

# Fortunate Families

voices for justice



sharing our stories

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2007-08

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September 2007

Dear [Bishop],

The USCCB 2006 statement, “Ministry to Persons with a Homosexual Inclination,” says:

*“The discovery that a family member has homosexual tendencies can pose a serious concern for parents, siblings, and spouses. The Church reaches out to them, seeking to help ensure that the bonds of love among the family members are intact.”*

In the summer of 2006, *Fortunate Families* launched the Parents Voice Project with a survey of Catholic parents of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) daughters and sons. Survey results indicate the bonds of love are intact for most of these families, but not because the Institutional Church reaches out to them.

*“I do not feel like the Catholic Church offers any support with our children. I remain a Catholic only because of the Mass and the Eucharist. – Catholic mother with gay son*

This and many other parent comments are summed up in this report conclusion:

*Parents grieve that the institutionalized Church’s inadequate response has distanced many parents from the Church and driven many of their daughters and sons away from it. Parents also grieve what they view as a failure of the institutional Church to follow 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.*

No survey is needed to confirm that many LGBT people are leaving the Church. This survey, however, sadly indicates that many of their parents, family members and friends are, or are close to, following them.

Survey responses also testify to the love of Catholic parents for their LGBT children and document the positive growth of parents over time, and their willingness to work for greater acceptance of their LGBT children within the Church. The report offers insights into the spiritual dilemma parents face. It also suggests pastoral responses from bishops and priests. Primary among these suggestions is one the U.S. Bishops made in the 2006 statement—an invitation to listen to each other. There are many Catholic parents across the U.S. who would welcome an opportunity to tell you their story, to tell you of their lesbian daughter or gay son in whom “God’s love is revealed” [*Always Our Children*].

With prayerful hope in God’s loving Spirit,

Casey Lopata, Parents Voice Project Director

## *Fortunate Families*

*Catholic Families fostering respect, friendship and justice for their lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender loved ones.*

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P.S. All parent comments are in the appendix, available on the *Fortunate Families* web site. Their comments put the statistical data and summary report into personal perspective. We encourage you to read them.

P.P.S. *Fortunate Families* has many parent contacts across the U.S. and we would be happy to help make connections with parents in your [arch]diocese who are willing to share their story with you.

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