

# Book of Memory and Thanksgiving

*Celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the  
Foundation of New Ways Ministry in  
1977*

In 1980, New Ways staff pose outside their new home (Clockwise from left): Sr. John Ellen Doclar, SSND (standing), Joseph Bekisz, Jeannine Gramick, SSND, Robert Nugent, SDS, Rick Garcia, Judy Markiewicz, RSM, and Joseph Orndorff.

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Dear Friend of New Ways Ministry,

Twenty-five years ago, Sister Jeannine Gramick and Father Robert Nugent had a vision: lesbian and gay people could live in Church and society as equal members, free of discrimination and prejudice. So they started New Ways Ministry as a place where that dream could be nurtured and brought to fruition. At the same time they knew that making their vision a reality would take a great deal of hard work, lots of patience, and much time at prayer.

They realized that education was needed most of all to fulfill the vision. In 1977 homosexuality was rarely spoken about, even in Church circles, except in hushed whispers. Knowledge about the reality of gay/lesbian people was equally unknown. Their wonderful mixture of idealism and perseverance helped correct those deficiencies as they criss-crossed the nation, diocese by diocese, spreading their positive message of justice and reconciliation for lesbian and gay Catholics.

But they did not work alone. Prayer, hospitality, and generous donations of thousands of thousands of Catholics from all walks of life supported them in their much-needed ministry. Their vision grew as hearts and minds began to be opened. Numerous people joined them in their efforts at New Ways, and many others served the ministry as, staff, board members, and presenters at major programs. (Their names are listed at the end of this book.) The generosity of so many, both financially and spiritually, has been one of the surest signs of God's blessing on New Ways Ministry.

And there are memories that could fill encyclopedic volumes: times of great victories and times of great setbacks; times of happiness and times of worry; times of certainty and times of doubt. (Some of these memories are documented in photos and texts throughout this book.) These memories, like all memories, are now dear and precious to us, no matter what their emotional import. They are part of our shared history as Catholics, while we walk the journey towards a Church that is totally inclusive.

Finally, while at this time of our silver jubilee it is natural to look backwards, we also keep an eye on the future. The past quarter of a century has been amazing in terms of social, cultural, technological, and scientific change. Gay and lesbian people have made great strides in their quest for equality. Catholic people and institutions have responded to the challenge of examining their attitudes and practices and opting for development and transformation. As you peruse this book, you will see how far we have come, but we also know that we still have far to go.

In this 25th anniversary year, we experience both pride and awe in stating that New Ways Ministry continues to thrive. We give thanks to God for having brought us thus far. The list of supporters in this book is a wonderful testament to the many people who have kept New Ways Ministry a leading voice in the Church for lesbian/gay rights.

On behalf of the entire New Ways Ministry board and staff, please accept our profound gratitude. Thank you for your support in helping us build wonderful memories for gay/lesbian Catholics and indeed for the entire Church.

Sincerely,

Rev. Paul K Thomas  
Chair, New Ways Ministry Board

# Ministering in New Ways to Gay and Lesbian Catholics and the Church

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by Francis DeBernardo, *Executive Director*

In 1976, Bishop Francis J. Mugavero of Brooklyn, New York, wrote a pastoral letter, “Sexuality: God’s Gift,” which was one of the first Roman Catholic statements to contain a compassionate and encouraging message to gay and lesbian people. Gay and lesbian people deserved to be treated equally in society and the Christian community, he noted, and then he addressed them directly, stating, “. . . we pledge our willingness. . . to try to find new ways to communicate the truth of Christ because we believe it will make you free.”

That passage and that term, “new ways,” caught the attention and the hearts of a priest and nun team who were doing ministry with the gay and lesbian community. Father Robert Nugent, SDS, and Sister Jeannine Gramick, SSND, adopted that phrase for the title of the workshops they were giving in Washington, DC, to Catholic pastoral workers and others interested in gay and lesbian issues. These “New Ways Workshops” were sponsored by the Quixote Center, a Maryland-based Catholic social justice group. One year later, in 1977, these “New Ways Workshops” blossomed into a separate non-profit organization, New Ways Ministry, devoted to Catholic gay and lesbian concerns.

Like its name’s origins and its co-founders, the vision and philosophy of this group was solidly Catholic. Gramick and Nugent’s work was based firmly in the burgeoning positive messages that the Church in the late 1970s was offering to gay and lesbian people: messages of justice, acceptance, dialogue, and reconciliation. Their work as “bridge-builders” found them reaching out, in one direction, to gay and lesbian people, and, in the other direction, to people working

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New Ways Ministry quickly established itself in the U.S. Catholic community as a national resource center and clearinghouse for information and materials on the topic of homosexuality as it impacts religious issues.

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At the Conference of Major Superiors of Men meeting, Milwaukee, 1981: Fr. Nugent and Sr. Jeannine (center) discuss homosexuality and pastoral care with two conference participants.

## Ministering in New Ways to Gay and Lesbian Catholics and the Church

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Over 200 people including nine bishops packed the reception room, probably the largest gathering of gay/lesbian people and their allies ever to attend the bishops' gathering.

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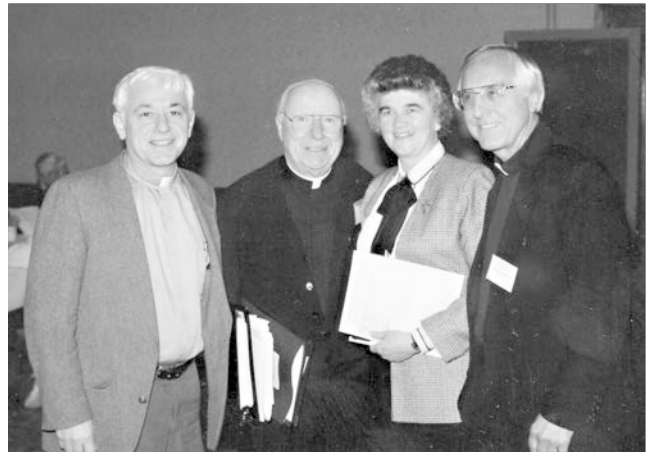
within the Church and Church structures.

