

14 September 2018
Feast of The Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
3211 Fourth Street NE
Washington, DC 20017

Cardinal DiNardo,

Ave Crux spes unica!

The Board of Directors of Fortunate Families, Inc., in solidarity with the rest of the Church, weeps at the horrors associated with the latest revelations of sinful and criminal conduct by some of the clergy and bishops of the United States and its subsequent cover ups. Indeed, we have heard the many voices that have reached out to us for some hope as they experience crises of faith, most already having been battered by rhetoric and attitudes that have cast them far beyond the peripheries because they identify as LGBTQ+.

Some bishops have chosen to blame – scapegoat – the abuse of minors and its subsequent cover up on members of the LGBTQ+ community. Outrageous and cruel claims made by some bishops have wounded an already vulnerable and particularly hurt portion of the Body of Christ with baseless accusations that homosexuality is the foundational reason for the abuse and cover up priests and bishops have perpetrated and which now plagues our Church.

This sinful assignation of guilt is not only contrary to the Gospel but contrary to the John Jay study that the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops – itself – had commissioned; the study indicates clearly that homosexuality is not the cause of sexual abuse. Certainly, homosexuality is not the cause of the cover up.

Pope Francis said that clericalism, which leads to a lack of transparency and creates priests and bishops whose abuse of power has, sinfully, caused them to erroneously believe they answer to no one, is the root of the present crisis.

In his August 20, 2018 letter to the faithful regarding the abuse crisis Pope Francis wrote:

Clericalism, whether fostered by priests themselves or by lay persons, leads to an excision in the ecclesial body that supports and helps to perpetuate many of the evils that we are condemning today. To say “no” to abuse is to say an emphatic “no” to all forms of clericalism.

We ask you to exercise your role of servant leadership within the USCCB and the Church in the United States to urge your brother bishops in November to state clearly and emphatically that:

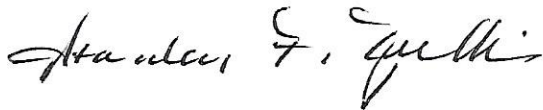
- gay priests and homosexuality are **not** the cause of the present crisis in the Church.
- gay priests have gifts and talents that are valued and essential in building up the Body of Christ.

- LGBTQ+ persons are not more prone to abusing or molesting other people nor covering up criminal activity than heterosexual persons, and condemn the statements made by your brother bishops that indicate otherwise.
- the USCCB intends to create opportunity for open and honest conversation with LGBTQ+ persons regarding their spirituality, sexuality and their rightful place in the mission and ministry of the Church.
- the USCCB resolves to eradicate all forms of clericalism and empower the laity in establishing and governing new structures within the Church that address accountability and provide honest evaluation of bishops, pastors and other priests.
- the USCCB acknowledges and asks forgiveness for inflicting pain and judgment upon LGBTQ+ laity, religious, deacons, clergy and bishops by their words - both written and spoken.

We plead with you and our bishops to work together with us, not against us, in fostering the culture of encounter including open, honest and deeply spiritual conversations so that all will have their dignity upheld, safeguarded, respected and celebrated by the shepherds entrusted with their pastoral care under the standard of our triumphant Holy Cross.

Trusting in the prayers of Our Lady, Mother of Fortunate Families, who weeps with her children under the Cross of her son, we commend you, our bishops and all our heterosexual and LGBTQ+ deacons, priests, religious and laity to her maternal care.

Your brother in ministry,



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