



Fortunate Families Newsletter

Number 37

March 2008

Catholic Families Advocating Respect and Justice for their Gay & Lesbian Children

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Words to ponder

“All of my life I have been hearing from the pulpit that I do not love. That what I do is a lifestyle. That my relationship to Jim, which has now gone on for 26 years, is a lifestyle. And that seems okay. But this church, it turns out, does not know the meaning of love. It doesn't even know the meaning of sex. You have grown men who are caught in some fantasy that makes them chase children. And this is the church that claims to tell me that I do not love. The scandal in our church is not that we tolerate hatred. There is plenty of hatred in the world and there is plenty of scandal about that. The scandal is that we do not know love. We do not know how to speak it.”

-- Richard Rodriguez, Catholic journalist, author, and PBS commentator, Nov. 4, 2007 Call To Action talk in Milwaukee

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Stories make a difference!

Did something you or someone you know do or say make a positive difference? Make someone more empathetic—perhaps a family member or priest or bishop or legislator or a LGBT person? Please tell us about it. Your story might encourage others whose stories might be exactly what someone else needs to hear!

Dear Pope ...



In the February issue, we told you about the New Ways Ministry project to write accounts of we would say if we had “A Few Minutes with the Pope.” New Ways will deliver these accounts to Vatican Embassy a few days before Pope Benedict XVI's arrival on April 15. Below is our personal contribution.

Your Holiness,

We would like to introduce you to some people you should know.

First, our son, Jim. As a college student in 1983, with much faith, courage, wisdom and trust in our love, he told us that he is gay. That is, he told us that his emotional, psychological, and, yes, sexual longing is for another man. He told us that these deep feelings had been with him for many years—at least since he was eight years old. He was very clear this was an integral part of who he is...not a choice but a discovery.

When we look at Jim, we see a deeply spiritual young man, blessed with many gifts: compassion for those in any kind of need, a talent for music which he shared as a cantor, a great intellect with which he appreciates the beauty of art and nature and the wonder of humanity. When we look at our son, we see God's gift to us, to the larger community and to the Church. Yet the Church appears not to want this gift. After years of seeking nurture from the Church of his baptism, Jim finally gave up and can no longer find peace in this Church after the 2006 U.S. Bishops document failed to even acknowledge his sexual orientation (not an “inclination”).

Next, our dear friends John and David, who faithfully give love and life to two adopted sons. We are privileged to be godparents for Daniel (from Vietnam) and James (from Guatemala) – both happy and delightful children. Theirs is a model family in our parish, active in a number of parish ministries. Fortunately, unlike most gay parents, they have found Christ's love and compassion in this faith community, despite the hurtful messages they hear from the U.S. Bishops, from the Vatican, and, we're sorry to say, from you too.



Then there are many gay priest friends, whose names we dare not reveal. They are model priests, lovingly bringing the light of Christ to the people they encounter in their ministries. Yet they have to hide an integral part of who they are for fear that they would no longer be allowed to function as priests if their sexual identity was revealed.

Finally, you should meet the 229 U.S. and Canadian Catholic parents of 242 lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender daughters and sons who responded to a survey we recently conducted. Here are the conclusions from the survey report:



- *Support for parents and their LGBT children in the Church is scarce, localized, and a hit-or-miss proposition.*
- *Parents love their LGBT children, and they love their Church. But they do not see their love, or God's unconditional love, reflected in the institutional Church's response to their LGBT daughters and sons.*
- *The underlying basis for many parent suggestions is to break the silence in the Church and to get the Church out of the closet. Parents seem to suggest that the Church needs to go through the same process of learning and growth in understanding that parents went, or are going, through.*
- *Parents grieve that the Church's inadequate response has distanced both parents and their daughters and sons from the Church. And they grieve what they view as the distancing of the Church from the compassionate example of Jesus. If forced to choose, they choose their*

children over the institutional Church, but they do not lose their faith in Christ.

In summary, the report says:

In and through their unforeseen journeys, parents' initial fears and tears have been transformed into ire and fire. The fire has turned to glowing embers for some who have distanced themselves from the institutional Church. For others it is burning strong as they try to concentrate their energy to encourage and enable both the people in the pews and the institutional Church to embody the compassion and love of Jesus, and to extend it toward their LGBT loved ones.

