



Fortunate Families Newsletter

Number 23

October 2006

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

NOTE: If you would rather not receive this newsletter, just let us know and we will remove you from the distribution list.

In this issue:

- Words to ponder
- Parents: *Questions for your Bishop*
- Press release from the USCCB: *Guidelines for Ministry to Persons with Homosexual Inclination on Catholic Bishops' Agenda*
- Letter to a bishop
- A special note to parents
- Parents Voice Project Note # 1
- Thanks!

Words to ponder

Gay, lesbian bisexual, and transgender persons have to be brought into full participation in the life of the church.... John Paul II's ecclesiology of communion calls Catholicism to adopt a pastoral style towards LGBT people that is accepting, welcoming, encouraging, one that does not reject, define and exclude, but that enables and encourages participation.

--Bishop Joseph Sullivan, NACDLGM Conference, Sept. 24, 2006.

Fortunate Families, Inc.

Board of Directors:

James Buckheit
 Ann Franczyk
 Linda Karle-Nelson
 Jean Kearse
 Casey Lopata (Newsletter Editor)
 Mary Ellen Lopata (President)
 Thomas Nelson
 William Pickett (Secretary/Treasurer/Webmaster)

Fortunate Families

239 Highland Parkway, Rochester, NY 14620
 Phone: 585-244-4427
 Email: info@fortunatefamilies.com
 Website: www.fortunatefamilies.com



Parents: Questions for your Bishop

By Casey Lopata

Parents of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons around the country frequently ask what they can do to make the Church more welcoming for their daughters and sons and other LGBT people seeking spiritual support from the Church. Well, here's your chance! Write your bishop!

At the fall meeting of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Nov. 13-16, the Bishops are being asked to approve a document entitled: *Ministry to Persons with a Homosexual Inclination: Guidelines for Pastoral Care.*

Parents of LGBT persons and those who minister with them applaud this section quoted in the press release: "the Church teaches that persons with a homosexual inclination 'must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity,' and it condemns all forms off violence, scorn, and hatred, whether subtle or overt. **'Those who would minister in the name of the Church must in no way contribute to such injustice.'** [Editor's emphasis]"

Based on what we've seen in the press release and several related articles, however, **Fortunate Families is concerned. Despite such welcome and supportive rhetoric, there are three reasons why this document may instead actually contribute to such injustice:**

1) The Committee on Doctrine which produced the document did NOT consult with people affected by the document. Several reliable sources quoted a member of the Committee stating that NO openly lesbian or gay Catholics were consulted. And though we checked with many parents, and people involved in such ministries, not one was consulted during the drafting process. To issue a document that deeply touches the lives of persons without involving them in the process is unjust.

2) Three points in the press release roused concern that the document could further alienate "the more than a few persons with a homosexual inclination [who] feel themselves to be unwelcomed and rejected."

First, the insistent use of the term “homosexual inclination” rather than “orientation” implies that the bishops do NOT acknowledge this as a “deep-seated dimension of one’s personality,” as stated in *Always Our Children*. Rather, they see it as a deviation from heterosexuality, which presumably is not an “inclination.”

Second, the continued insistence to call such an “inclination” “disordered,” despite attempts to explain the language, is seen by many LGBT persons and their families as a deliberate demonization that deeply offends them.

Third, contrary to the positions of ALL the major health and mental health professional associations, that homosexuality is NOT a mental disorder, asserting that there is no consensus regarding the value of therapy to change one’s orientation is irresponsible.

These basic positions effectively label LGBT persons as defective heterosexuals, and may dispose them to psychological damage associated with assimilating such negativity with respect to a “deep-seated dimension of one’s personality.” The Church can ill-afford to alienate Catholic LGBT people, their families, and those who compassionately and pastorally minister with them, risking the loss of the gifts they are, and the gifts they offer to the whole Christian community!

3) The document may be used to accuse ministries that truly welcome and affirm LGBT persons of “distant neutrality with regard to Church teaching,” in an attempt to obstruct them. These ministries are effective because they are guided by the core of Catholic pastoral tradition that

accepts the person wherever he or she might be in his or her relationships with God, others, and self; and journeys with the person as he or she grows in honesty, integrity and authenticity in all these relationships.

This newsletter contains the USCCB press release. Inserted throughout the release are Fortunate Families’ “points to consider” as you read it, including additional quotes from a Catholic News Service article. We recognize that there are supportive statements quoted, but limit our considerations to what may be harmful for our lesbian daughters and gay sons. The points are addressed to parents but are relevant to other readers as well.