Primarily educational in mission, New Ways Ministry quickly established itself in the U.S. Catholic community as a national resource center and clearinghouse for information and materials on the topic of homosexuality as it impacts religious issues. In addition, they lobbied for civil rights and called the Church to reach out compassionately for the inclusion of gay and lesbian people in the community of the faithful. The co-founders were among the few Roman Catholic religious leaders who publicly opposed Anita Bryant's anti-gay initiatives in the 1970s. As with many individuals and groups which were early supporters of gay and lesbian people, the co-founders of New Ways Ministry were criticized by the Archbishop of Washington, DC, who lobbied the Vatican for their removal. In 1984, the Vatican required that they separate themselves from New Ways Ministry, but they were allowed to continue ministry, under the auspices of their religious orders, to gay and lesbian Catholics

And New Ways Ministry continued, as well. For over twenty years now, the ministry of education, justice, and reconciliation has flourished and grown. Through various forums, New Ways Ministry has tried to get the word out to the Catholic community that welcoming, accepting, and loving their gay and lesbian members is an imperative for Gospel living. Through national symposia, research, resources, workshops, retreats and other programs, New Ways Ministry has brought the best of Catholic intellectual thought and research to Catholic leaders and the people in the pews.

In 1992, Bishop Thomas Gumbleton of Detroit surprised U.S. Catholics at a New Ways Ministry Symposium by telling the personal story that one of his brothers, Dan, is gay. He touched the crowd of 500 people gathered in Chicago by talking frankly and movingly about his own struggle to understand and accept his brother. Gumbleton's life was radically affected by that talk. He has since become the "point bishop" for this issue, criss-crossing the nation, talking to Catholic groups about gay and lesbian issues.

In 1995, New Ways Ministry recognized the gifts of this courageous Church leader by presenting him with a "Bridge Building Award." The award was given at a public reception during the fall meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington, DC. Over 200 people including nine bishops packed the reception room, probably the largest gathering of gay/lesbian people and their allies ever to attend the bishops' gathering.



At the Third National Symposium, Chicago, 1992: (left to right) Bishop Kenneth Untener of Saginaw, Michigan; Bishop William Hughes of Covington, Kentucky, RSM, Bishop Thomas Gumbleton of Detroit.



Virginia Apuzzo (left) chats with Casey and Maryellen Lopata at the Fourth National Symposium, Pittsburgh, 1997.

1997, the twentieth anniversary year was a banner year for the ministry. In March, New Ways Ministry sponsored the Fourth National Symposium, entitled “The Church Teaching/Teaching the Church: A National Dialogue on Lesbian/Gay Issues and Catholicism.” Over 650 Catholic leaders and pastoral ministers gathered in Pittsburgh for a weekend-long in-depth and extensive discussion of topics ranging from same-sex marriage, family relationships, civil rights, homophobia, heterosexism, pastoral care, and lesbian nuns.

At that meeting, Bishop Gumbleton made another historic statement: he called on all gay and lesbian Church workers—“including priests and bishops”—to come out of the closet and acknowledge their sexual orientation. Little by little, awareness of gay and lesbian Church personnel is becoming a reality in Catholicism.

October 1997 saw the publication “Always Our Children,” a historic pastoral statement from the U.S. Bishops’ Committee on Marriage and Family Life. This document, directed to parents and pastoral ministers, is one of the strongest affirmations of the goodness of lesbian and gay people in the Catholic Church. “In you, God’s love is revealed,” the bishops say to gay and lesbian people at the close of this document which calls Catholic parents and leaders to initiate dialogue, outreach, and affirmation of the gay and lesbian members of their families and parishes.

New Ways Ministry played a key role in the development of this statement. In 1992, the organization petitioned the bishops to include on their agenda a statement supportive of gay and lesbian people. New Ways was told that only a bishop could make such a petition. When Bishop Gumbleton learned of this response, he stepped in and requested such a statement, enlisting 15 other bishops to support such an initiative. As the document was drafted, our co-founder, Fr. Nugent, and a board member, Mary Kilbride, served as consultants of early drafts.

*Always Our Children* has provided a powerful incentive to many Catholic parishes and communities to inaugurate support groups, spirituality programs, and educational opportunities for gay/lesbian people and their families. In the fall of 1998, on the one-year anniversary of the issuance of the statement, New Ways Ministry hosted a panel presentation at the U.S. Bishops’ Conference meeting, entitled, “*Always Our Children*: A Report from the Pews.” Two bishops, a pastoral minister, a lesbian woman, and the mother of a gay son spoke to

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## Ministering in New Ways to Gay and Lesbian Catholics and the Church

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a gathering of over 200 people about the impact of the pastoral and how it was being implemented in their various pastoral settings. New Ways Ministry continues to do ministry to parents of gay/lesbian people through retreats, educational programs, and resources. In July of 2000, New Ways Ministry assumed the administration of the Catholic Parents Network, a fledgling organization of parents of gay/lesbian people across the country who support one another in their journeys.

Making public statements about Catholic commitment to gay/lesbian rights has always been a part of New Ways Ministry's mission. From the early days, the co-founders began the Catholic Coalition for Gay Civil Rights, eventually collecting over 3,000 signatures from Catholic individuals and organizations. Most recently, New Ways Ministry followed through on that tradition by sponsoring, with Pax Christi/USA, a full-page signature ad in the *New York Times*, denouncing violence against gay/lesbian people just two months after the 1998 brutal murder of Matthew Shepard, a young gay man in Wyoming. Close to 2,000 Catholics, including nine bishops, put their names on that advertisement.

As the second millennium began to close, gay/lesbian ministry, and New Ways Ministry in particular, received disturbing news. In mid-July of 1999, the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith released a Notification which permanently prohibited Sr. Jeannine Gramick and Father Robert Nugent, New Ways Ministry's co-founders, from conducting pastoral programs with lesbian/gay people and their families. Less than a year later, there followed an aftershock to this terrible news: these two pioneers of gay/lesbian ministry were additionally prohibited from speaking about homosexuality in any forum, and also from speaking about the 11-year investigation that the Vatican conducted.