Very few of the 242 lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender daughters and sons of these parents remain active in the Catholic Church. What gifts we have spurned! Furthermore, of the 229 parents, more and more are becoming frustrated with the institutional Church's response to their daughters and sons, and they are seeking faith communities that welcome and nurture them and their families, and that encourage them to follow in the way of Christ.



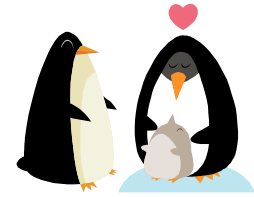
Our prayer is that you get to know people such as we described above: gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender; families headed by same-sex couples; gay priests who yearn to be honest and open about their orientation and role models for future gay priests; and parents who simply want their Church to support their family members, gay and straight alike. These people are not abstractions to be doctrinally dismissed based on pre-scientific assumptions about who people are supposed to be, but real

persons struggling to be true to the way God made them.

We pray that the Spirit leads you to see these persons as God does, for "Human beings see the appearances, but the Lord looks into the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).

With our prayers for you and for the Church,

Casey & Mary Ellen Lopata



Terrifying Tango: Religious Right Horrified By March Of The (Gay) Penguins

By Rob Boston

Tue Mar 4, 2008 12:44PM (on www.talk2action.org). With permission.

As I've monitored Religious Right organizations over the years, one thing has provided a lot of amusement: the constant obsession with children's books and cartoon characters.

We all remember the late Jerry Falwell's assertion that Tinky Winky, the purple Teletubby, was gay. Alan Sears of the Alliance Defense Fund once opined in a book that SpongeBob SquarePants might be gay as well. After all, SpongeBob's best friend is a pink starfish. (What more evidence do you need?!) James Dobson of Focus on the Family once called SpongeBob a dupe for the gay rights movement for appearing in a video promoting tolerance.

Religious Right busybodies just can't keep their hands off children's literature. They spent years attacking the Harry Potter books for allegedly promoting witchcraft. Heather Has Two Mommies, a

book about a girl with lesbian parents, pushed some Religious Right groups over the brink into hysteria.

Now the self-appointed guardians of public morality have another target: two allegedly gay penguins. Religious Right groups are up in arms over a kids' book titled *And Tango Makes Three*. The work, loosely based on actual incident, concerns two male penguins at New York City's Central Park Zoo who adopted a fertilized egg and raised the chick.

Thus did a charming story about unexpected behavior by animals that might amuse and delight young readers become, to the Religious Right, yet another part of the great gay agenda. Angry fundamentalist parents all over the country have demanded that *And Tango Makes Three* be removed from public school libraries and public libraries.



Focus on the Family was quick to jump on the censorship bandwagon. Candi Cushman, education analyst for Focus on the Family Action, said, "It's very misleading, and it's a very disingenuous, inaccurate way to promote a political agenda to little kids. What they're not telling kids is that the supposedly gay penguin who is the star of this story later mated with a female penguin in real life."

So a kids' book about penguin sex would have been okay with Focus on the Family - as long as they were heterosexual?

The chinstrap penguins in question, named Roy and Silo by zookeepers, engaged in a partnership that's not unusual for their species. It is called "paired behavior."

Male chinstraps are more involved dads than some of their counterparts in the animal kingdom. Male and female chinstraps take turns incubating eggs, sitting on them for shifts of five to 10 days, so males are accustomed to playing a serious parenting role.

Roy and Silo had been observed trying to hatch a rock as if it were an egg. The zookeepers decided to give them the second egg of a male and female penguin couple that had previously been unable to hatch two eggs at the same time. Roy and Silo successfully hatched the egg, and the chick was named Tango. It sounds like a happy, pro-life ending, but leave it to the Religious Right to carp about it.

There's no doubt that Roy and Silo were adopted by many in the gay community and became icons. But that's no reason to censor the book. Their unusual story remains compelling and provides an interesting, educational tale of unexpected animal behavior for youngsters.

The good news is that efforts by latter-day Puritans to censor this book are failing in some parts of the country. Most recently, officials in Loudoun County, Va., decided to return *And Tango Makes Three* to the shelves of the school library.

Loudoun County School Superintendent Edgar B. Hatrick now says it was a mistake to pull the book from elementary school libraries. A county resident had complained about the book, and Hatrick decided only teachers and parents should have access to it. He has now reversed himself and says the book may go back on the shelves.

