noblat of Langres made his recommendation in a December 13, 2019 letter to France's bishops in his role as president of the national episcopal conference's Council for Canonical Questions. Metz-Noblat wrote that the "increasingly complex situation of families in France" has raised challenges for pastoral practice, particularly in regards to baptism. He continued:

"Knowing that, according to canon 843, 'ministers cannot refuse the sacraments to people who request them properly' and that children cannot be



Bishop Joseph de Metz-Noblat

held responsible for the situation of their parents, many chancelleries have been confronted with vocabulary problems in the expressions to be used.

"Joint work was carried out by the Commission for the Reform of Administrative Acts of the Church of France, the Commission for Pastoral, Liturgical, and Sacramental Work and the Council for Canonical Questions. Approved by the Permanent Council, the attached form is mainly concerned with the baptized person, making a simple statement of their family situation, without making a moral judgment on it." Metz-Noblat concluded his letter by asking fellow bishops to adopt a gender-neutral practice on baptismal certificates in their dioceses as it seems "most appropriate for our time." His letter included an attached template for such a certificate. Instead of reading the "son/daughter of _____ and _____," as had been the case previously, the proposed certificate reads "Names and surnames of parents or other holders of parental authority" with spaces below and an area to note the parents' civil status. The signatory lines for godparents, however, still read "Godfather" and "Godmother."

Baptizing the children of LGBTQ parents is an opening for more welcoming pastoral care, efforts supported by an increasing number of church leaders including Pope Francis. Changes similar to that proposed by Metz-Noblat could easily be expanded worldwide within the parameters of existing canon law and doctrine, as has happened in Colombia and in Spain. And beyond helping parents in same-gender relationships, making church records gender-neutral and adaptive to LGBTQ needs could greatly help transgender and intersex Catholics, too (as evidenced in the Philippines).

While many pastoral ministers have offered such baptisms for some time, structural reforms like adapting baptismal certificates are necessary to be fully inclusive. France's bishops would be wise to adopt the proposed gender-neutral language and to open their doors even wider so that all who wish to be baptized feel welcome. ✦

In Washington State, Students Protest LGBT Teachers' Resignations

By Heidi Schlumpf

NCRonline.org

February 21, 2020

Two teachers who have reportedly been forced to resign from a high school outside Seattle now join a group of nearly 100 employees who have lost their jobs at Catholic institutions in the last 13 years because of LGBT issues, according to records kept by a ministry that advocates for LGBT Catholics.

The cases of Michelle Beattie and Paul Danforth of Kennedy Catholic High School in Burien, Washington, follow a similar pattern of employees at Catholic institutions who have been fired, forced to resign, had offers rescinded or had their jobs threatened because of LGBT issues.

After their engagements to same-gender partners became known to administration, health and fitness teacher Beattie and English teacher Danforth left in the middle of the school year.

While the school and archdiocese maintain the resignations were voluntary, attorney Shannon McMinimee, who represents both teachers, told NCR they resigned after the archdiocese made clear "that continued employment was incompatible with being honest about being gay and engaged."

Such actions on the part of Catholic institutions "focus on the wrong thing," said Loretto Sr. Jeannine Gramick, a co-founder of New Ways Ministry, which advocates for justice and equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Catholics.

"When bishops or leaders in Catholic institutions complain that teachers or students need to follow the teachings of the church, the teaching that we need to follow is the gospel. And the gospel is clear about the dignity and respect of every human person," Gramick told NCR.

Seattle Archbishop Paul Etienne, who has been in the position for less than a year, confirmed that "within the family of God, all are welcome, and all are loved" in a Feb. 19 statement.

The statement added that "those who teach in our schools are required to uphold our teaching in the classroom and to model it in their personal lives. We recognize and support the right of each individual to make choices. We also understand that some choices have particular consequences for those who represent the church in an official capacity."

Gramick said she was encouraged by "grassroots Catholics" who support victims of discrimination, as protests by students and parents have become part of the regular pattern after news of such employment decisions.

Hundreds of Kennedy Catholic students walked out of the classes Feb. 18, joining about a hundred more parents and other community members to protest the loss of the beloved teachers. Many

signs at the protest referenced students' faith, which they saw as supporting inclusion not discrimination: "Pray the hate away" and "I bet Jesus was not homophobic."

News reports quoted LGBT students who were especially pained by the loss, including a sophomore who said Beattie had comforted her after she was bullied and called homophobic slurs by other students.

Democratic State Sen. Joe Nguyen, who is a Kennedy Catholic graduate and a friend of Danforth, shared his support of the protesters on social media.

"Institutions like the Archdiocese of Seattle are on the wrong side of history and this will be a moment they'll look back on in shame," he wrote.

Cases like Kennedy Catholic and others are "creating a bad name for Catholic education," said New Ways Ministry

part because they see such a stance as necessary to the viability of their schools.

The perception that the church is anti-LGBTQ is already contributing to the exodus of young people from Catholicism, he said.

"It's a very bad pastoral move in terms of evangelization," DeBernardo said. "If part of [schools'] mission is to evangelize, this is the worst thing they could be doing. For young people, LGBTQ issues and equality are paramount."

That young people and parents are "voting with their feet" saddens the president of another Seattle Catholic high school.

"Our youth are fleeing the Catholic Church in droves. ... One of these reasons is our tendency to exclude people instead of walking with them," Kent Hickey, president of Seattle Preparatory

Catholic schools, where our goal is for people to know and love Jesus," Hickey said. "But this really hurts young people. Because today's kids have only known the church of the clergy abuse crisis, it's really hard to establish trust with them. They get angry and they just leave."