The news of these decisions troubled many Catholic leaders and lay people who saw these penalties as unjust. Many saw that this case involved several issues: freedom of conscience, freedom of discussion, undue interference by the Vatican in the workings of the local Church, undue interference in the governance of religious communities. New Ways Ministry spearheaded the campaign to try to restore their ministry by organizing a signature ad in the *National Catholic Reporter*. The ad was signed by 4,551 individuals, making it the largest public signature ad in the history of the Catholic Church in America. In one sense, the overwhelming support showed that interest in and sympathy for gay/lesbian ministry had grown dramatically from the days when Gramick and Nugent began New Ways Ministry in a small apartment in Mt. Rainier, Maryland. The issues they cared passionately about for the last quarter century had taken root in the Church and were growing rapidly.

On the grassroots scale, New Ways staff spends a significant portion of time providing day-long workshops for church personnel across the country. Entitled "Building Bridges: Gay and Lesbian Christians and the Church," these programs offer positive information on Church pronouncements, Scripture interpretation, lesbian/gay spirituality, and pastoral outreach. Many gay and lesbian people and their family members, as well, attend these programs. The structure of the workshop allows for story-telling and dialogue, so many walls of ignorance and fear are broken down, and bridges are built right in the course of the workshop. To date, New Ways Ministry has conducted such programs in over 90% of the dioceses across the United States.

Additionally, New Ways Ministry staff members have acted as consultants to Catholic parishes and faith communities who want to be more welcoming to the gay and lesbian



4012 29<sup>th</sup> Street, Mt. Rainier, Maryland: New Ways Ministry's home since 1980.

## Ministering in New Ways to Gay and Lesbian Catholics and the Church



New Ways Ministry Board and Staff at Spring 2001 meeting. Back Row: Robert Mialovich, Jennifer Mabe, Linda McCullough, Rev. Paul Thomas. Middle Row: Cynthia Nordone, Joseph and Mary Byers. Front Row: MaryAnn Coyle, SL, Francis DeBernardo, Barbara Regan, rc.

community. The staff often give talks to such groups and help them devise a pastoral plan to both reach out and look inward. The quarterly newsletter, *Bondings*, has been carrying a list of gay-friendly Catholic parishes around the country. The list is updated with each issue and now contains over 100 parishes.

Opportunities for spiritual development and growth for gay and lesbian Catholics, their parents, and also for lesbian nuns have also been an important item on New Ways Ministry's agenda; e.g., weekend retreats across the country, as well as book and video discussion groups on sexuality and spirituality in the local Washington, DC area.

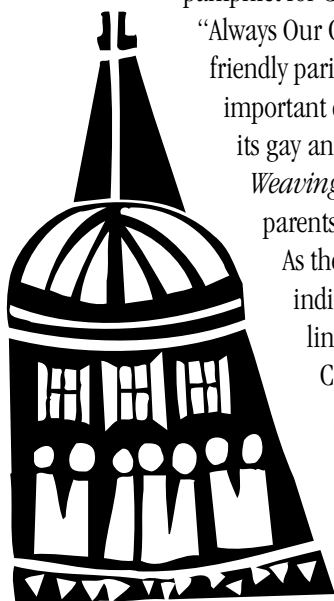
New Ways Ministry's mission of publishing and providing educational resources continues today. We distribute *Voices of Hope*, an anthology of positive Catholic statements about gay and lesbian issues, and *Building Bridges: Gay and Lesbian Reality and the Catholic Church*, a collection of essays by our co-founders. Currently, we are readying for distribution a pamphlet for Catholic gay/lesbian college students, a commentary on "Always Our Children," and anthology about the experiences of gay friendly parishes. In addition, our newsletter *Bondings* chronicles important developments in the relationship of the Catholic Church and its gay and lesbian members. We also publish *Womanjourney Weavings*, a newsletter by and for lesbian nuns, and a newsletter for parents of gay/lesbian people, *Families Helping Families*.

As the chronology in this book of Memory and Thanksgiving indicates, the story of New Ways Ministry has been intimately linked with the story of gay/lesbian ministry in the Catholic Church in the United States. The prayers, courage, and generosity of so many supporters over the past 25 years has kept New Ways Ministry vibrant. That stronghold of good people who are willing to help in the ministry of building bridges of justice and reconciliation will keep New Ways Ministry going strong into the future. ☸

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# New Ways Ministry and Gay/Lesbian Ministry in the Catholic Church

## A Modern Chronology: 1962-2002

Sister Jeannine Gramick, SSND,  
and Father Robert Nugent, SDS,  
in 1977, the year they founded  
New Ways Ministry.



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1962-65

The Second Vatican Council meets.

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1967

Fr. Henri Nouwen publishes “Homosexuality: Prejudice or Mental Illness” in the *National Catholic Reporter*. Nouwen urges compassion for gay and lesbian people.

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1968

Fr. John McNeill, SJ, publishes a three-part article, “The Christian Male Homosexual,” in successive issues of *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*. McNeill questions the moral system that condemns all homosexual activity as objectively evil.

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1969

Fr. Pat Nidorf calls together a group of lesbian/gay Catholics in southern California for discussion, fellowship, and prayer. From these groups, Dignity, Inc., is founded. In succeeding years, Dignity establishes chapters across the nation.

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1971

As a graduate student in mathematics at the University of Pennsylvania, Sister Jeannine Gramick, SSND, meets Dominic Bash, a gay Catholic, who asks her “What is the Church doing for my gay brothers and sisters?” She begins her ministry by having “home Masses” for gay/lesbian people in Dominic’s apartment. Fr. Robert Nugent answers her call for priests to aid her ministry.

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1972

Fr. Charles Curran publishes “Homosexuality and Moral Theology: Methodological and Substantive Considerations” in *The Thomist*. Curran calls for the use of updated scientific findings and new interpretations of Scripture to study moral questions concerning homosexuality.



## New Ways Ministry and Gay/Lesbian Ministry: 1962-2002

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U.S. Bishops publish “Principles to Guide Confessors in Questions of Homosexuality.”

Dignity hosts its first national convention in Los Angeles.

Gregory Baum publishes an article “Catholic Homosexuals” in *Commonweal*, which questions the idea of the unnaturalness of homosexuality.

At separate meetings in the same year, the National Coalition of American Nuns and the National Federation of Priests Councils both pass resolutions in support of gay/lesbian civil rights.

Brian McNaught, a writer for the Archdiocese of Detroit’s newspaper, is fired when it is discovered that he is gay. He begins a public fast at the archdiocesan chancery that is answered by two of Detroit’s auxiliary bishops, Thomas Gumbleton and Joseph Imesch, calling for an end to discrimination and prejudice.