In overruling himself, Hatrick relied on something of a

technicality. He said that the resident who complained about the book is not a parent of children in the county school system. School policy states that challenges to curriculum material, he pointed out, must come from parents.

It's great that the book will remain in school libraries, but it's a shame that Hatrick didn't just come right out and say that the school system rejects censorship and will not allow a tiny fraction of religious extremists to determine the reading material of everyone else. The book, after all, was merely made available in the school library. No child was required to read it.

This will certainly not be the last Religious Right challenge to reading material in public schools. The American Library Association catalogs censorship attempts every year and always finds a disturbing number of challenges to books. The crusade against children's literature seems to be on the upswing, as theocracy-minded Religious Right activists seek to enforce their own Index of Forbidden Books.

And Tango Makes Three has won several awards. The American Library Association named it a Notable Children's Book, and the American Society for the Protection of Animals liked it so

much they gave it an Outstanding Book Award. A family magazine published by the children's cable network Nick Jr. named it "Best Book of the Year."



It would be a shame if Religious Right pressure groups were to succeed in their campaign to keep this interesting book out of the hands of youngsters



“Let’s Talk About Homosexuality”

This well-received 8-week educational series—which attempts to raise awareness and promote understanding and discussion among Catholics and others concerned with the impact of homosexuality on family and faith life—is archived on the Fortunate Families web site.

Here’s what readers say about it...

So very readable, informative, positive in tone and well documented.

...will be a great help to a friend’s mom who is struggling with her daughter’s orientation.

.... information available all in one place, and...people can easily access it, anonymously.

...good syllabus for any parish, faith community, organization, family and GLBT person.

...most thorough presentation I ever read from Catholic viewpoint... passed on to Catholic parent [at] PFLAG.

... marvelous summary and has already proven very helpful for our own support group here.

...not Catholic but found series very thoughtful & helpful in understanding how we live with one another by making sense of our differences and uniting in our commonalities.

...any way to get it translated into Spanish?...would certainly use it for... our lay formation programs.

...going to make little booklets to share...excellent. What a great idea!

...the series has been wonderful, perfectly organized and so well done.

Though copyrighted, the series may be downloaded and printed for personal reading or for use in discussion or support groups.



What Straights Can Learn From Gays about Relationships and Parenting

By Robert-Jay Green, Ph.D., January 10, 2008. With permission.

Psychological studies of lesbian and gay couples reveal two key factors that promote healthier relationships and provide examples for all couples: (1) flexibility about gender roles, and (2) equal division of parenting and household tasks.

“It all comes down to greater equality in the relationship,” says Robert-Jay Green, PhD, executive director of the Rockway Institute and a nationally recognized researcher in both family issues and gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender relationships.

“Research shows that lesbian and gay couples -- by virtue of being composed of two partners of the same gender -- have a head start in escaping the traditional gender role divisions that make for power imbalances and dissatisfaction in many heterosexual relationships.”

Green is Distinguished Professor at the California School of Professional Psychology at Alliant International University, the nation’s largest nonprofit training institution for doctoral clinical psychologists. In a series of studies he conducted with Michael Bettinger, PhD, and Ellie Zacks, PhD, lesbian couples were found to be emotionally closer than gay male couples who, in turn, were found to be emotionally closer than heterosexual married couples. Lesbian and gay male couples also showed dramatically more

flexibility in the way they handled rules and roles in the relationship. Thus they avoided the traditional division of labor and division of expressive versus instrumental roles toward which heterosexual couple typically evolve over time despite their best intentions, especially after the birth of children.

More equal relationships for same-sex couples also were confirmed in recent studies by John Gottman, PhD, of the University of Washington, and Robert Levinson, PhD, of the University of California, Berkeley. Based on observations of couples interacting in conflict situations, these scientists found that same-sex couples were better at resolving disagreements because they approached problems from a position of peer equality, using “softer” starts in the initiation of conflict discussions and more humor during the discussion to avoid escalation of hostilities. With married heterosexual couples, the researchers observed, there was “much more of a power struggle with someone being invalidated.”