In his email, Hickey noted that Seattle Prep's employment policies also require employees to respect "fundamental Catholic, Jesuit teachings" and the school's mission. But "employment decisions involve a variety of factors. Just as we are not a one-issue Church, generally no one issue is fully dispositive in any employment decision," he wrote.

To those wanting a "specific list of permissible and prohibited behaviors," Hickey said, "Unfortunately for those people, the Catholic faith is not a list faith."

Instead, Hickey referenced Jesus' teaching to love God and our neighbors as ourselves. "That, in a nutshell, is what 'fundamental Catholic, Jesuit teachings' means at Seattle Prep," he wrote. "Perhaps, just as was the case when Jesus was questioned by the Pharisees, that nutshell isn't big enough for some."

Hickey also noted that in his 22 years in Catholic school administration, he had never terminated the contract of an employee who had divorced and remarried without an annulment, in part out of respect for employees' privacy, which is also part of Seattle Prep's employment policies.

He noted that many Catholic schools do not acknowledge employees' privacy rights through the use of the "ministerial exemption" in which every teacher is labeled a minister and thus exempt from some employment protections.

He said the accompanying public and private doctrinal requirements of such "ministers" were not only unjust but unrealistic — and nearly always focused on sexuality.

"When is there going to be media coverage of a Catholic teacher who was fired because his lifestyle did not include a commitment to helping the poor?" he said. "These things are always related to some sexuality issue, as if that was the be-all and end-all of Catholic core principles. I taught religion for 35 years, and it's just not the case that our personal sexuality is something that Jesus often discussed as a core principle."

DeBernardo also expressed concern about how Catholic institutions "overextend" the ministerial exemption to apply to employees who are not ministerial, including some who are not even Catholic.

"I'm a strong believer in the separation of church and state and [the ministerial exemption] is important for religious institutions," he said. "But I think the way the bishops are interpreting religious freedom these days is overstepping the boundaries."

(Continued on page 6)



Parents, students, alumni and friends of Kennedy Catholic High School in Burien gathered at the Archdiocese of Seattle offices to protest two LGBT teachers who lost their jobs. (Joel Connelly/Seattle Post-Intelligencer)

Director Francis DeBernardo, who believes parents will choose to not send their children to Catholic schools if they are seen as intolerant and discriminatory.

"And young people are just not going to stand for this kind of nonsense," he told NCR. "They're being pushed out of the church."

DeBernardo said at the university level, administrators have more independence from local bishops and many have been in the forefront of promoting LGBTQ equality in their institutions, in

School in Seattle, wrote in a Feb. 19 email explaining their school's policies.

He wrote the email "so that all of our people know how deeply they are respected and valued and cared for here," he told NCR.

The email was disseminated widely, resulting in responses from some Catholics who said exclusion of LGBT people is one reason why they do not send their children to Catholic schools, Hickey said.

"This saddens me greatly. I love

"When bishops or leaders in Catholic institutions complain that teachers or students need to follow the teachings of the church, the teaching that we need to follow is the gospel. And the gospel is clear about the dignity and respect of every human person."

—Sister Jeannine Gramick



PARISHES

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

Arizona
Glendale: St. Thomas More
Mesa: St. Bridget
Phoenix: St. Patrick
Tucson: St. Cyril of Alexandria,
Ss. Peter and Paul, St. Pius X,
Our Mother of Sorrows, St. Odilia,
St. Thomas More Newman Center

California
Baldwin Park: St. John the Baptist
Berkeley: Holy Spirit Parish
Burney: St Francis of Assisi
Carlsbad: St. Patrick
Camarillo: Padre Serra Parish
Claremont: Our Lady of Assumption
El Cajon: St. Luke
Encino: Our Lady of Grace
Escondido: St. Timothy
Fremont: St. Joseph-Mission San Jose
Fresno: St. Anthony Claret, St. Paul
Newman Center
Goleta: St. Mark Univ. Parish
Hawthorne: St. Joseph (Spanish)
Hayward: All Saints
Huntington Beach: Sts. Simon and Jude
LaPuente: 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
Orangevale: Divine Savior
Palm Springs: St. Theresa, Our Lady of
Guadalupe, Our Lady of Solitude
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
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, Our
Lady of the Pines

LGBT-friendly Catholic Parishes & Communities

Below is a list of known LGBT-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 welcomes LGBT Catholics, please let us know. Tell us if this welcome is because of a support program, spirituality group, mission statement, participation in LGBT community events, or involvement with parents. For links to many of these parishes’ websites, go to www.NewWaysMinistry.org/resources/parishes.

To recommend a community for the list, please email info@newwaysministry.org or call 301-277-5674. Parishes are listed first and intentional Eucharistic communities follow. If you learn that any of the places on this list are no longer LGBT-Friendly, please inform us of that, too.

Denver: St. Dominic, Christ the King,
Our Lady of Mount Carmel, St.
Ignatius Loyola
Lafayette: Immaculate Conception
Lakewood: St. Bernadette
Littleton: Light of the World,
St Frances Cabrini

Connecticut
Guilford: St. George’s
Hartford: St. Patrick-St. Anthony
New Haven: St. Thomas More Chapel
& Center

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

District of Columbia
Holy Trinity, St. Matthew Cathedral

Florida
Cocoa Beach: Our Savior
Daytona Beach: Our Lady of Lourdes
Flagler Beach: Santa Maria del Mar
Ft. Lauderdale: Blessed Sacrament, St.
Anthony, St. Maurice
Key West: Basilica of St. Mary Star of
the Sea
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. Car-
mel, 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
Franklin: St. Rose of Lima
Indianapolis: St. Thomas Aquinas, St.
Gabriel the Archangel, St. Pius X