So the U.S. Bishops may hear from at least some people that will be affected by this document, we strongly encourage you to **read, consider, pray, and respectfully share your thoughts and feelings with your bishop before the Nov. 13-16 meeting.**

To help you with that, this newsletter also contains an edited letter to a bishop written by a pastoral minister who has seen the document, and some thoughts on what parents might want to include in their letter. We suggest you also send a copy of your letter to:

- Bishop William Skylstad (President, USCCB),
- Bishop Arthur J. Serratelli (Chairman, Committee on Doctrine)
- Bishop Jerome E. Listecki (Chairman, Committee on Pastoral Practices)
- Bishop Joseph Kurtz (Chairman, Committee on Marriage and Family), and
- H. Richard McCord, Executive Director, Secretariat for Family, Laity, Women, and Youth.

All these copies can be sent together to: USCCB, 3211 4th Street, N.E., Washington DC 20017-1194. Sorry, they don’t offer an email address.

And please send a copy to Fortunate Families as well—email works for us!



Press Release from the USCCB Office of Media Relations (06-203)

Guidelines for Ministry to Persons with Homosexual Inclination on Catholic Bishops’ Agenda

WASHINGTON (October 18, 2006)—Approval of guidelines for the pastoral care of persons with a homosexual inclination will be on the agenda of the fall meeting of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

FF points to consider:

- The Catholic News Service (CNS) article [“Bishops to vote on guidelines for ministry to homosexuals” by Jerry Filtreau, Oct. 19, 2006] says: “Throughout its treatment the document avoids the use of the term ‘orientation,’ referring instead to a homosexual ‘inclination’ or ‘tendency.’” “Inclination” suggests that one’s sexual orientation is NOT a “deep-seated dimension of one’s personality” with “relative stability in a person” as stated in *Always Our Children* (AOC). “Inclination” implies malleability, rather than a “given” as AOC states, contrary to the American Psychological Association statement that “psychologists do not consider

sexual orientation to be a conscious choice that can be voluntarily changed.”

- How malleable or “given” is your daughter’s or son’s orientation?

The guidelines say that the support and leadership of bishops and other pastoral leaders is essential to the success of this ministry. “This is particularly important because more than a few persons with a homosexual inclination feel themselves to be unwelcome and rejected.”

FF points to consider

- Will this document decrease or increase the “more than a few persons with a homosexual inclination [who] feel themselves to be unwelcome and rejected,” as well as their families?

“As baptized members of the Catholic community, persons with a homosexual inclination continue to look to the Church for a place where they might live in authentic human integrity and holiness of life,” the guidelines say. “Being welcomed into and participating in their local faith community is the foundation of spiritual support that the Church offers to them. Full and active participation is encouraged. Participation in a worshipping Catholic community can be a support for living a life of integrity and an encouragement to an ongoing personal conversion.”

The document, Ministry to Persons with a Homosexual Inclination: Guidelines for Pastoral Care was prepared by the bishops’ Committee on Doctrine in response to questions which were raised about the suitability of these ministries in some instances.

FF points to consider

- Why were guidelines for pastoral care drafted by the Committee on

Doctrine rather than the Pastoral Practices Committee? The CNS article says: “Despite the title, only about one-fifth of the document is devoted specifically to pastoral care guidelines; the larger and more important part of the text is devoted to the framework of church teaching within which such pastoral care is set.”

- “Response to questions raised” by whom?

Work on the project began in the fall of 2002. The draft was sent to four other committees for comments and suggestions, Canonical Affairs, Catechesis, Marriage and Family Life, and Pastoral Practices.

FF points to consider

- Clearly this document was NOT developed with the participation of openly lesbian or gay persons, or of persons involved in any ministries associated with the National Association of Catholic Diocesan Lesbian & Gay Ministries. How reasonable or just is it to develop guidelines for ministry to people without them or those that minister with them being consulted?

The document is intended for bishops, in order to assist them in evaluating existing or proposed ministerial efforts, and for those engaged in this ministry, in order to provide them with guidance.

The guidelines begin with a statement of general principles, including the fundamental dignity of each person as created by God. The document says the Church teaches that persons with a homosexual inclination “must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity,” and it condemns all forms of violence, scorn, and hatred, whether subtle or overt.

“Those who would minister in the name of the Church must in no

way contribute to such injustice,” the guidelines state. “They should prayerfully examine their own hearts in order to discern any thoughts or feelings that might stand in need of purification. Those who minister are also called to their own ongoing conversion. In fact, the work of spreading the Good News involves an ever-increasing love for those to whom one is ministering.”