The Salvatorian Fathers and Brothers release a pastoral report, “A Model for Ministry to the Homosexual Community,” which calls for concerted pastoral care. The report states that ministry should begin with the oppression and alienation that gay/lesbian people feel, not with any warnings about sexual activity.

The Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issues a “Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics” which acknowledges that there are “homosexuals who are definitively such because of some kind of innate instinct. . .”

Bishop Francis Mugavero of Brooklyn, NY, issues a pastoral letter, *Sexuality: God’s Gift*, that in part addresses gay/lesbian people by saying “. . . we pledge our willingness. . . to try to find new ways to communicate the truth of Christ because we believe it will make you free.”

Fr. Nugent and Sr. Jeannine join the staff of the Quixote Center, a new Catholic social justice center in Hyattsville, Maryland. They begin to do “New Ways” workshops to educate Church leaders and ministers about homosexuality and gay/lesbian issues. The workshop title is taken from Bishop Mugavero’s pastoral letter.

The Diocese of Richmond, Virginia, establishes the Sexual Minorities Commission, the first diocesan ministry to lesbian/gay Catholics.



The United States Catholic Conference hosts “A Call to Action Conference” on social justice in the Church. Along with 100 national organizations, Dignity is invited to send a voting delegate. Five of the recommendations in the final statement have to do with promoting pastoral care for gay and lesbian people, and fighting discrimination.

In a pastoral letter on moral values, *To Live in Christ Jesus*, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops affirm that “Homosexuals, like everyone else, should not suffer from prejudice against their basic human rights. They have a right to respect, friendship and justice. They should have an active role in the Christian community.”

Fr. John McNeill, SJ, publishes *The Church and the Homosexual*, the first full-length theological challenge to the magisterial prohibition of same-sex activity. He receives the *imprimi potest* from his Jesuit superiors.

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# 1973

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# 1974



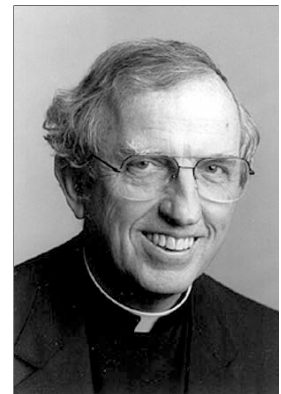
Brian McNaught

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# 1975

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# 1976



Bishop Walter Sullivan of  
Richmond, Virginia.

## New Ways Ministry and Gay/Lesbian Ministry: 1962-2002

1977



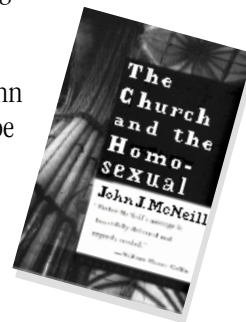
New Ways Ministry is founded by Sister Jeannine Gramick, SSND, and Father Robert Nugent, SDS, in Mt. Rainier, Maryland, and incorporated as a not-for-profit organization.

The National Assembly of Religious Brothers passes a resolution supporting the human rights of gay/lesbian people.

The Catholic Theological Society of America publishes *Human Sexuality: New Directions in American Catholic Thought*. The authors, Anthony Kosnik, William Carroll, Agnes Cunningham, Ronald Modras, and James Schulte call for new theological understandings of homosexuality, free of stereotypes and prejudices, and based on the biological and social sciences and the quality of relationships.

The Vatican orders the Jesuits to remove the *imprimi potest* from Rev. John McNeill's *The Church and the Homosexual*, and to order to McNeill to be silent about homosexuality and ethics in the public arena.

Communication Ministry, Inc., a support network for gay/lesbian priests and religious, begins to form at a workshop given by Fr. Paul Morrissey at Dignity's national convention.



*Another Kind of Love: Homosexuality and Spirituality* by Richard Woods, OP, is published by Thomas More Press.

*Insight*, a quarterly journal of gay Catholic opinion, begins publication.

1978



First issue of *Bondings*, New Ways Ministry's newsletter, is published.

The National Institute of Mental Health awards a grant to Jeannine Gramick for a study of the coming out processes and coping strategies of lesbian women.

In response to the anti-gay campaigns organized by Anita Bryant, New Ways Ministry starts the "Catholic Coalition for Gay Civil Rights," which eventually grows to more than 3000 Catholic groups and individuals supportive of social justice.

The National Assembly of Women Religious passes a resolution supporting the struggles of sexual minorities.

New Ways Ministry publishes *A Time to Speak*, a collection of positive statements from Catholic organizations about civil rights.

SIGMA (Sisters In Gay Ministry Associated), a group of women religious who work in the Church for gay/lesbian inclusion and rights, is formed.

## New Ways Ministry and Gay/Lesbian Ministry: 1962-2002



Sr. Jeannine and the New Ways Ministry exhibit at the first Women's Ordination Conference, Baltimore, 1978.

New Ways Ministry sponsors first retreat for lesbian women religious. The Vatican and the Archdiocese of Washington, DC, try to prevent the program, yet the retreat is held.

Communication Ministry, Inc., publishes its first newsletter for gay/lesbian religious and priests.

New Ways Ministry serves as a consultant to the U.S. Catholic Conference's Ad Hoc Committee for the Plan of Pastoral Action for Young Adults.

The Diocese of Trenton, New Jersey, appoints a Diocesan Liaison for Sexual Minorities.

New Ways Ministry publishes *Homosexual People in Society*, a document from a committee of the Dutch bishops, and *An Introduction to the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons* from the Bishops of England and Wales.

Archbishop John Quinn of San Francisco issues a "Pastoral Letter on Homosexuality."

The Catholic Pastoral Committee on Sexual Minorities is established in the Archdiocese of St. Paul, Minnesota.

# 1979

# 1980



The Catholic Coalition for Gay Civil Rights, an early New Ways Project, takes part in the historic 1979 March on Washington for Gay Rights.

## New Ways Ministry and Gay/Lesbian Ministry: 1962-2002

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The National Conference of Catholic Bishops issues *Human Sexuality: Education for Lifelong Learning*.

Father John Harvey, OSFS, inaugurates Courage, a ministry to gay/lesbian Catholics to help them remain celibate.

Archbishop Rembert Weakland, OSB, of Milwaukee, supports statewide legislation protecting the civil rights of gay/lesbian people. Wisconsin becomes the first state with a gay rights law.