Iowa
Coralville: St. Thomas More
Des Moines: Holy Trinity

Kentucky
Lexington: Historic St. Paul Church,
St. Peter Claver
Louisville: Epiphany, Cathedral of the
Assumption, St. William, Our La-
dy of Lourdes



Louisiana
New Orleans: St. Augustine

Maine
Portland: Sacred Heart-St. Dominic,
Our Lady of Hope
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
Brimfield: St. Christopher
Buzzard’s Bay: St. Margaret’s/St.
Mary’s
East Longmeadow: St. Michael
Medford: Catholic Community at Tufts
University
Monson: St. Patrick
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, St. Francis
Xavier
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,
St. John Parish (Creighton
University)

Nevada
Las Vegas: Christ the King,
Guardian Angel Cathedral

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

New Jersey
Cherry Hill: Christ Our Light
Clifton: St. Philip the Apostle
Hoboken: Our Lady of Grace
Keyport: St. Joseph
Lawrenceville: St. Ann
Long Beach Island: St. Francis of
Assisi
Maplewood: St. Joseph
Monmouth: Precious Blood
Pompton Lakes: St. Mary
River Edge: St. Peter the Apostle
South Plainfield: Sacred Heart
Tinton Falls: St. Anselm
Turnersville: Sts. Peter and Paul

New Mexico
Albuquerque: Holy Family,
San Felipe de Neri
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
Buffalo: St. Joseph University Parish
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 Sacra-
ment, Holy Name of Jesus, St. Fran-
cis 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, St. Francis de
Sales
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

Oklahoma
Tulsa: St. Jerome

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

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

Rhode Island
Providence: St. Raymond
Warwick: Sts. Rose & Clement
Wickford: St. Bernard

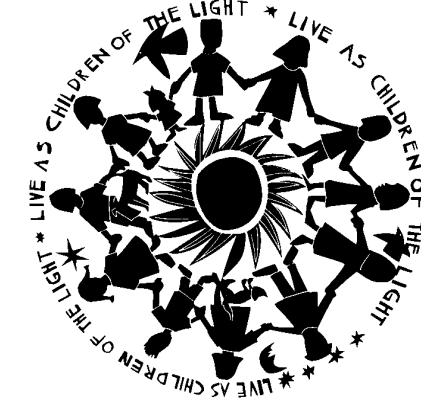
LGBT-friendly Catholic Parishes & Communities (continued)

(Continued from page 4)

Tennessee
Memphis: St. Patrick, 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. Elizbeth 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, St. Mary's
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, Our Lady of Lourdes
Wauwatosa: St. Pius X

Outside the U.S.

Canada
Montreal: Holy Cross, Saint-Pierre- Apôtre,
Ottawa: St. Joseph
Toronto: Our Lady of Lourdes

England
Bristol: St. Nicholas of Tolentino
London: Church of the Immaculate

Conception (Farm Street Church, Mayfair)
York: Bar Convent (Middlesborough Diocese LGBT+ Ministry)

Ireland
Dublin: Orlagh in the City

Northern Ireland
Belfast: Clonard Monastery Parish

South Africa
Johannesburg: Holy Trinity

INTENTIONAL EUCHARISTIC COMMUNITIES

Arizona
Scottsdale: Franciscan Renewal Center

California
Bermuda Dunes: St. Clare of Assisi
Pleasanton: Catholic Community of Pleasanton
San Diego: Mary Magdalene Catholic Community
San Francisco: Dignity/San Francisco

District of Columbia
Communitas, Dignity/Washington

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 Catholic

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
McLean: PAX Community

Washington
Lacey: Holy Wisdom Inclusive Catholic Community

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

Outside the U.S.

Ireland
Dublin: Orlagh in the City

Korea
Seoul: Alpha Omega Community

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 LGBT student group, support group, ally group, program, or policy. If you are aware of such a college that is known as welcoming to LGBT people, please contact New Ways Ministry. Phone: 301-277-5674; Email: info@newwaysministry.org.



Alabama
Mobile: Spring Hill College

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

Colorado
Denver: Regis University

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

District of Columbia
Georgetown University, Trinity University

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

Hawaii
Honolulu: Chaminade University

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

Indiana
Hammond: Calumet College
Notre Dame: Holy Cross College,

St. Mary's College, Univ. of Notre Dame

Iowa
Davenport: St. Ambrose University
Dubuque: Loras College, Clarke University

Kentucky
Louisville: Spalding University, Bellarmine University

Louisiana
New Orleans: Loyola University

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

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

Michigan
Detroit: University of Detroit Mercy, Marygrove College
Grand Rapids: Aquinas College

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

Missouri
Kansas City: Avila University, Rockhurst University
St. Louis: Fontbonne University, Maryville University,

St. Louis University

Montana
Helena: Carroll College

Nebraska
Omaha: Creighton University

New Hampshire
Manchester: St. Anselm College
Nashua: Rivier College

New Jersey
Caldwell: Caldwell College
Jersey City: St. Peter's College
Newark: Seton Hall School of Law

New York
Albany: College of Saint Rose
Brooklyn and Patchogue: St. Joseph's College
Bronx: Fordham University, Manhattan College
Buffalo: Canisius College
Loudonville: Siena College
New Rochelle: College of New Rochelle, Iona College
Poughkeepsie: Marist College
Rochester: St. John Fisher College
St. Bonaventure: St. Bonaventure Univ.
Sparkill: St. Thomas Aquinas College
Syracuse: LeMoyne College
Queens: St. John's University

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

Oregon
Marylhurst: Marylhurst University
Portland: University of Portland

Pennsylvania
Cresson: Mount Aloysius College

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

Rhode Island
Newport: Salve Regina University
Providence: Providence College

Texas
Austin: Saint Edward's University
San Antonio: University of the Incarnate Word, Our Lady of the Lake University, St. Mary's University

Vermont
Colchester: Saint Michael's College

Washington
Lacey: St. Martin's University
Seattle: Seattle University
Spokane: Gonzaga University

West Virginia
Wheeling: Wheeling Jesuit University

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

Outside the U.S.