FF points to consider

- Will this document lessen or contribute to injustice against homosexual persons?

Stating that the phenomenon of homosexuality poses challenges that can only be met with the help of a clear understanding of the place of sexuality within God’s plan for humanity, the document says: “By its very nature, human sexuality finds its proper fulfillment in the marital bond. Any sexual act that takes place outside the indissoluble and lifelong bond of marriage does not fulfill the proper ends of human sexuality. It is not directed toward the expression of marital love with an openness to new life. It is disordered in that it is not in accord with this twofold end and is thus morally wrong.”

“Because of both Original Sin and personal sin, moral disorder is all too common in our world today, among both heterosexual and homosexual persons,” the document says.

The guidelines state that while the Church teaches that homosexual acts are immoral, there is a distinction between engaging in homosexual acts and having a homosexual orientation. “While the former is always sinful, the latter is not.”

FF points to consider

- Does this document recognize that your son or daughter is a child of God whose sexual identity, one component of which is sexual orientation, helps to define the unique person he or she is (ref: AOC)? Or, is his or her sexual identity reduced to sexual acts?
- The CNS article says the document stresses the importance of “bonds of friendship,” especially within families, as a means of support for living a full human life. ‘There can be little hope of living a healthy, chaste life without nurturing human bonds.’”
- If “chastity means the successful integration of sexuality within the person and thus the inner unity of man [/woman] in his [/her] bodily and spiritual being” (Catholic Catechism, no. 2357), what does chastity mean for a person striving to live a full human life whose homosexual orientation is a “deep-seated dimension of one’s personality”?
- If your daughter or son is in a committed relationship with someone of the same-sex (or, heterosexual and unmarried, with someone of the opposite sex), is his or her sexual activity “not directed toward the expression of marital love” and “always sinful”?
- Does this judgment rest on “gay lifestyle” stereotypes, while ignoring how healthy, holy, honest, faithful, loving, and self-giving such a relationship might be?

“It is crucially important to understand that saying a person has a particular inclination that is disordered is not to say that the person as a whole is disordered. Nor does it mean that one has been rejected by God or the Church.”

FF points to consider

- If it “seems appropriate to understand sexual orientation (heterosexual or homosexual) as a deep-seated dimension of one’s

personality” [*Always Our Children*], is it possible to consider the orientation/“inclination” to be disordered, but not the person?

Given that a considerable number of people experience same-sex attraction as an inclination they did not choose raises the question of whether or not this situation can be changed with the help of some kind of clinical intervention, or therapy, the guidelines state.

“There is currently no scientific consensus on the cause of the homosexual inclination,” the document asserts “There is no consensus on therapy. Some have found therapy helpful. There is, however, no moral obligation to attempt it.”

FF points to consider:

- Does the document in any way support the statement that: “There is no consensus on therapy”?
- “Reparative therapy” is based on an understanding of homosexuality that has been rejected by all the major health and mental health professional associations, representing more than 477,000 health and mental professionals. Their position is that homosexuality is not a mental disorder and that there is no need for a “cure.” These include the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Counseling Association, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychological Association, the National Association of School Psychologists, and the National Association of Social Workers.
- How changeable is your daughter’s or son’s homosexual orientation? (How about for your heterosexual daughter or son?)
- If sexual orientation is a “deep-seated dimension of one’s personality” (AOC), would your daughter or son be the same

person you know and love if he or she could and did change?

Specific guidelines in the document address issues which arise in the areas of church participation, catechesis, sacraments and worship, and pastoral support. Key points include:

- * Persons who experience same-sex attraction and yet are living in accord with Church teaching should be encouraged to take an active role in the life of the faith community. However, the Church has a right to deny roles of service to those whose behavior violates her teaching.

FF points to consider

- Does your parish “deny roles of service” to anyone “whose behavior violates her teaching”? What is the “behavior”?
- Does that mean the Church should deny roles of service to a person with a homosexual orientation for being publicly out? For attending church regularly with someone else who is out? For holding hands with someone of the same-sex? For being out and having an adopted child?
- Does the document consider that “coming out has been found to be strongly related to psychological adjustment—the more positive the gay, lesbian or bisexual identity, the better one’s mental health and the higher one’s self-esteem”? [American Psychological Association, *Answers to Your Questions About Sexual Orientation and Homosexuality*]
- If applied consistently to all whose behavior violates Church teaching would anyone be in a role of service?

