Opinion



by NCR Editorial Staff

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

April 2, 2021

Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

In a recent editorial, NCR writes that the pope's decision to approve the March 15 decree from the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith instructing Catholic priests not to offer blessings for same-sex couples seems out of character when thinking about his pastoral approach over the last eight years. The pope's decision, we write, brings to mind a word that is much more bitter — hypocrite. Following are letters to the editor responding to this editorial. They have been edited for length and clarity.

Yes, we affirm Pope Francis' track record over the years, including his two recent encyclicals. He is more open to reaching out to other religions, appears to be welcoming of LGBT people, is compassionate and sees the bigger picture of the unity of all peoples and our care for the earth. He has made several steps forward, but with this decree on same-sex unions, he has taken a giant step backward. How tragic that he chooses this step to say our relationship is a sin.

The pope's reasoning and his signing of the decree on same-sex unions reflects a very narrow view of sexuality and couples like us who have faithfully lived together for over 40 years. We are a gay couple, former Jesuits, married and have adopted four children. We are not sin! We are blessed and have been blessed by countless family members and friends who dealt with all the challenges of our situation and fully embraced us.



Pope Francis, we are gay, committed and faithful to each other. We will continue to care for our four sons and others who enter our lives. We seek to live from the gospel, with goodwill and openness toward all, to care for those who are in need and to care for the earth. Who are you to judge who we are or how we live? As images of God, we are condemned by you and the Catholic Church as intrinsically disordered.

Yes, Pope Francis, with all the good you have done, you have chosen to take a step back and erect another barrier. We invite you to meet us, hear our story, walk in our shoes, see how we image God and then you might fully embrace us.

FRANK AND JERRY GOLD

Denver, Colorado

***

I appreciate the majority of NCR editorial staff's editorials. Sometimes I agree with them, other times I don't, but usually I believe that the editorials are a worthwhile contribution to the exchange of ideas in the church. Usually, but not always. A small number of NCR editorial staff's editorials have been awful or quite nearly so.

That brings me to "Vatican's decree on gay unions risks making Francis into a hypocrite," which is one of the very worse editorials that NCR has yet published.

I am deeply disappointed that the Holy Father has forbidden the blessing of same-sex unions. At the same time, I am not surprised, because he has been very consistent in his teachings and actions.

Where is the hypocrisy? Have you followed what he says and does at all? He views GLBTQI Catholics basically the same as he does divorced Catholics who have remarried without an annulment. In accordance with church doctrine and law, he does not approve of the remarriage, but neither does he judge the remarried. There are no blessings for the remarriage. What there is, is compassion toward those who are in a difficult situation. That has also been our Holy Father's approach to the GLBTQI faithful. There is no inconsistency here at all.

Disagree with him if you want, I certainly do, but if you think he's engaging in hypocrisy you haven't been paying attention.

JEFFREY JONES

Hamburg, New York

***

I endorse your editorial completely. I have always believed that Pope Francis is the answer to change in our Catholic faith. The light shining from the darkness of sexual abuse within Catholicism. It is so disappointing to see the pope signing off on this decree. The only reason being doctrinal decisions are made from the hierarchy, and although Pope Francis can do and say certain things, he is totally governed by the cardinals below him when it comes to these doctrinal decisions. Obviously, these decisions are made by voting.

I, as a committed Catholic convert, am so disappointed by this decree. Our Catholic faith needs to evolve, keeping basics, but moving with wisdom forward as Second Vatican Council had done, but now we are going backwards.

All people should be shown that the Catholic Church is a Jesus people, accepting and welcoming into his fold the marginalized and the privileged, the poor and the rich, heterosexuals and LGBT people, the sick and the healthy, the loveable and unlovable. We should be showing hope for all, not just a few.

DIANNE HAIRE

Tamworth, Australia

***

So much for the critique of Pope Francis in your NCR editorial. We know his predecessor lurks in house when he should be way out to pasture. That man has a following.

It's like President Donald Trump occupying a back room of the White House while President Joe Biden tries to go about our business. I would expect the editors of NCR to look deeper.

DONALD FRANCIS CUDDIHEE, SR

Greer, South Carolina

***

The issue seems to revolve around the meaning of "blessing of same-sex union." "Blessing" here must in no way have to mean the same as a sacramental marriage, nor does it necessarily mean any approval of sin.