Canada
Toronto: Regis College

New Book on Bishop Gumbleton Details Strong Record of LGBTQ Advocacy

By Robert Shine
Bondings 2.0
 NewWaysMinistry.org/blog
 January 26, 2020

"We need credible witnesses," exhorted Pope Francis in 2017, explaining that credible witnesses are people who refuse to be indifferent and who choose to risk for the Gospel. Few Christians living today offer as credible a witness as Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, his life a masterclass in how to pursue justice even when it hurts. Thankfully for younger Catholics and for historical memory, Peter Feuerherd captures this witness well in a new book, *The Radical Gospel of Bishop Thomas Gumbleton* (Orbis Books, 2019).

Bishop Gumbleton has been active and outspoken on major social justice issues since the 1960s. In his early days as a priest, he challenged the Vietnam War, and for decades after as a bishop he has championed the cause of nonviolence, co-founding Pax Christi USA. He has decried both repression in Central America and the United States' deep-seated racism, chancing arrest by the state and scorn by his fellow Catholics numerous times. Still, in these efforts for peace and justice, the bishop had episcopal supporters.

But Bishop Gumbleton's advocacy did not stop at the church's threshold. What has set him apart from so many

clergy, indeed Catholics generally, is his willingness to name honestly the sins of the church that he clearly loves. Even in his early days as auxiliary bishop of Detroit, Gumbleton protested the archbishop's closing of urban parishes in the city. And that ecclesial critique has meant Gumbleton played a decisive role in Catholic efforts for LGBTQ inclusion.

Feuerherd captures the LGBTQ aspect of Bishop Gumbleton's ministry in a chapter titled "A Mother's Question." That mother was Gumbleton's, and the question she posed to him was whether her son Dan was going to hell for being gay. He was clear in his answer: no. Dan's coming out would prompt Bishop Gumbleton to become a strong advocate for LGBTQ people.

He moved from being a priest guided by anti-gay seminary lessons to a bishop who lived "Who am I to judge?" decades before Pope Francis. He began

to speak out for gay rights. In 1974, Bishop Gumbleton joined Bishop Joseph Imesch in calling for the church to "root out structures and attitudes that discriminate against the homosexual as a person" in response to the Detroit diocesan newspaper firing an employee because he was gay. He addressed New Ways Ministry symposia in the 1990s and 2000s, even though he received severe criticism for his inclusive message.

He was instrumental in getting the U.S. bishops pastoral letter, *Always Our Children*, developed and approved. He held listening sessions, ministered to gay priests around the country, and refused to join Michigan's bishops in condemning marriage equality. In short, he is a prophet for inclusion.

At just over one hundred pages, *The Radical Gospel of Bishop Thomas Gumbleton* is a quick read. But crowded in those pages are the lessons from a credible witness that we should contemplate deeply. Francis DeBernardo, executive

director of New Ways Ministry, said in a dust jacket endorsement that the book is a gift to the church:

"Peter Feuerherd beautifully captures the rare mixture of this shepherd's courage and humility—two virtues which have made him an effective advocate for marginalized groups. This book, like its subject, is a gift to the Catholic community."

I am pulled to biographies because the lives of others, the meek of history as much as the great figures, can be so instructive for how we should live our own. I first met Bishop Gumbleton years ago at a Pax Christi USA event, and in the intervening years met him through LGBTQ work. But I had no idea just how profound his commitment to justice is and how much he has done until I read Feuerherd's book. It was necessary reading for this younger Catholic. And, in the wounded church and the troubled world we inhabit, studying the credible witness of Bishop Thomas Gumbleton who refused to be indifferent and risked so much for the Gospel is precisely what we need to be people of hope and action. ✚

[Editor's Note: Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, retired auxiliary of Detroit, is an early and long time courageous supporter of LGBTQ people. New Ways Ministry presented him with its Bridge Building Award in 1995. Bishop Gumbleton served on the New Ways Ministry Advisory Board.]



Bishop Thomas Gumbleton

Cardinal: God's First Question Is Not About Sexual Orientation

By Robert Shine
Bondings 2.0
 NewWaysMinistry.org/blog
 January 17, 2020

A cardinal has defended his participation in an AIDS fundraiser by suggesting the first question God asks is not about a person's sexual orientation, but about how they treat other people.

Conservatives targeted Cardinal Christoph Schönborn of Vienna after the cardinal attended an HIV/AIDS fundraiser,



Cardinal Christoph Schönborn

"Believe Together," hosted by the city's cathedral and organized by LGBTQ activists.

Schönborn told the German magazine *Die Furche* that the event was focused on helping an AIDS hospice in South Africa, which he said primarily cares for heterosexual victims. But he acknowledged the close ties between homosexuali-

ty and AIDS, continuing:

"[W]orking with [gay activist] Gery Keszler is also a sign for me that we really need to work together for this help. Concern for AIDS sufferers was the focus of this night taking place a third time. I think that is a very right effort. I am very aware that the right way to deal with homosexuality is a big social and also a big church issue. Here I strongly advocate not looking first at the question of sexual orientation, but at human quality. The first question is: how are you with other people? And that's the first question God asks us. Not the only one, but the first. The great gospel speech in Matthew does not ask about sexual orientation, but: I was hungry and you gave me food, and I was naked and you clothed me. This is how I see these fundraisers in the cathedral for AIDS relief."