- * Special care must be taken to ensure that those carrying out the ministry of the Church not use their position of leadership to

advocate positions or behaviors not in keeping with the teachings of the Church. They must not belong to groups that oppose Church teaching. It is not sufficient for those involved in this ministry to adopt a position of distant neutrality with regard to Church teaching.

FF points to consider

- How does this apply to effective ministries that welcome LGBT people wherever they are on their journey and then support them in their conscience efforts to grow in their relationship with God, self, and others?
- Should individuals who do not support Church teaching on the primacy of conscience not be permitted to serve as leaders in this ministry?
- Should those who do not believe that “In order to discover the [Bible’s] sacred authors’ intention, the reader must take into account the conditions of their time and culture” (Catechism #110)--e.g. not accepting that biblical writers had no understanding of sexual orientation as we know it today--be permitted to serve as leaders in this ministry?

* Church policies should explicitly reject unjust discrimination and harassment...procedures should be in place to handle complaints.

FF points to consider

- Are you aware of such Church policies or complaint procedures? Would your bishop or pastor establish and support procedures?

* The Christian life is a progressive journey toward a deepening of one’s discipleship of Christ...Those who stumble along the way should be encouraged to remain in the community and to continue to strive for holiness. In this regard, frequent reception of

the Sacrament of Reconciliation is of great importance.

FF points to consider

- Is holiness more difficult for persons with a homosexual orientation?
- Is “frequent reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation” as important for persons with a heterosexual orientation?

* The Church does not support so-called same-sex “marriages” or any semblance thereof, including civil unions that give the appearance of a marriage. Church ministers may not bless such unions or promote them in any way, directly or indirectly.

FF points to consider

- Does this also mean Church ministers may not support opposite-sex couples, who have legally remarried without annulling a previous marriage, in any way, directly or indirectly?
- Does the document discuss the distinction between personal morality and public policy? Isn’t legislation a public policy issue that requires a judgment as to whether the legislation supports or is at least neutral with regard to public order and/or the common good irrespective of personal morality? Are same-sex unions that promote stable relations better for society?

* Similarly, the Church does not support the adoption of children by homosexual couples since homosexual unions are contrary to the divine plan. For this reason, Baptism of children adopted by such couples presents a pastoral concern. Nevertheless, the Church does not refuse the Sacrament of Baptism to these children, but there must be a well founded hope that the children will be brought up in the Catholic religion.

FF points to consider

- Can children of heterosexual couples be baptized even if there isn’t “a well founded hope that the children will be brought up Catholic”?
- Adoption is a public policy issue. If one accepts the American Academy of Pediatrics July 2006 statement that “there is ample evidence to show that children raised by same-gender parents fare as well as those raised by heterosexual parents,” and that there are over 100,000 children available for adoption, can’t one support such adoptions as good for society and those children?

In the document’s conclusion, the bishops express thanks to all who have labored faithfully in this pastoral ministry and outreach. “They have done so at times under adverse and difficult conditions,” the bishops say. “They have set an example for this important service to the Church.”

FF points to consider:

- Do you recognize your LGBT daughter or son in the statements in this press release, or do you expect to in the document?
- Are these proposed pastoral support guidelines consistent with pastoral support the Church defines for and/or offers to young adults or divorced and separated people?
- Will the document encourage your LGBT daughter or son to strengthen her or his Catholic identity, or cause alienation from their Catholic identity? How will this affect your Catholic identity?
- Is yours a Fortunate Family?





***Excerpts: Letter to a bishop
from a person who read the
text of the proposed
document (with permission)***

Dear Bishop

I am a Roman Catholic gay layperson with over 39 years in ministry to Catholic lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons. I have been an active member and promoter of the diocesan pastoral ministry.

Permit me to share my thoughts and concerns on the USCCB proposed guidelines: “Ministry to Persons with a Homosexual Inclination: Guidelines for Pastoral Care.”

- As one reads the content of the proposed guidelines, it becomes rather clear that the writers had no consultation or dialogue with faithful Catholics within the gay community. If the goal of the committee was to alienate more gay Catholics, family, loved ones, friends and supportive others, they have done admirably well.
- Pastoral care comments deal more with prohibitions and negative admonitions than with proactive welcoming of Catholic homosexuals and full participation in the Church. There are few signs of affirmation or advocacy for Catholic homosexuals, and no signs of Christ-like compassion.
- In the limited instances where the document touches on homosexuals as members of church organizations and faith communities, they are admonished to stay in the closet and refrain

from announcing their homosexual orientation. It is another extension of the military’s “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell policy.” The document writers have yet to understand how this leads to deceit, lies and duplicity in the lives of people desirous of being whole, authentic people with personal integrity. Nor do the writers recognize or appreciate how this leads to low self-esteem; depression; sex, alcohol and drug addiction and suicidal tendencies. How does one build relationships in faith communities and the general community when admonished to secrecy in being who they are? Genuine relationships are founded on mutual trust and respect derived from interaction and shared exchange.