Yale University History Professor John Boswell publishes *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*.

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# 1981

New Ways Ministry takes the National 4-H Center in Bethesda, Maryland to court for breaking a contract to rent facilities to the group for the Symposium. It is discovered there was communication between the 4-H Center and the Archdiocese of Washington. New Ways Ministry loses the case.



Sr. Jeannine Gramick presents her talk at the First National Symposium in 1981

### 1<sup>st</sup> National Symposium

**New Ways Ministry's First National Symposium** on Homosexuality and the Catholic Church is held in Washington, DC. More than 50 Catholic groups endorse the program, and 185 people attend. The co-founders meet with Archbishop James Hickey who tries to thwart the program by writing to Catholic bishops and religious communities, asking them not to support the event.



Fr. Robert Nugent is interviewed by the media.

## New Ways Ministry and Gay/Lesbian Ministry: 1962-2002

New Ways Ministry wins a case in the Catholic Press Association's Fair Publishing Practices Committee against the *St. Louis Review* for their denial of an opportunity to respond to criticism.

New Ways Ministry and Dignity/USA publish *Homosexual Catholics: A Primer for Discussion*, co-authored by Fr. Bob Nugent, Sr. Jeannine Gramick, and Fr. Tom Odo.

The Archdiocese of Baltimore publishes "A Ministry to Gay and Lesbian Catholic Persons by the Roman Catholic Church of Baltimore."

*Homosexuality and the Christian Way of Life* by Edward Malloy is published by University Press of America.

The Diocese of St. Augustine, Florida, establishes a ministry to homosexual Catholics.

*Homosexuality and Social Justice* is published by the Task Force on Gay/Lesbian Issues of the Commission on Social Justice, Archdiocese of San Francisco.

*Homosexuality and the Catholic Church*, edited by Jeannine Gramick, is published by Thomas More Press

*A Challenge to Love: Gay and Lesbian Catholics in the Church*, edited by Robert Nugent, is published by Crossroads Publishing Company. The Vatican pressures Bishop Walter Sullivan (Richmond, VA) to remove his name from the book's cover.

The Archdiocese of San Francisco publishes "Ministry and Homosexuality in the Archdiocese of San Francisco."

The Washington State Catholic Conference publishes "Prejudice Against Homosexuals and the Ministry of the Church."

Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen of Seattle offers the archdiocesan Cathedral for Dignity/USA's national convention Mass. Hunthausen is called to the Vatican for a meeting during the time the Dignity convention meets; he leaves a videotaped welcome speech for convention delegates and participants.

The organization, Conference for Catholic Lesbians, is established.



At the East Coast Conference on Religious Education, Washington, DC, 1981, Fr. Nugent talks with a participant.

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1982

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1983

At a Manhattan fundraiser for New Ways Ministry, staff and supporters pose. Top row, standing: Bob Nugent, Karen Doherty, Christine Nusse. Bottom row: Blythe Batten, Rick Garcia, Jeannine Gramick, Joanne Still, Mary Mendola



## New Ways Ministry and Gay/Lesbian Ministry: 1962-2002

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### 1984

Eastern Regional Meeting of SIGMA (Sisters in Gay Ministry Associated), 1984.  
Top Row: Mary Anne Vincent, CSJP; Mary Lou Steele, SC, Marguerite Kropinak, CSJ.  
Bottom Row: Andrea Nenzel, CSJP; Jeannine Gramick, SSND; Blythe Batten.



The Vatican Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, following pressures from Archbishop James Hickey of Washington, DC, informs Gramick's and Nugent's religious administrators that the pair must separate themselves from New Ways Ministry.

The Consultation on Homosexuality, Social Justice, and Roman Catholic Theology is founded in San Francisco by Kevin Gordon.

Archbishop John O'Connor of New York opposes New York City Mayor Ed Koch's Executive Order 50 which requires non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation for agencies which hold contracts with New York City. The Diocese of Brooklyn, led by Bishop Francis Mugavero, also in New York City, issues a statement saying that they do not object to the Executive Order.

### 1985



*Bondings*, New Ways Ministry's newsletter, prints its first special issue on how Catholics are responding to the AIDS crisis. Two more special issues on AIDS follow in the 1980s.

*Lesbian Nuns: Breaking Silence*, a collection of autobiographical essays edited by Rosemary Curb and Nancy Manahan, is published by Naiad Press.

### 1986

The National Council of Pax Christi/USA issues a statement supporting the human rights of gay/lesbian people.

The Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith publishes "Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons" which introduces the term "objectively disordered" to describe a homosexual orientation.

U.S. bishops begin to ask Dignity chapters across the country to leave Church buildings. Dignity chapters continue their ministry in other facilities.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> National Symposium



At the Second National Symposium, 1985: Mary Hunt, Madeline Pellerin, and John Boswell.

**New Ways Ministry's Second National Symposium**, entitled "Homosexuality in the Priesthood and Religious Life," is held in Washington, DC, San Francisco, and St. Louis in 1985 and 1986. Over 300 church people attend.

John McNeill, SJ, breaks his ten-year silence on homosexuality and ethics, decrying the CDF's "Letter to the Bishops. . ."

The Diocese of San Jose, California, publishes guidelines for ministry with gay and lesbian Catholics.

New Ways Ministry publishes *Homosexuality and the Magisterium*, a collection of positive Catholic statements on homosexuality.

*A Faith of One's Own: Explorations by Catholic Lesbians*, a collection of first-person accounts, is edited by Barbara Zanotti and published by The Crossing Press.

Fr. John McNeill is dismissed from the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) for breaking the Vatican-imposed silencing of his thoughts on homosexuality and ethics.

Archbishop Roger Mahony establishes an office for Ministry with Gay and Lesbian Catholics in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

The First National Catholic HIV/AIDS Ministry Conference is held in Chicago. The meeting gathers together Catholic leaders and ministers who have been responding to the AIDS crisis, which in the 1980s was greatly affecting gay men.

*The Homosexual Person: New Thinking in Pastoral Care* by Fr. John Harvey, OSFS, is published by Ignatius Press.

*The Vatican and Homosexuality* edited by Jeannine Gramick and Pat Furey is published by Crossroads Publishing Company.