Other research on parenting also found significant advantages for same-sex couples. In three separate studies, Charlotte Patterson, PhD, at the University of Virginia, Valory Mitchell, PhD, at Alliant International University in San Francisco, and Henny Bos, PhD at the University of Amsterdam found that lesbian partners tend to share parenting and household responsibilities more equally and to be more satisfied with this division of labor. By contrast, in heterosexual dual career families, mothers often did much more childcare and housework compared to fathers, regardless of equal hours spent at work. This

imbalance often breeds resentment over time.

Psychologist Jerry J. Bigner, PhD, of Colorado State University, found that gay fathers are more nurturing than straight fathers. They are also less likely to limit their parenting role to being only a provider. All of these family researchers concluded that the freedom to defy traditional gender-linked parenting roles helped gay men and lesbians take just as good care of their children yet preserve greater feelings of fairness in their couple relationships compared to heterosexuals.

Green's research suggests some lessons straight men could learn from gay men. Heterosexual men need to "stand up to the pressures of conformity from their male peers and relatives" by becoming more flexible in their behavior and taking on tasks and roles more traditionally assigned to women. Green believes that heterosexual partners could learn by observing how their lesbian and gay coupled friends share housework, childcare, use softer communication of feelings in conflict situations, and more equally nurturing behaviors toward one another and their children.

"Our research found that the most successful couples demonstrate closeness and flexibility," said Green. "We found high levels of both characteristics in 79% of lesbian couples, 56% of gay male couples, but in only 8% of heterosexual married couples. Clearly, the more egalitarian approach taken by same-sex couples is an advantage that could benefit straight couples too," he concluded.

For further info about Professor Robert-Jay Green, PhD and the Rockway Institute, go to www.RockwayInstitute.org.



God spoke via Mass. Court

The 2003 ruling on same-sex marriage was a turning point for me in learning to accept my lesbian daughter.

By Robert A. Bernstein

Feb. 29, 2008, © 2008 The Washington Blade | A Window Media Publication, washingtonblade.com. With permission.

Some 3,000 gay and straight activists cheered as Lutheran Minister Bob Mordhorst stood in the spotlight, his bald pate glistening.

The occasion was the Human Rights Campaign's 10th annual dinner in the D.C. Convention Center. Seated next to Rev. Mordhorst, his daughter Heidi glowed with pleasure. On the stage, Heidi's partner, Fiona Grant, the event's co-chair, had just raised her glass in a toast to Mordhorst for traveling the long spiritual journey from bewildered parent to open supporter of gay equality.

Now, Fiona said, Rev. Mordhorst had no compunction about "preaching on diversity and talking publicly" about Heidi and Fiona and their two children — his and wife Lila's only two grandchildren, born to Heidi via donor insemination.

Still, at Baltimore's Emmanuel Lutheran Church, where "Pastor Bob" served 19 years until 2002, the subject of homosexuality to this day has never been openly discussed. In nearly two decades in



the pulpit there, he never raised the subject of sexual orientation or same-sex unions, either privately or from the pulpit.

It was only after his retirement from the Baltimore post, when he became a part-time minister in a more progressive congregation in Silver Spring, that Pastor Bob began to preach diversity and speak candidly about his devotion to his daughter and grandchildren. His decades of ducking the issue exemplify a syndrome that Martin Luther King, Jr., in another era with regard to an earlier civil rights movement, dubbed "the appalling silence of the good."

Rev. King of course had reference to the reluctance of white clergy to openly declare their support for black civil rights in the 1960s. But precisely the same kinds of pressures — perceived danger to their jobs and pensions, aversion to confrontation, fear of congregational wrath — are today squelching what would otherwise amount to massive clerical support of gay equality and gay marriage.

While I had long assumed this to be the case, my suspicions have now been confirmed by discussions with dozens of Protestant, Catholic and Jewish clergy.

Not surprisingly, I have found very few of those silent supporters willing to speak with me. By definition, it's something they're loathe to talk about. But I did discover significant numbers of courageous clergy who are speaking out — and who often express severe impatience with colleagues who refuse to reveal openly that their faith values support gay equality and gay marriage. A few examples:

- Rt. Rev. Rusty Smith of D.C., a former Catholic priest, now a bishop of the Evangelical Anglican Church of America, says "mainstream denominations are full of ministers who know that gay inequality isn't right but

don't speak their secrets out loud. The fear factor is just horrible among clergy."