- On the matter of being welcomed and establishing friendships in local faith communities and society at large, why would non-homosexual persons want to be associated with persons the body of bishops describe as being outside the moral order by their very existence and nature? Are not the bishops complicit in the setting of discriminatory barriers, as well as violence toward gay Catholics and others within the GLBT community, when they classify persons of a homosexual inclination to be objectively disordered and support anti-gay initiatives and legislation denying fundamental human and civil rights accorded others in society? Are they not complicit when they fail to recognize valid research findings within the physical and human sciences counter to their teachings and beliefs regarding homosexual orientation and diversity of sexuality in nature and the animal kingdom?
- Nowhere in the document is there any discussion on the role of human touch and physicality in

expressing love and affection of heterosexual or homosexual relationships. The principle thrust is on the requirement for being open to procreation.

- In sections of the document discussing marriage with scriptural references, consideration must be given to the fact that the writers were writing from their experiences and perceptions, to the period of time and to whom the messages were being addressed. Marriage in those times, and many periods to follow, were civil contracts dealing with property rights. Wives and children were chattel, property of the husband to be dealt with as he saw fit. Marriage did not involve equality of the partners nor sacramentality.
- With respect to references to communication by St. Paul, we must consider to whom the messages were addressed and why. Paul admonished members of the recently formed and building Christian communities to refrain from pagan practices such as idol worship, temple prostitution and fertility rites, as well as prayers and rituals to ensure a good harvest. The purpose was to have members of the Christian communities to be different and distinguishable by setting such practices aside.
- The document goes to some length in describing homosexual inclination as objectively disordered and homosexual acts as immoral acts contrary to natural law or the natural order of things. Natural law and natural order are philosophical rather than theological constructs. They are largely contributed by St. Thomas Aquinas based on his experience or perceptions of nature and the animal kingdom. He was not aware of more recent findings of homosexuality or the existence of

sexual changes in the animal kingdom. Furthermore, since animals act out of built-in instinct rather than by rational choice, these are part and parcel of who they are. Might it not be possible that physical sexual expression and human touch are also expressions of love and complementarity between same-sex (same gender) persons in keeping with their nature?

- The document holds that there is a strong tendency toward moral relativism in our society which inhibits the reception of Church teaching on sexual issues in general and on homosexuality in particular. However, it has also been part of Church teaching on moral culpability and sinfulness as to the role of discernment of proportionality and intent by the acting person. Yet the Church is very adamant about the strictures placed on persons in sexual matters and physical expression. There is no room for proportionality or intent in sexual morality.

- Under the section *Pastoral Support* is a guideline, “Young people, in particular, need special encouragement and guidance, since the best way of helping young people as to aid them in not getting involved in homosexual relations or in the subculture, since these experiences create further obstacles.” The difficulty here is that puts the person at risk of isolation during their crucial search to find answers to whether or not they alone have certain feelings and attractions. They need to have access to wholesome, caring and accepting friendships among peers gathered in supportive environments such as schools, colleges, universities or community centers.

- Above all, homosexual persons need access to appropriate publications including spirituality, Church teachings, physical and social scientific studies and the like to assist them to discern the truth for the formation of conscience.

- The composition of families today goes far beyond the heterosexual husband and wife with 2-1/2 children. Configurations include single parent, foster parents, families by adoption, extended families, communes, hospices, and other forms. Upon the incapacity or death of one or more parents—older children, uncles, aunts, grandparents, friends and court appointed persons may take over the parenting and care of the household. In numerous cases, the acting parent(s) may be lesbian or gay, including those of a Catholic background and tradition. There are over 100,000 children awaiting adoption for numerous reasons, including biological parents not wanting or incapable of raising the biological child or children. This is one of the many reasons why such gay parents should be accorded the rights and responsibilities of civil marriage, civil unions and domestic partnerships and accorded similar legal rights and protections. This would strengthen, not weaken, the meaning of marriage.