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1987

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1988

## New Ways Ministry and Gay/Lesbian Ministry: 1962-2002

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The Archdiocese of Baltimore's gay/lesbian ministry publishes *Homosexuality: A Positive Catholic Perspective* by Fr. Paul Thomas.

The Archdiocese of Chicago inaugurates ministry to lesbian/gay Catholics.

The Vatican Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes begins an investigation into the writings and ministry of Gramick and Nugent.

James Hanigan's *Homosexuality: the Test Case for Christian Sexual Ethics* is published by Paulist Press.

The Diocese of Dallas, Texas, inaugurates Ministry Among Catholic Homosexuals and their Families.

Brian McNaught's *On Being Gay: Thoughts on Family, Faith, and Love* is published by St. Martin's Press.

An eight-year court case against Georgetown University ends when campus lawyers agree to grant homosexual student groups the same rights as other student groups. Based on the Georgetown legal precedent, many lesbian/gay student groups form at other Catholic colleges and universities.

*Taking a Chance on God* by John McNeill is published by Beacon Press.

Catholic University of America allows a gay/lesbian student group full privileges.



Bishop Charles Buswell of Pueblo, Colorado, and Sr. Jeannine Gramick (1984).



July 4<sup>th</sup> picnic: Rita Baum, Bob Nugent, Karen O'Donoghue, Bob Mialovich (1984).

The Archdiocese of Seattle establishes a gay/lesbian ministry.

Dignity/USA publishes its Sexual Ethics Task Force Report, which proposes a new sexual ethic for those "sexually disenfranchised" by the Church.

As he delivered the John Courtney Murray Forum lecture in New York City, Father Timothy Healy, SJ, former President of Georgetown University, acknowledges that he had done wrong by following Archbishop Hickey's order to oust the Washington chapter of Dignity from the campus: "For the first time in my life as a priest I felt what I was doing at that altar was obscene, . . . I wondered what had happened to my Church."

*Homosexuality in the Priesthood and Religious Life*, edited by Sister Jeannine Gramick is published by Crossroad Press.

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# 1989



## New Ways Ministry and Gay/Lesbian Ministry: 1962-2002

The National Catholic AIDS Network is established.

The Diocese of Oakland, California, establishes a Task Force for Outreach to Gay and Lesbian Communities and Their Families.

New Ways Ministry publishes the first issue of *Womanjourney Weavings*, a newsletter for, by, and about lesbian religious.

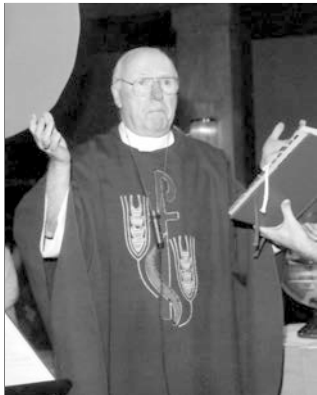
*Listen to the Stories: Gay and Lesbian Catholics Talk About Their Lives*, edited by Raymond Holtz, is published by Garland Publications.

New Ways Ministry Director Greg Link and Co-Founder Jeannine Gramick meet with Bishop William Hughes to discuss the possibility that the National Conference of Catholic Bishops would issue a statement about ministry to families with lesbian/gay members. Link writes to the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, requesting such a statement from the Committee on Marriage and Family Life. Bishop Gumbleton makes the request formally, with a letter signed by 15 other bishops. The statement will be issued a few years later as *Always Our Children*.

1990

1991

1992



Bishop William Hughes presides at the Symposium III Mass

**New Ways Ministry hosts the Third National Symposium**, entitled “Lesbian and Gay People and Catholicism: The State of the Question,” and over 450 Catholic leaders attend the Chicago meeting. Three bishops—William Hughes of Covington, KY, Kenneth Untener of Saginaw, MI, and Thomas Gumbleton of Detroit, MI—speak on pastoral care, despite a request from the Vatican’s U.S. Nuncio not to do so. Bishop Gumbleton, on his way to the podium, decides not to give his prepared speech and instead speaks about his family’s coming to terms with his brother’s homosexuality. He begins a new era of advocacy in the Church by speaking out on lesbian/gay issues.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> National Symposium

At the Third National Symposium, Chicago, 1992: Fran Ferder, FSPA, Margaret Farley, RSM, and John Boswell share conversation



## New Ways Ministry and Gay/Lesbian Ministry: 1962-2002

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At the presentation of the first Bridge Building Award, Washington, DC, 1992: Helen Marie Burns, RSM, Rev. Charles Curran, Greg Link.



The Vatican privately issues a letter to the U.S. bishops urging great caution about support for gay/lesbian rights legislation. New Ways Ministry receives a copy of the document and releases it to the press. Catholic reaction in the U.S. and in various parts of the world is to continue support for civil rights for lesbian and gay people.

Rev. Charles Curran receives the first New Ways Ministry “Bridge Building” award at a luncheon in Washington, DC.

New Ways Ministry sponsors “A Time to Speak: Catholics for Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights” statement in the *National Catholic Reporter* signed by 1500 Catholics, including three bishops.

New Ways Ministry and Dignity/USA organize a petition drive requesting that the U.S. Catholic bishops maintain support of civil rights legislation for lesbian and gay persons. Petitions with over 12,400 signatures are delivered to Bishop James Malone, president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, at the fall meeting of the conference in Washington, DC.

*Building Bridges: Gay and Lesbian Reality and the Catholic Church* by Sr. Jeannine Gramick and Fr. Robert Nugent is published by Twenty-Third Publications.

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## 1993

Marching in the Washington, DC, Gay Pride Parade, 1993: Greg Link, Kurt Schade, and Jack Engel



## New Ways Ministry and Gay/Lesbian Ministry: 1962-2002

New Ways Ministry sponsors “Respect for Lesbian and Gay Persons: An Open Letter to Pope John Paul II” in the *Denver Post* signed by 911 Catholics, including four bishops. The advertisement’s statement asks the Pope, on the occasion of a papal visit for World Youth Day, to denounce bigotry and discrimination against gay and lesbian people, and to address the needs of gay/lesbian youth.

The National Coalition of American Nuns supports the national movement to lift the ban on gay/lesbian people in the U.S. military.

Cardinal Adam Maida of Detroit announces that he has been appointed to chair a Vatican commission to investigate the ministry of Gramick and Nugent.