- Harry Knox, who heads HRC's Religion and Faith Program, denounces clerics who "have made an idol of their pension. They say, 'I've got to take care of my family.' I tell them, 'Well, I've got to take care of my family, too, and what you're saying to me is that yours matters more than mine.'"
- Dennis Hahle is a retired Evangelical Lutheran minister now living in Littleton, North Carolina with his wife Jeannie. They have a gay son and say they know numerous colleagues similarly situated but only privately supportive. And their own local church's atmosphere is so repressive that Jeannie says, "It feels as though we're in the closet ourselves, because we can't really share in our congregation the way we'd want to."

But perhaps the most meaningful comment is that of Pastor Bob Mordhorst, explaining how in 2003—12 years after learning his daughter and Fiona were partners—he finally resolved the anguishing conflict between the teachings of his church and of his heart.

Now, he laughs as he confesses, "God spoke to me through the Massachusetts Supreme Court."

In its ruling mandating gay marriage there, he explains: "[The justices] talk about the fundamental human need for intimacy. And that was the final turning point for me to full acceptance of my daughter and her partner's relationship and the intimacy it entailed. And I came to that as a theological conclusion."

Amen.

The joy of giving ourselves

The Church's teaching on sexuality is based on natural law, but the former Master of the Dominicans argues that a Christian vision of sexuality can also embrace another kind of sexual ethic derived from Jesus' gift of himself at the Last Supper

By Timothy Radcliffe OP, former Master of the Dominicans. This is an edited version of an essay in Christianity and Sexuality in the Time of Aids, a collection of essays just published by Continuum.

The Tablet, 23 February 2008. With permission. (<http://www.thetablet.co.uk>).

In Ireland 50 years ago, it was notorious that the clergy used to try to regulate kisses.

People were told how long they could kiss, maybe 10 seconds if they were under 18. And there were rules about what sorts of kisses were allowed. (The most dangerous kiss of all was known as the French kiss.) But it is better to reflect upon what a kiss says. The body is made to be communicative, and the face is the apex of the body's communication.



The face shows what it means to be bodily, and the mouth, speaking and kissing, expresses the culmination of communication.

When we think of Christianity and sexuality, then people usually ask what is permitted or forbidden. What sexual activity is permitted between people who are not married? Can people of the same sex have a sexual relationship? This is to start at the wrong place.

The first question in all ethics is: "What does my behaviour say?" Ethics is learning to behave to each



The Kiss by Auguste Rodin (1840-1917). Photo: Bridgeman Art Library

other so that we relate ever more deeply. An action is not bad because it is forbidden but because it undermines human communion, though if it obviously does do that, then it may be good to forbid it.

It is natural that when Jesus wishes to express the utter communion of God and humanity, then he does so by giving his body. He is not giving us a lump of matter. He is making a sign that speaks and creates communion. And Jesus says that this body is given for you. It is gift. This may be incomprehensible because for the last 400 years we have tended to think of bodies as possessions. If one thinks that one's body is fundamentally an important possession, then of course one can do what one likes with it, as long as it harms no one else. The result has been a sexual ethic that has often been founded on rights regarding possessions. Usually a man was seen as owning not only his own body but also the body of his wife. He could do what he liked with her, though she did not possess his body in the same way. Adultery by the woman was seen as a form of robbery since in sleeping with another man she would be unlawfully disposing of her husband's property.

When Jesus gave us his body, he was expressing the deepest meaning of what it is to be a body. To be a body is to



receive all that this body is from one's parents and their parents before them. It is ultimately to receive one's being from God. Our existence is a gift in every moment. God gives me being now. So our sexual relations should be expressive of the gift of oneself to another, and the acceptance of the gift which is the being of the other person.

Jesus' words at the Last Supper take us to the heart of a sexual ethic.



Sexuality is about communion; it speaks. And what it should express is mutual generosity, the giving and the receiving of gifts. But the Last Supper was also the moment at which Jesus faced and embraced the contradiction of communion. On that night he shared himself with Judas who had sold him, with Peter who would shortly deny him, and with the other disciples who would mostly run away. It was the dark night, when there was betrayal, lies, fear, violence and death. On that night Jesus faces all that subverts and destroys human communion.

He faced and transcended it.

