

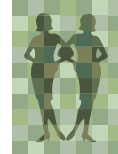
My twin lesbian daughters

By Florence Balog [This story originally appeared in the December 2005 Fortunate Families newsletter]

On October 22, 2005, I spoke as part of a panel at the Metropolitan Alliance for Common Good. The title of the conference was “Who does Jesus invite to His Church?” The presentation was very emotional, both for me and for the 300 persons there. I felt very much the presence of the Spirit both guiding me and letting my words be received. I was surprised by the entire assembly giving me a standing ovation. Many were visibly moved; many came up and spoke with me. I am not the one to get up before a crowd and speak; so it had to be the Spirit working through this potter’s clay.

I am a member of St. Andrew Parish. My husband, Steve, and I are parents of 35-yr-old twin lesbian daughters.

Our twin daughters came out to us after their first year of college 15 years ago (1990). The revelation of their sexual orientation didn’t change our love for them.



We were the ones who changed. We were confused and fearful of our daughters’ revelation. Both society and the church, as we understood them, condemned homosexuality. For 5 years we were silent; we kept the secret to ourselves. When neighbors, friends, relatives, St. Andrew parishioners asked us, “How are your daughters? Are they married yet?” I would always answer something like, “Well, you know, they’re out there doing their thing.” I began to notice that every time I said that, I felt a “tug” in the center of my being. I began to realize I wasn’t being truthful with myself. The feeling kept churning in me until I began to see what it was all about. I realized that I could not acknowledge my own daughters’ sexual orientation for fear of what others would say.

With that realization, I zeroed in on my church, my faith community, the institution that influenced me from the day I was born and also baptized. I realized that neither my husband nor I had ever heard the words, “homosexual”, “gay” or “lesbian” used in church; certainly, we’d never heard that gay and lesbian people were welcome to come to the table. The only message we received was silent condemnation.

The dilemma set in. How dare my church judge my daughters simply because of their sexual orientation! I know my daughters intimately. I know their spiritual and moral goodness and integrity. I know them as compassionate, wholesome and loving women. It became evident to me that my church with its violent rhetoric against GLBT people didn’t really know her GLBT children.

As the mother of twin lesbian daughters, I believe:

- my daughters are made in the image and likeness of God;
- homosexuality is not a choice but a variation on the God-given gift of sexuality;

- homosexuality expresses another dimension of the diversity of the life of God, and is therefore good!

I challenge the misconceptions and inaccuracies concerning GLBT people, including that homosexuality:

- is a curable condition,
- a changeable lifestyle, or
- equivalent to pedophilia.

I do not accept as truth the notion that same-sex marriage is part of “an ideology of evil”; or that gay unions threaten children with abuse and will destroy marriage, as the Vatican has stated.

So, when I hear messages from the Congregation of the Faith that my daughters’ homosexual orientation is “objectively disordered” and because of this orientation, they are “inherently inclined toward evil,” I become very angry. This group of men does not know my daughters! These are two human beings who are suffering, physical, mental and emotional abuse, and we along with them, are being treated as if they do not belong to the Body of Christ. They belong with us in our Church; they were baptized there; they need to be able to come home. Both of my daughters find the church hypocritical. One of them put it this way: “Mom, I didn’t choose to be lesbian. I already am a minority bi-racial black person, and a woman. I don’t need another thing to separate me from society, to make others hate me more. But, this is who I am. I feel the church is trying to make me be against myself.”

The oppression of GLBT persons is a justice issue; one of trying to form right relationships; of listening to our stories; of getting to know us and the gifts we bring. Simply stated, it’s one of living Jesus’ message of including everyone at the table. I am happy to say, St. Andrew Community does just that!