Cardinal Schönborn's response should not be misunderstood. He is not suggesting, as some church leaders do, that sexual orientation should be downplayed or ignored. Schönborn is an ally. This AIDS fundraiser is the third Schönborn has hosted in Vienna's cathedral, and he has spoken warmly of his friendship with Keszler. His repeated welcomes to LGBTQ people are evidence he recognizes the importance of sexual and gender identity in people's lives. But without mitigating that importance, Schönborn can offer the credible reminder that what is most important to God, and therefore should be most important to us, is whether or not we have treated one another, especially the poor and oppressed, with great love. ✚

Albany's Bishop Affirms Gay Priests and Gay Love

By Lori Van Buren
The Times-Union
 Albany, New York
 January 11, 2020

[Editor's note: Excerpts from an interview with Bishop Edward Scharfenberger of Albany, New York.]

[Bishop Scharfenberger's] trying to build bridges to gay Catholics. His communications director, Mary DeTurris Poust, said that in 2017, "in an effort to be sensitive to the needs of the LGBTQ community, Bishop Ed and I and about

20 other people working in the Diocese of Albany" attended "safe space" training to learn how to make gay congregants feel welcome and protected.

It's not simply gay worshippers he wants to welcome.

"I know priests who are gay and they're great," Scharfenberger said.

He knows the church's definition of marriage as a union between a man and a woman is alienating for many gay Catholics. But he has his own message for them.

"It is never wrong to love another person. Never," the bishop said. ✚

Students Protest Teachers' Resignations

(Continued from page 3)

Former Seattle mayor Greg Nickels, a graduate of Seattle Prep, noted that King County's anti-discrimination ordinance would otherwise protect Catholic school employees. "Any other employer would be breaking that law to fire two well qualified employees simply because they are gay," he wrote on Facebook. "It is wrong and the school should be held to account."

New Ways has called for local Catholic institutions to adopt non-discrimination policies. DeBernardo praised Seattle Prep's policy as "excellent."

"It reflects Pope Francis' call to be a church of discernment and accompaniment," he told NCR. "The policy repudiates a litmus-test approach, which is

what has happened in all of the LGBTQ employment disputes that New Ways Ministry has followed."

Last year, administrators at Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory School in Indianapolis refused to fire a gay employee in a same-sex relationship, which resulted in the archdiocese attempting to remove the school's Catholic status. The Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education temporarily lifted the decree until its final decision.

Said DeBernardo: "Part of the problem of this trend is that it's like playing the carnival game of whack-a-mole," he said. "It keeps popping up somewhere new." ✚

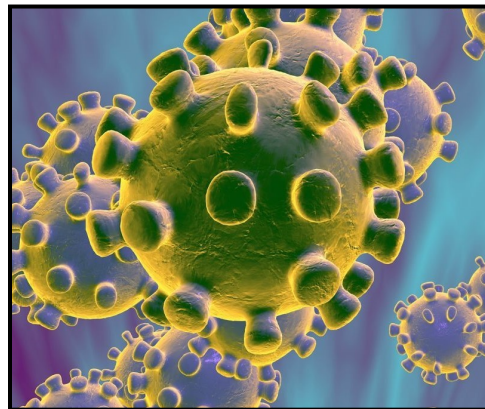
New Ways Ministry Decries Church Leaders for Coronavirus Statements

The following is a statement from Francis DeBernardo, New Ways Ministry's Executive Director, responding to the statements of Cardinal Burke and Bishop Castro about LGBTQ people and the coronavirus.

Two high-ranking Catholic leaders have blamed the coronavirus pandemic on LGBTQ people, displaying rash irresponsibility in a time when the world is already suffering from danger, fear, and instability.

Bishop Ramón Castro of Cuernavaca, Mexico, included transgender youth as one of the evils for which he claims God has caused the virus to infect the world. Cardinal Raymond Burke, a U.S. prelate currently living in Rome, said that churches should be open for Masses and prayer services because he claims the world is in grave danger, in part because of sexual and gender identity equality.

These irresponsible messages from highly-placed church leaders will only incite desperate people seeking an



"enemy" behind the virus to perpetrate acts of violence toward LGBTQ people. Instead of saving lives, the bishop and cardinal are endangering them.

With no scientific evidence—

because none exists—these churchmen have exploited the world's most dangerous modern public health crisis to promote their own biased and prejudiced views of LGBTQ people. The lack of scientific knowledge about the virus mirrors their lack of scientific knowledge about LGBTQ people.

The combination of these anti-intellectual perspectives is a volatile mixture.

Pope Francis should remove both men from public ministry for dangerous and irresponsible language about LGBTQ people, and also for promoting ignorant disinformation in the midst of a global health crisis. The Catholic Church, a worldwide religion already widely discredited, cannot ignore such recklessness. ✚

—March 24, 2020

Parish Ministry Seeks to Bridge Gap to LGBTQ Community with Love, Blankets

By Jesse Williams
ZIP06.com
January 14, 2020

A special ministry at St. George Catholic Church, Guilford, Connecticut, is working to reach out to LGBTQ people, aiming to create healing and understanding in a relationship that members said has long been defined by judgment and discrimination.

This year, the Building Bridges Ministry hand-made more than 30 blankets to be sent to the Trinity Place Shelter in New York City, a refuge for homeless LGBTQ youth associated with the Lutheran church that offers educational and practical resources to help these young people, who have often been rejected by families and loved ones.

The Building Bridges Ministry was founded three years ago by Diana Harris and Margot Burkle, who were inspired by their own LGBTQ children to work within their Catholic faith toward making connections between the church and the LGBTQ community. The ministry’s mission, Harris said, is finding ways to show “true Christian love and support” to LGBTQ people, who have often been rejected or experienced discrimination at the hands of church officials because of their identities, as well as educating community members about LGBTQ issues.