- The language used in the document gives rise for concern. For example, “homosexual inclination,” infers predisposed, disposed to, or propensity towards homosexual genital activity and relationships. Would the authors set up a parallel “heterosexual inclination”? If so, should not the proposed guidelines on the Church’s teaching concerning contraception, to be discussed at the same Nov. 13-16, 2006,

USCCB conference, be identified as, “Guidelines for Persons with a Heterosexual Inclination on Matters of Contraception”?

- While the document authors had the opportunity to recognize that homosexual orientation is not chosen but rather discovered at some point in the person’s life and development, and be open to the possibility of legitimacy of sexual diversity and homosexual orientation of God’s inclusive plan of creation, they chose to perpetuate such notions as:

- There are imperfections in the universe, in creation, and in the development of humanity.

- Homosexual persons and orientation are not commensurate with the Church’s teaching on the end objective of male and female sexuality, namely marriage and procreation, therefore are outside the moral and natural order of things.

- Homosexual persons and orientation are defects in creation as results of Original Sin or personal sin.

- Homosexual persons are deficient or defective heterosexuals.

- Homosexual persons are morally deficient or defective at birth or become so at some point during maturation.

Bishop, adoption of the proposed guidelines will have a serious negative response and feeling among many conscientious, faithful, loving and caring Catholic gay persons, their family, loved ones and friends within the diocese and nationwide.

I strongly urge you and your fellow bishops to reconsider and revisit the guidelines in consultation with the lived experience and reality of conscience-driven Catholic gay persons.



A special note to parents (but all of you can read it)

By Mary Ellen Lopata

If you write to your bishop, write respectfully. Consider that he may be as ignorant about the real lives of our beloved daughters and sons and other LGBT people as you may have been before you discovered you had a lesbian daughter or a gay son.

Don't forget to tell him your STORY. It's evident that many of our bishops do not really know openly gay or lesbian people. But WE know gay and lesbian people. They are our much-loved children. "God's love is revealed" in them as surely as it is in all our children.

The bishops need to hear about our LGBT children. Be specific. How does your gay son or lesbian daughter bring love to your family? How does she/he interact with her/his siblings, nieces and nephews, grandparents? If he/she is in a loving relationship with someone, tell your bishop if that relationship enhances her or his life and helps her or him to be a better person, a better disciple of Christ. Tell the bishop if your son's/daughter's relationship mirrors your own ideal of marital love.

If your daughter/son has children, tell your bishop about your loved grandchildren. Tell him how loving a parent your son or daughter is.

Tell your bishop what kind of life your son or daughter leads, what she or he does for a living, what kinds of hobbies she or he has.

Tell your bishop how hurtful it is if your child finds more spiritual encouragement and the love of Christ manifested in another church...if your son or daughter is convinced that the Catholic Church simply does not want him or her.

These are just thought-starters, you may not want to put all that in one letter. You may end your letter by respectfully asking for a chance to talk with your bishop. Or suggest that he have a "listening session" to hear Catholic parents talk about their lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender daughters and sons.

God bless our Fortunate Families!



Parents Voice Project Note #1

NOTE: This message was emailed Oct. 13, 2006 to parents whose email address we have. It's included with this newsletter to get it to non-email parents, and to inform non-parent readers.

Dear Catholic Parents of LGBT Daughters and Sons,

Greetings!

We're writing for three reasons.

1. To make sure we have an accurate address for you.
2. To thank you if you submitted a survey to the Parents Voice Project or, if you haven't, to encourage you to submit a survey to add your views to those of the 235+ who have. You can complete the survey online at the Fortunate Families web site (address below); you can download, print, complete, and mail a hard copy; or you can ask us to mail you a copy to complete and return.
3. To encourage you to read *Always Our Children, A Pastoral Message to Parents of Homosexual*

Children, the statement of the Bishops' Committee on Marriage and Family. A number of you who submitted surveys said you hadn't read it. It's not perfect, but it is one of the most pastoral and compassionate official Church statements about lesbian and gay persons. You can read it by going to this URL: <http://www.usccb.org/laity/always.shtml>, or we'll be happy to mail you a copy. It's worth reading (or rereading), just to savor these words of the bishops: "To our homosexual brothers and sisters.... In you God's love is revealed. You are always our children."

You are part of a growing network of Catholic parents of LGBT daughters and sons. We look forward to working with you to make this network a prophetic and influential voice in advocating for justice for our daughters and sons in both our society and our Church.

Blessings!

"Voices for justice, sharing our stories"



Thank you for your prayers and support. Since our September newsletter, 17 people and/or groups contributed! We are grateful for your support!!!

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

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