The Eucharist is the sacrament of hope, because on that night, when there was apparently nothing to hope for, Jesus performed this astonishing gift of himself. And Christian sexual ethics should help us to live with hope, in the face of our own failures and denials and betrayals of each other. Christian sexual ethics teaches us to speak truthfully with our bodies, and to overcome the lies that we may sometimes tell. When you have sexual intercourse with someone, you say with your body, "I give myself to you, without reserve, now and for ever, and I receive all of you as a gift." But if we get up the next morning and leave a note by the bed saying, "Thanks for the pleasurable sex, but I never wish to see you again", then we have, in a sense, lied with our bodies. It is as if we were to say, "I love you eternally" and then walk away for ever. We need to touch each other truthfully, to mean what we say when we kiss. We need to live out the deep meaning of what we do with each other's bodies.

But if a Christian sexual ethics is to be hopeful, then it must teach us how to say the words that heal the wounds when we lie. We need to find the words that break the silence and which restore communion. It is not enough just to go to confession and get absolution. We need to give and receive absolution from each other. To live one's sexuality truthfully means also that we find ways to overcome the lies and heal the hurts.

Bad sexual behaviour is usually linked with domination and violence. All over the world today, one can see the violence that often accompanies sex. War is always associated with the rape of women, but women are daily forced to submit to the domination of men, who force them to have sex. As John Paul II said, a man may rape even his own wife. Millions of children are forced into sex with foreign tourists in Thailand and the Philippines. Whenever dominance is introduced into a sexual relationship, then the heart of our sexuality is denied. The Last Supper teaches us that the heart of a Christian sexual ethics is the renunciation of violence. We seek mutuality and equality. When someone desires the body of another person, then that desire should not be rapacious, seeking to take possession of the body, as if it were a piece of meat to be devoured. We must learn to desire in a way that delights in the other, that treasures their vulnerability, that takes pleasure in their very existence. We must delight in another as God delights in us, tenderly and without dominion.

If a good sexual relationship overcomes the distortions of power, reaching for equality and mutuality, then it is a preaching of the Gospel to the society in which

we live. It challenges the unjust power structures of every society.

So often relationships merely echo the patterns of dominance of the society. If society is ruled by men, then men will probably rule in the home and in the bed. So a good sexual ethics offers a challenge that is implicitly political. If we are formed in our homes for reciprocity, then we will not be at home in political structures that oppress.


At the heart of a Christian sexual ethics is fidelity. The typical form that this has taken throughout Christian history has been through the marriage vows, when a husband and a wife pledge mutual fidelity until death. This has become much more difficult in our society, in which people live much longer, and are more mobile. Marriage is a fragile institution. In fact in our society no bonds are as secure as they used to be. We live in a society of short-term contracts, whether at work or at home. And this creates immense problems for couples whose marriages have broken down and who find themselves in "irregular situations".



Fidelity is much deeper than simply not getting divorced. It is offering a context in which people take the time to belong to another, to see the other and be seen. One needs courage to remain with another when they begin to see one's weakness. The Eucharist invites us to endure in fidelity, when we are exposed in all our fragility. There is a deep link between sex and death. In the Old Testament, the begetting of children was the principal hope of immortality. One would be immortal in the memory of one's offspring. So sexuality was our defiance of death. That is why one had a duty to raise children for

one's brother if he were to die without issue.

Sex and death are still linked today. For most of Christian history, the bearing of children was a time of extreme danger for women. And now there is the link with Aids, especially for women in poor countries, where they may have no control over when and with whom they have sex.

 So what can a Christian sexuality offer us in the face of death? It is not just the delegated immortality of children, though that does indeed reveal the profound creativity of human sexuality in the face of mortality. Also we give our bodies to each other as an act of love which is stronger than death. The Song of Songs says, "Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm, for love is as strong as death" (8: 6). But in Christ, love is stronger than death. Sexual relations should express that love of the Father for the Son which defeats our old enemy. Our society is both obsessed with sex yet lacks a deep exploration of its meaning. When the Church does articulate a vision of sexuality it is usually in terms of the natural law. This has its own usefulness and beauty, and I do not wish to dismiss it at all, but it carries the danger that the sex may then be seen reductively, in terms of the production of children. Sexuality must be placed again in the complex context of human communication, with defeats and victories.