Harris said making blankets was a special and heartwarming way she and the other members of Building Bridges felt they could directly reach out to LGBTQ folks in a personal, loving way.



Some of the blankets from the St. George Parish “Building Bridges” Ministry.

“And this is a special situation because not only do they use the blankets there but...the people get to take the blankets with them as they start their lives out on their own,” Harris said.

Building Bridges Ministry is also

currently reaching out to LGBTQ people and their families who are practicing Catholics or former Catholics, hoping to document their stories and publish them for the broader community, a strategy she said she hopes will help other Catholics understand the humanity and struggles of their LGBTQ neighbors.

“It’s not just, ‘Oh it’s one of them.’ They start to put faces to stories and names with stories and really see that we’re really more similar than we are different. And we all need to be welcomed and reached out to,” Harris said.

The Catholic Church’s official stance on homosexuality is that it is “inherently disordered,” and “homosexual acts” are broadly considered sinful, according to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Building

Bridges Ministry is part of a larger, grassroots movement by many Catholic organizations particularly in the United States that want to pass over these dogmas and focus instead on love and acceptance.

That inclusiveness, Harris said, is what she and the other members of the ministry want to emphasize to LGBTQ people who might be struggling with their Catholic faith.

“They were baptized into the church and have just as much right to be there as we do,” she said.

Harris said in the past, Building Bridges has screened documentaries focusing on LGBTQ experiences and tracing the history of the Catholic Church’s teachings and treatment of non-heterosexual relationships and identities.

More than anything, she said the ministry is made up of people who want to see love and acceptance shown to everyone.

“Just people who feel this is an important cause, and want everyone to feel welcome,” she said.

Harris invited anyone who wanted to share their stories about their own or loved one’s experience of being LGBTQ and Catholic to send email to: AlwaysOurChildren@gmail.com.

✦

QUOTE TO NOTE: The Pope’s New Message on Lesbian and Gay Couples

By Francis DeBernardo
Bondings 2.0
NewWaysMinistry.org/blog
January 31, 2020

The U.S. bishops are having their *ad limina* visits, group meetings with the pope which occur every five years for a particular nation. This past week, Pope Francis met with bishops from California, Nevada, and Hawaii, as a group, offering pastoral advice on a variety of issues. Though the meetings are private, some bishops are letting people know about the pope’s messages as they give interviews to the press.

Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone of San Francisco told *America* magazine that among the topics the pope discussed were the pastoral care of LGBTQ people. The news story, quoting and summarizing Cordileone, stated:

“‘He spoke about the pastoral care that we have to give’ and the need to understand the suffering many of them have endured, including being shunned by their families.

“‘He made important distinctions between the (sexual) orientation and the

question of marriage,’ for example saying it was important to ensure gay couples have access to public benefits, but insisting gay couples cannot marry, the archbishop said. ‘Marriage is unique; marriage, by its nature, is complementarity between man and woman. And he spoke about the danger of the gender ideology and how it denies difference,’ the diversity with which God created human beings male and female.”

While the pope’s admonitions against “gender ideology” were reported by other bishops, what is interesting about Cordileone’s report is that he relates that the pope believes it is important for same-gender couples to have legal protections, essentially approving domestic partnership and civil union arrangements. This is a new and important message to note. The pope has been strong in his advocacy for a heterosexual definition of “marriage,” but he has said nothing publicly supporting le-

gal protections for same-gender couples. In fact, in November 2013, early in his pontificate, he said that “on an educational level, gay unions raise challenges



Pope Francis

for us today which for us are sometimes difficult to understand.”

His actions, however, sometimes pointed in a different direction. In September 2015, during his apostolic visit to the U.S., he met with Yayo Grassi, a former student, and Grassi’s male part-

ner, welcoming them warmly. In July 2017, he sent a congratulatory note to a Brazilian gay couple on the occasion of their children’s baptisms.

Of course, his statement to the bishops was not public, but it is also important to note that he gave this advice about legal protections for gay and lesbian couples to a group of U.S. bishops, many of whom have opposed and continue to oppose legal recognition of any kind for same-gender couples. In particular, Archbishop Cordileone is the former chair of the U.S. bishops’ committee for the defense of marriage and the current chair of the Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth. (Cordileone has expressed interest in developing more pastoral messages to the LGBTQ community.)

Someone should pull the pope aside at some point and tell him to drop “gender ideology” from his vocabulary. It’s a meaningless term designed to cause fear, not communicate information. The pope has made some great pastoral gestures towards transgender people, but he still has a lot to learn about gender identity. ✦

Editorial: The Pope Is NOT Upset with Fr. James Martin

National Catholic Reporter
Editorial
Ncronline.org
February 27, 2020

A sequence of events unfolded in recent days — a “What did the pope really say?” intrigue — that might have the quality of a Molière comedy, except that, in the end, the hidden whisper campaign misrepresented the pope and was aimed at destroying a good priest’s reputation. Worse, it further fueled the most extreme fringe of the Catholic right and its insane fixation on homosexuality.

The plot had its beginnings in the recent *ad limina* visit to the Vatican of bishops from Region XIII, an area covering Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming. The visit included a conversation with Pope Francis.

On their return, *Catholic News Agency* announced to the world that “several” bishops, who remain anonymous, told them that the pope was quite upset, even angry, with Jesuit Fr. James Martin, who has a noted ministry to the Catholic LGBT community. The object of the pope’s concern, said the anonymous several bishops, was the way Martin was characterizing his celebrated meeting with the pope last September.

They also said that his Jesuit superiors had called him to task about his ministry and that the pope had actually given him a “talking to.”