The National Board of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious issues a statement in support of gay/lesbian rights.

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Marriage and Family Life accepts a proposal by Bishop Thomas Gumbleton to write a letter on ministry to families with gay/lesbian members. New Ways Ministry Co-Founder, Robert Nugent, and Board Member, Mary Kilbride, will become consultants to the drafting committee for the statement, which will become *Always Our Children*.

*Same Sex Unions in PreModern Europe* by John Boswell is published by Villard Press.

The first national retreat for parents of gay/lesbian people is sponsored by Catholic Parents Network in Stamford, Connecticut.

The National Association of Catholic Diocesan Lesbian/Gay Ministers is established at a Chicago meeting of ministers.

Daniel Helminiak’s *What the Bible Really Says About Homosexuality* is published by Alamo Square Press and becomes an instant mega-bestseller for several years in gay/lesbian bookstores.

# 1994

### ‘Bridge Building’ Award to Bishop Gumbleton

Bishop Thomas Gumbleton receives New Ways Ministry’s “**Bridge Building**” award at the annual meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington, DC, at a reception of 200 supporters, including 13 bishops.

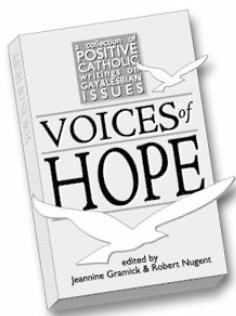


At the Bridge Building Award presentation, Bishop Thomas Gumbleton (left) poses with his brother, Dan Gumbleton, Bishop John Snyder of St. Augustine, Florida, and Francis DeBernardo

# 1995

## New Ways Ministry and Gay/Lesbian Ministry: 1962-2002

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Jeannine Gramick and Robert Nugent publish *Voices of Hope: A Collection of Positive Catholic Statements on Gay/Lesbian Issues*.

Cardinal Basil Hume of Westminster, London, England, issues a pastoral letter, “A Note on the Teaching of the Catholic Church Concerning Homosexual People.” The letter condemns anti-gay violence, defends human rights, and emphasizes that “love between two persons, whether of the same sex or of a different sex, is to be treasured and respected.”

Dignity/USA inaugurates Solidarity Sunday program, a prayer and ribbon-wearing campaign to raise awareness in faith communities about the problem of violence against sexual minorities.

John McNeill’s *Freedom, Glorious Freedom* is published by Beacon Press.

The Dioceses of Rockville Centre, New York and Tucson, Arizona, inaugurate ministries to gay/lesbian Catholics and their families.

The Paulist Fathers present the Isaac Hecker Award for Social Justice to Sister Jeannine Gramick and Father Robert Nugent.

*Homosexuality: Catholic Teaching and Pastoral Practice* by Fr. Gerald Coleman is published by Paulist Press.

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### 1996

Chicago’s Cardinal Joseph Bernardin dies. The Windy City Chorus (Gay Men’s Choir of Chicago) sings at a vigil Mass for his funeral.

The 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Diocese of Richmond’s Sexual Minorities Commission is celebrated by hosting the third annual conference of the National Association of Catholic Diocesan Lesbian/Gay Ministries in Williamsburg, Virginia. Bishop Walter Sullivan celebrates the Mass.

*Homosexuality and Roman Catholic Ethics* by Thomas Thurston is published by International Scholars Publication.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Mass of the Los Angeles Archdiocesan Ministry to Lesbian/Gay Catholics is celebrated by Cardinal Roger Mahony.



Bishop Matthew Clark

Bernadette Brooten’s *Love Between Women: Early Christian Responses to Female Homoeroticism* is published by the University of Chicago Press.

The Diocese of Rochester, New York, announces a formal collaboration with the lay-led Catholic Gay and Lesbian Family Ministry.

Dominican Father Richard Peddicord’s *Gay and Lesbian Rights—A Question: Sexual Ethics or Social Justice?* is published by Sheed and Ward.

The Diocese of Charlotte, North Carolina, establishes the Diocesan Commission for Ministry to the Gay-Lesbian Community and their Families.

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### 1997

Bishop Matthew Clark of Rochester, New York, celebrates Mass in the diocesan cathedral for lesbian/gay Catholics, families, and friends, despite protest by various groups.

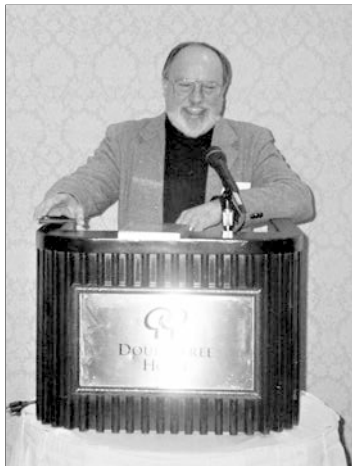
## New Ways Ministry and Gay/Lesbian Ministry: 1962-2002

The Diocese of Orlando, Florida, establishes a gay and lesbian ministry.

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Marriage and Family Life issues "Always Our Children—A Pastoral Message to Parents of Homosexual Children."

At Georgetown University, New Ways Ministry, along with three campus student groups, hosts "Bridging the Gap: A Theological Debate on Homosexuality and Catholicism," with three theologians: James Hanigan, Richard McCormick, SJ, and John McNeill. A panel of three religion writers, Anne Rodgers-Melnick, Kenneth Briggs, and Larry B. Stammer question the theologians. Sister Camille D'Arienzo, RSM, Vice-President of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious moderates the debate. Cardinal Hickey asks the President of the University to cancel the event, but the President allows the debate to happen.

Bishop Walter Sullivan celebrates Mass for gay/lesbian Catholics in Richmond diocese Cathedral, telling the congregation: "You belong here. It's about time somebody says that to you."



Fr. Richard Rohr, OFM, at the speaker's podium

### 4<sup>th</sup> National Symposium

**New Ways Ministry hosts its Fourth National Symposium** in Pittsburgh, entitled "The Church Teaching/Teaching the Church: A National Dialogue on Lesbian/Gay Issues and Catholicism." It is endorsed by more than 100 Catholic organizations; more than 650 Catholic leaders attend.



