

Fortunate Families

voices for justice



sharing our stories

Dear Catholic Parent of a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Questioning Daughter or Son,

Catholic parents love their lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) daughters and sons! The strength of that love, witnessed through the truth of their shared stories, is a prophetic force that can move our church to be a more loving and pastoral spiritual home for LGBTQ persons and their families. *Please help us strengthen that prophetic force by completing this survey.*

PLEASE NOTE: If you are NOT a Catholic parent of an LGBTQ person, please pass on this survey to someone who is, or refer her or him to www.fortunatefamilies.com to complete the survey on-line.

We are Casey and Mary Ellen Lopata, founders of *Fortunate Families: Catholic Families with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Daughters and Sons*. Our oldest son came out to us in 1983. For the past 14 years, we've been involved with lesbian and gay ministry in the Catholic Church—primarily with parents. We have served in leadership roles with *Catholic Gay & Lesbian Family Ministry* in the Diocese of Rochester (NY), the *National Association of Catholic Diocesan Lesbian and Gay Ministries*, and with *New Ways Ministry*.

Fortunate Families

Fortunate Families strives to be a loving presence to parents who are struggling with their LGBTQ son's or daughter's sexual orientation. We encourage parents to explore and value their stories and to share these stories with their family, their faith community, the larger church, and society. Our vision is to:

- make our families, Church, faith communities, and world more just and welcoming to our LGBTQ children.
- be instruments of reconciliation between our LGBTQ loved ones and their families and their church.
- pray continually for wisdom, perseverance, and strength for the journey, and to be ever thankful to our loving God for making us Fortunate Families.

The Parents Voice Project

The Parents Voice Project, generously funded by a grant from the Wheaton Franciscan Sisters, has two phases. Phase one, the enclosed Survey, aims to catalog the needs, and the gifts and talents, parents like you can offer to other Catholic parents to make this particular journey more positive and faith-filled. The Survey also seeks to assess your interest in participating in such efforts with other parents.

Phase two is the development of a network of parents who will be encouraged and supported to raise their voices, individually or together, to call for a more just and loving response to our LGBTQ daughters and sons. NOTE: This phase depends on information gleaned from the survey—the more information, the stronger the network.

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The need for this project

Parents can be an especially powerful force. First, by virtue of their faithfulness and service in the church, parents are more likely to be listened to by church ministers than are their LGBTQ children. As faithful Christians knowledgeable about LGBTQ persons, parents have the right and duty to speak the truth of the goodness of their LGBTQ children to church leaders. Second, parents can best support and engage other parents wherever they are on their journey—empowering them to move from the early stages of tears and fears to acceptance, understanding, and finally to appreciation of their special roles in the work of justice for their LGBTQ children.

As a networked community of Catholic parents of LGBTQ daughters and sons, together we will foster the willingness and the courage to be prophetic voices in both the church and the world, bearing witness—by sharing our stories—to the faithfulness and integrity of our families and our LGBTQ children.

Please complete and submit the survey. Add your voice to the voices of other parents seeking justice for their LGBTQ daughters and sons.

Sincerely,

Casey & Mary Ellen Lopata
Fortunate Families
Parents Voice Project

NOTE: Please return completed surveys to: Fortunate Families, 239 Highland Parkway, Rochester, NY 14620, or complete a survey on-line at: www.fortunatefamilies.com. The survey is an ongoing part of the Parents Voice Project, and your voice is important!

Fortunate Families

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

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