Some clarity is necessary here. Do not mistake *Catholic News Agency* (CNA) for *Catholic News Service* (CNS). The former, which posted the anonymous source drubbing of Martin, is affiliated with EWTN, which we’ve previously profiled in our series on the far-right Catholic money and entities attempting to fashion a narrow Catholic narrative for the wider culture. It is a narrative that can’t imagine a church that would embrace and celebrate its LGBT members with the same warmth and enthusiasm as it welcomes others.

CNS, on the other hand, is the official news service of the United States



Fr. James Martin, SJ

Conference of Catholic Bishops. While it might not engage in reporting that would rock the institutional barque, it is honest and professional in what it does and would never trade in this sort of transparently shoddy attempt to smear.

The tale took a remarkable turn, however, when Archbishop John Wester of Santa Fe, New Mexico, decided to go public to refute the CNA account.

“Our meeting with the Pope lasted almost two hours and forty-five minutes, so it is difficult for anyone to remember with precision anything that was said,” he wrote. “However, the general tone of the Pope’s responses to issues raised with him was never angry, nor do I remember the Pope saying or implying that he was unhappy with Father Martin or his ministry.”

He also said that while Martin and his ministry were discussed, it was not the pope who raised it but rather some bishops.

Following Wester’s Feb. 21 account, Bishop Steven Biegler of Cheyenne, Wyoming, stepped up to say publicly that Wester’s response “accurately describes the tone and substance of the short dialogue regarding Fr. James Martin.”

Martin himself, thanking Wester on social media, said he’s never had a

“talking to” and “never heard anything negative from Jesuit superiors.”

It is important to understand some of the back story contained in the reporting of NCR national correspondent Heidi Schlumpf about the incident. The author of the “report” was J.D. Flynn, CNA’s editor in chief who previously worked in the Diocese of Lincoln, Nebraska, and the Denver Archdiocese, at the latter under Archbishop Charles Chaput, a noted Francis critic. Days before the CNA article appeared, Flynn had authored a piece critical of Martin in the conservative publication *First Things*.

It is enough to say here that websites labeling themselves Catholic have engaged in absolutely unhinged homophobia and made Martin a primary target. That bishops — dare we point out that they are fellow priests — should provide even the slightest legitimacy to such dangerous thinking is horrifying.

In the current atmosphere, and given the traditional standards of secrecy and silence among the episcopal culture, the church owes a deep debt of gratitude to Wester and Biegler for their courage in supporting a good priest and setting the record straight on their conversation with Francis. ✦

Sister Luisa DeRouen: Truth and transgender lives

By **Sister Luisa Derouen, OP**
GlobalSistersReport.org
 March 3, 2020

I've known this about my friend for years, but recently over a wonderful steak dinner we talked about it again. She is a soft-spoken, very competent professional woman in her mid-60s. She is deeply immersed in the life of her church, and involved with several groups in her city to address the needs of the poor and marginalized. For her whole life, and still now, she knows she is both female and male. It has been a conundrum for decades, but she is increasingly at peace with this dimension of her graced life. She is far from alone in this experience and I have the privilege of knowing many gender-variant people.

That's why I felt such sadness and disappointment when I read Bishop Thomas Paprocki's document intended to guide Catholics in his Springfield, Illinois, Diocese in their understanding of and interactions with transgender people. In large part, he echoes the document from the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education that states God created us male or female at birth and that identity is unchangeable and permanent.

I believe Paprocki is genuine in his desire to exercise responsible leadership for his people, but this is a complex reality, and is best addressed with nuance, humility, sensitivity and in dialogue with transgender people.

By invalidating their existence, leaders give religious sanction to the violence perpetrated against transgender people, and certainly raise the risk of suicide attempts, which are already at 40% among them.

This document gives no credence to a significant number of reputable medical and psychological national associations that support evidence-based data that sex and gender are not always linked. During fetal development our brain as well as our genitals are formed by the influence of hormones at various times during the period of gestation. For most of us, these are aligned, which means our genitals and how we identify match, but for a little less than 1% of the population they do not match.

The challenges transgender people face are not theoretical or academic to

me. For the past 21 years, it has been my privilege to be invited into the sacred and often perilous journey of their lives. I have spent thousands of hours with them as a spiritual companion and have known many of them for years.

Transgender people are who they say they are. I have witnessed their incredible courage and faith in the pursuit of living an authentic life. It is what we call transformation in God, conversion of life.



Sr. Luisa Derouen, right, with her friend, Scotty

It is a movement from integration to disintegration to reintegration. On the way to being whole and holy, we all go through these stages in some way. We spend many years making sense of who we are and how we live. But there are times when the narrative of our life is significantly challenged and we experience a crisis. What held before begins to crumble.

Gradually, we live into a more authentic life. A big difference between what we experience and what transgender people experience is that most of them know from an early age that the life narrative they are being pressured to live is false.

False Integration: What is reflected back to transgender people repeatedly is that others see them in one gender, and they experience themselves as another gender. They learn very quickly that

their self-knowing is judged psychotic and sinful. It's no wonder, then, that they are tortured by self-doubt and self-loathing. They struggle to be in right relationship with God, and understandably so. It's difficult to be in communion with God pretending to be someone they are not. Try as they might, though, they cannot shake loose the mysterious knowing that this is who they are, and neither they nor anyone else can change it.

Dawn recalls, "It was impressed upon me in first grade that the feelings I had of being a girl were wrong and not according to God's will for me. It was unnatural. I had not asked for nor cultivated these feelings. They were just there inside me, and they were evil. For decades, I prayed every day to want to be a man, but those prayers didn't help."