Steve Benzek at the New Ways Ministry exhibit



(left to right) Gertrud Ayerle, MMS, Mary Kilbride, Fr. Jim Schexnayder, Fr. Rodney DeMartini



Francis DeBernardo, Executive Director of New Ways Ministry

## New Ways Ministry and Gay/Lesbian Ministry: 1962-2002

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### 1998

New Ways Ministry hosts “*Always Our Children: A Report From the Pews*” at the annual meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, DC. Two bishops and three lay women speak about how the pastoral has begun to be implemented in Catholic communities.

The Diocese of St. Augustine, Florida, establishes “Ministry to Gay/Lesbian Catholics and their Families.”

Matthew Shepard, a Wyoming college student, dies after being brutally beaten. New Ways Ministry and Pax Christi USA sponsor a full-page advertisement in the *New York Times*, entitled “A Catholic Pledge to End Violence Against Gay and Lesbian Persons.” Approximately 2,000 Catholics sign the ad, including nine bishops.

*Spiritual Direction and the Gay Person* by James Empereur, SJ, is published by Continuum Press



New Ways Ministry Board Meeting, 1998 (back row): Fr. Paul Thomas, Maryellen Kane, CSJ, Frank O'Donnell, SM; (front row): Robert Mialovich, Barbara Regan, rc, Bishop Thomas Gumbleton.

### 1999

The Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issues a Notification permanently prohibiting Sister Jeannine Gramick and Father Robert Nugent from conducting pastoral programs for gay/lesbian people and their families.

New Ways Ministry responds to the Vatican Notification by publishing a signature advertisement in the *National Catholic Reporter*, entitled “Jubilee Justice Begins at Home,” requesting the U.S. bishops to ask the Vatican to reverse the decision against Gramick and Nugent. Fifty religious congregations endorse the statement and 4,551 individuals and organizations sign the ad—the largest number in U.S. Catholic history.

At the sixth national meeting of the National Association of Catholic Diocesan Lesbian/Gay Ministries in Chicago, Cardinal Francis George, OMI, addresses the participants, telling them that they cannot criticize the recent Vatican decision about Sister Jeannine Gramick and Father Robert Nugent during their meeting.

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati institutes Catholic Ministry of Gays and Lesbians.

Over 100 University of Notre Dame students hold a three-day hunger strike calling for the administration to include homosexuality in its non-discrimination policy. The effort is unsuccessful.

# 2000

New Ways Ministry hosts the first college retreat for Catholic gay/lesbian students in Scranton, Pennsylvania.

On the eve of Lent, Cardinal Roger Mahony issues a seven-page apology to those that he or the Roman Catholic Church may have offended. Included was an apology to gay/lesbian people: "I ask pardon of our Catholic homosexual and lesbian members when the church has appeared to be non-supportive of their struggles or of falling into homophobia."

To satisfy the Vatican, the School Sisters of Notre Dame and the Salvatorian Fathers and Brothers issue obediences to Gramick and Nugent that they can no longer speak or write about homosexuality or about the Vatican's 11-year investigation of their ministry.

New Ways Ministry organizes a coalition of Washington, DC-area Catholic social justice groups to hold a prayer vigil, entitled "We Shall Not Be Silent," at the Vatican embassy protesting the silencing of Gramick/Nugent.

New Ways Ministry Executive Director Francis DeBernardo delivers the opening address at the Conference on Religion and Homosexuality at the first World Pride celebration in Rome, Italy. Bishop Jacques Gaillot of France, also scheduled to speak at the conference luncheon, is silenced by the Vatican the day before the event. The World Pride march draws thousands to Rome, despite Vatican protests to prevent it because of the Jubilee Year celebrations.

Mark Jordan's *The Silence of Sodom: Homosexuality and Modern Catholicism* is published by the University of Chicago Press.

At an Advent Mass at St. Bernadette's parish, Severn, Maryland, Bishop William Newman, auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, asks lesbian and gay Catholics for forgiveness for "the sins individually and collectively the Church has committed against the gay and lesbian community."

Dignity/USA, the Rainbow Sash Movement (a group of gay Catholic activists), and Soulforce (an interfaith coalition of gay activists) protest at the National Conference of Catholic Bishops meeting in Washington, DC, calling for an end to "spiritual violence against lesbian/gay people."



Linda McCullough speaks at Vatican Embassy prayer service in support of New Ways Ministry's co-founders, Washington, DC, 2000.

## New Ways Ministry and Gay/Lesbian Ministry: 1962-2002

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2001

Dignity/USA and Souforce bring their protest against spiritual violence to St. Peter's Square, Vatican City.

Catholic University of America forbids a conference of "ex-gay" ministries from meeting on campus.

*Sexual Diversity and Catholicism: Toward the Development of Moral Theology*, edited by Patricia Beattie Jung, with Joseph Andrew Coray, is published by The Liturgical Press.

The Diocese of Cleveland institutes Gay and Lesbian Family Ministry.

*With Listening Hearts: Understanding the Voices of Lesbian and Gay Catholics* by Fr. Peter Liuzzi, O. Carm. is published by Paulist Press.

2002

New Ways Ministry hosts its Fifth National Symposium in Louisville, Kentucky, Entitled "Out of Silence God Has Called Us: Lesbian/Gay Issues and the Vatican II Church," it is endorsed by more than 100 Catholic organizations; more than 500 church leaders attend. At the Symposium, New Ways Ministry issues a comprehensive set of proposals for gay/lesbian ministry, entitled "Lesbian/Gay Ministry in the Catholic Church: A Vision for the Future."

In conjunction with the Symposium, New Ways Ministry hosts the first national conference day for Catholic parents of lesbian/gay children.

New Ways Ministry celebrates its silver jubilee by publishing "The Book of Memory and Thanksgiving."



A recent photo of the co-founders:  
Sister Jeannine Gramick and  
Father Robert Nugent.



## PEOPLE: The Lifeblood of New Ways Ministry



Volunteer Appreciation 1996 (left to right): Morgan McDonald, Dave Vespa, Tom Webster, Mary and Aidan Kilbride, Jeff Maier, Frank DeBernardo, Mark Cole, Tom Stoddard; kneeling: Jim DePersis.

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Cyndie Wolf  
Hwa Yung Kim

## Symposium and Major Program Speakers

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At a New Ways Christmas season party, staff and volunteers celebrate: Maureen Healey, ru, Jack Engel, Marion Storjohann, SSCC, Margaret Brault, RSM.



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