On the night before he died, Jesus gave us his body and this invites us to a deeper understanding of what it might mean to offer our body to another person. Sexuality speaks of a relationship that is founded in the giving and receiving of gifts.

At the heart of sexuality is gratitude and generosity. Sexual intercourse is the transmission of the gift of our being, and so a profound expression of what it means to be human.

Calendar

April 10, 2008
(Thurs)



Prominent Lesbian/Gay Catholics Address the Pope. New Ways Ministry Press Conference leading up to Papal Visit. National Press Club, **Washington, DC**. Panelists include: Teresa DeCrescenzo, Gregory Maguire, Heather Mizeur, and Richard Rodriguez. Info: www.newwaysministry.org.

May 23-25, 2008

New Ways Ministry Retreat for lesbian/gay Catholics, parents, pastoral ministers, and interested individuals. **Racine, WI**. Presenter: Anthony Gittins, CSSp. Info: www.newwaysministry.org.

May 30-Jun 1, 2008

Next Steps: Developing Catholic Lesbian/Gay Ministry, Ossining, NY. New Ways Ministry program for pastoral ministers, leaders of Catholic institutions, and all interested in all aspects of lesbian/gay ministry--individual counseling, developing support groups, empowering parents, initiating educational programs. Info: www.newwaysministry.org.

June 21 (Sat), 2008

Day of Reflection for Catholic Parents of Lesbian Daughters and Gay Sons, Toronto, Ontario. Fr. Foliot S.J. Facilitator. Contact: John Montague, 416-523-6449.

Sep. 6 Sat), 2008

Day of Reflection for Catholic Parents of Lesbian Daughters and Gay Sons and Family Members. St. Matthew's Parish, 8:30AM TO 4:30PM, followed by Mass at 5:00pm. **Baltimore, MD.** Facilitators: Mary Ellen & Casey Lopata. Info: tbd.

Sep. 18-21, 2008

NACDLGM Conference: Long Beach, CA. Plenary speakers include: Bishop Jaime Soto, coadjutor, Diocese of Sacramento; Bishop Raul Vera y Lopez, OP, Diocese of Saltillo, Mexico; Teresa DeCrescenzo, Executive Director and founder of Gay and Lesbian Adolescent Social Services; Sr. Fran Ferder, Co-director of Therapy & Renewal Associates, Seattle. Info: www.nacdlgm.org.



Since our February newsletter, 20 people and/or groups contributed to Fortunate Families. Thank you so much for your commitment to supporting our efforts!!!

Your donations help with this newsletter and with resources for ministers, parents, and others.

Contributions to the Len Szumiloski Memorial Fund enable us to send resources—including our book, Fortunate Families, and our resource manuals, Seeds of Hope and More Seed—to parents or pastoral ministers who may not be able to afford them.

Your prayers and support strengthen our commitment to help families with LGBT members to know they are fortunate families.

You can contribute online at www.fortunatefamilies.com/donate.htm. There, you can also print a form and send a check or charge.

Fortunate Families, Inc. is a non-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) public charity organization. Contributions are fully tax-deductible.

Still getting this newsletter by U.S. Postal delivery? You can reduce our mailing costs (and folding and stuffing labor) if you request email notification of future newsletters and download it from our website. Thanks!

If you would like to help Fortunate Families in its continuing work to provide resources and networking opportunities for Catholic parents of LGBT daughters and sons, please download this page and send your contribution to:

**Fortunate Families
239 Highland Parkway
Rochester, NY 14620-2533**

Or you can go to http://www.fortunatefamilies.com/make_a_contribution.htm to contribute on-line.

Thank you for your prayers and support!

Fortunate Families

Yes, I want to help Fortunate Families. Enclosed is my contribution of:

\$100.00 \$80.00 \$60.00 \$40.00 Other \$_____

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Pay by check; make your check payable to: Fortunate Families, Inc. ***(Must be in U.S. dollars.)***

Charge your contribution by completing the information below.

Charge my contribution: Visa _____ MC _____ Amount:
\$ _____

Card number: _____ Security #: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Signature: _____

In addition . . .

I'd like to extend my commitment to Fortunate Families for one year by making a monthly credit card donation of \$20 or more. Please charge my card in the following amount:

\$20.00 \$25.00 \$50.00 Other \$_____/month

Card number: _____ Security #: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Signature: _____