Does the church not bless same-sex organizations of men and women in religious brothers and sisters without implying sin? A blessing can simply mean best wishes to two persons who want to share a supportive and loving relationship. Any further

implications in this relationship are strictly between these persons and God — the same as in any other union including a sacramental marriage between a man and a woman.

DAVID PARSONS

Austin, Texas

Advertisement

***

Surely your article lacks depth and proper analysis of the pope's doctrinal teachings, which has never contradicted the Second Vatican Council or the text published by the CDF. I can't believe you're Catholic and referring to the pope as a hypocrite when he has not acted as such.

You're supposed to analyze the text from the CDF and prove that it is wrong in the light of the divine revelation. You did not quote any section of the Second Vatican Council teachings or canon law or the teachings of Christ and his apostles to support your accusations.

Surely, your article lacks depth and most importantly lacks the truth of the church's teachings. It seeks to misrepresent the church and the teachings of the bishop of Rome.

The least you can do is not to lie against the pope or misrepresent his teachings.

EROMOSELE ODIJIE

Orangeville, Ontario

***

Neither Pope Francis nor any other pope can bless same-sex unions any more than they could bless heterosexuals living together outside of marriage. Those situations

are equally sinful. What part of mortal sin and the sixth commandment does your editorial department not understand?

As every educated Catholic has been taught, all sins of a sexual nature are all mortal and forbidden to all except those in a traditional male/female marriage.

The real hypocrites are those who say they are devout and faithful Catholics (as President Joe Biden has often been characterized) and yet are always promoting ideas that are in direct contradiction to church dogma.

You should rewrite your editorial on this subject.

PHYLLIS ROSS

Fountain Valley, California

***

The NCR editorial is critical of the Vatican's recent statement on the issue of homosexual unions and marriage: the CDF has explicitly written that the church does not have, and cannot have, the power to bless unions of persons of the same sex. There is no wiggle room in the CDF's pronouncement.

NCR must reverse editorial course and accept that there is no validity for the position of the LGBT lobby in regards to church sanction of same-sex marriage: it's fish or get out of the boat. The editors must lead the course reversal lest NCR continues to become less than National, certainly not Catholic, and not much of a Reporter.

If you fail to do that, you fail in your mission to support the Barque of Peter. In that case, you will continue to bear some responsibility for the loss of souls.

ALAN CLUNE

Locust Grove, Virginia

***

If the media reported accurately what the pontiff's words were there would not be controversy. The statement concerning not blessing same-sex unions keeps with

Catholic teaching and is not contradicting anything the pope has said.

Pope Francis has stated that all people should be treated with love respect and dignity, and LGBT people should not ostracized or rejected. He neither condones nor condemns.

DORIS COBB

Cambridge, Ontario

***

For some years, the National Catholic Reporter has encouraged dialogue and synodality as ways of fostering new depths in the church's mission, self-understanding and praxis.

But now, from the editorial board of NCR we get the "hypocrite editorial," an extended performance of the very worst ad hominem name calling. It serves both the church and the LGBTQ community poorly. I understate when I say it is a disappointment.

JOHN O'DONOGHUE

Eugene, Oregon

***

Bravo for your humane and stirring editorial. Perhaps as you alluded to, the underlying cause of the pope's mixed messaging resides in the church's essentially medieval views on human sexuality and curious obstinacy in not revisiting it.

In a world clearly suffering from a paucity of tolerance and love — for each other, for the environment, its flora and fauna and for those deemed on the margins, the Vatican should hardly be labeling any genuine manifestations of caring as "sin." And Pope Francis knows better. Shameful.

R. JAY ALLAIN

Orleans, Massachusetts

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts and ideas, reactions and responses to letters@ncronline.org. The editor will collect them, curate them and publish a sampling in Letters to the Editor online or in our print edition.

We cannot publish everything. We will do our best to represent the full range of letters received. Here are the rules:

- Letters to the editor should be submitted to letters@ncronline.org.
- Letters to the editor should be limited to 250 words.
- Letters must include your name, street address, city, state and zip code. We will publish your name and city, state, but not your full address.
- If the letter refers to a specific article published at ncronline.org, please send in the headline or the link of the article.
- Please include a daytime telephone number where we can reach you. We will not publish your phone number. It may be used for verification.

We can't guarantee publication of all letters, but you can be assured that your submission will receive careful consideration.

Published letters may be edited for length and style.

This story appears in the **Your thoughts** feature series. View the full series.