Disintegration: They finally acknowledge that to live other than from a place of honesty is a pretense they can no longer maintain. A false life becomes unsustainable. There are so many with whom I have stood on the precipice of sweeping and profound loss as they made the courageous decision to live in the gender they know themselves to be. They risk losing their family of origin, spouse, children, job, friends and faith community. How many of us have paid that kind of price to live with integrity? This is what we call holiness. It is dying to a false self to live as one's true self. Jesus said "You will come to know the truth and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32).

Sara remembers, "In the tumultuous two-and-a-half years that followed my decision to transition, I changed my name and wardrobe, grew out my hair, switched my hormonal make-up and way of living completely. ... Friends aban-

doned me, concert dates evaporated and I lost my teaching job. But within my body there was complete calm because the journey within was integral to myself, and it was a journey made not alone, but with God."

Reintegration: Gradually, usually over a period of years, as they make their way through the painful and complex stages of transition, self-hatred is replaced by self-love. Self-doubt is replaced by confidence in their perceptions and judgments. They are finally at home with themselves and with the world around them. They have made the passage from what was death-dealing to what can now be life-giving.

Scotty asserts, "I am a photographer and light is central to my art. The best pictures are in the hours when light has nuance. I am twilight, I am a sunrise and a sunset. I am a physical living embodiment of that moment that allows for striking images, fleeting visions and perspectives that are not possible during the dullness of day or night. I am of God and I have beauty in this world that can only be viewed by those who choose to see it."

For 21 years, my mantra to the transgender community is that the truth always leads you to God, never away from God. And the truth does set you free. What holiness looks like is when you live your lives as honestly as you can, being faithful to the person God calls you to be. This is what gives glory to God.

My mantra to those who are not transgender is that transgender people are God's beloved every bit as much as any of us. They, too, are God's dwelling place. With rare exception, they are closer to God after transition. They have been tried by fire in ways many of us cannot imagine. It has brought them to a place of truth, wisdom, compassion, forgiveness, joy, peace, generativity and immense gratitude.

They have so much to teach us, if only we would listen. ✚

Luisa Derouen, a member of the Dominican Sisters of Peace, began to minister among the transgender community in 1999 and has been a spiritual companion to about 250 transgender people across the country.

Korean Catholic Mother: 'I take pride in my gay son'

By **Ock Hyun-Ju**
KoreaHerald.com
 January 22, 2020

When her son Jiho, 38, came out as gay 12 years ago, Hong Jung-seun felt as if her world had stopped.

The ardent Roman Catholic asked God many times why she and her family were facing this personal crisis and what she had done wrong in her life. She begged God to change her son's sexuality so that he could lead a normal life.

In the end, it was she who changed.

"I had been so devoted to serving God, but why my son? I thought it was a punishment for something I did wrong. I hated God," Hong said during an interview with *The Korea Herald*.

For a while, she could not eat. She spent many sleepless nights in shock, denial and guilt. Her mood changed every second.

Her thoughts were fixed on what her son's sexuality would mean for his life -- and for her life -- in a society where sexual minorities are often denied, discriminated against and hated.

After spending much time alone praying, she came to the realization that God was teaching her the virtues of love and acceptance, not punishing her.

"My life goal was to send my son to a good university, get him to have a good job and form a good family. But I learned to see and accept him as he is, not as I want him to be," she said. "God taught me I cannot change a living thing but I can embrace it as it is."

"Without him coming out, I would

have lived and died without breaking my prejudices, unable to wholeheartedly sympathize with the socially marginalized," she said. "My views have been broadened and my world has been en-



Hong Jung-seun in front of a Catholic church in Seoul, holding a book, "Coming Out Story," which she co-authored with other parents of LGBT people.

riched. I learned the meaning of gratitude."

Now, Hong leads a group of parents of sexual minorities who meet for three hours once a month. It's her way of supporting other parents going through the same agony.

In South Korea, homosexuality is not illegal, but discrimination against sexual minorities remains widespread. Many Korean sexual minorities keep

their identities hidden for fear of judgment.

According to the latest Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development report published in 2019, Korea

was fourth from the bottom in terms of LGBTQ inclusiveness among member countries surveyed. It scored 2.8 points out of 10, with the OECD average being 5.1. Teenage sexual minorities appear to be more vulnerable.

A 2014 poll by the National Human Rights Commission of Korea found that 54 percent of LGBTQ teens experienced bullying and discrimination at school, and 19.4 percent had attempted suicide.

Most parents who attend Hong's group meetings have teenage children who have just come out. Those children, Hong said, are walking on the fence between life and death -- and asking for help.

"There was a time when my son was very sensitive and I thought it was just due to stress from studying ahead of the college entrance exam," she said. "I am

sorry that he had to put up with fear and loneliness on his own."

For her son, Hong hopes for a world where sexual minorities can thrive and find happiness as they are.

"Most urgently, we need an anti-discrimination law. Parents of sexual minorities are worried about their children's safety every day," she said. "I just want my gay son to be able to live here safely just like others. I am not asking for any privileges."

Religion should be a bridge, not a barrier, she added, referring to Protestant groups that have been outspoken in their opposition to gay rights and expression.

Yet, Hong sees signs of positive change, albeit slow.

The group Hong leads won the Lee Don-myung Award -- established in memory of the pro-democracy human rights lawyer -- from Korea's Catholic Human Rights Committee earlier this month.

The country's pride parade is also getting bigger every year, with the 2019 parade in central Seoul attracting a record 80,000 LGBTQ people and their supporters.

Her son is not a source of worry anymore, she said. He is a source of happiness and reason for gratitude, as well as a bridge to a world that is richer and more colorful. For that, she thanks him every day for having appeared in her life and being who he is.

"Thank you, my son, for opening up a bigger world for me," she said. ✚