Opinion



by NCR Staff

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September 9, 2022
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Fr. Peter Daly spent the last 18 months as a caregiver for his dear friend, José Luis, and it was one of the most important chapters of his life. "It was the most intense period of love and loss in my life. It was a huge blessing," Daly writes. Following are NCR reader responses to Daly's commentary. The letters have been edited for length and clarity.

Both loving and lovely. Thank you, Fr. Daly.

RICHARD LEO CRANK

Topeka, Kansas

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What a beautifully written and honest piece! It made me cry to hear this from a priest. Father is so blessed to have been able to experience agape love. It takes many a lifetime. Love is love and for those of us lucky enough to have experienced this, I praise God.

JANE FRANCISCO

Charlotte, North Carolina



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This is a really beautiful story, and as a psychiatric nurse therapist, and also an Episcopal priest in the Diocese of Washington, I am thrilled that Fr. Peter Daly had this amazing opportunity to experience the incredible love of caring for someone so intimately and lovingly.

The Psychiatric Professional Association has long believed that there is nothing "abnormal" or wrong with same-sex relationships, and we are becoming clearer that human sexuality has a whole continuum of expressions, and that all are to be respected and honored as children of God.

Back in the late 1960s, I was asked to help start a ministry in the Tenderloin area of San Francisco for young gay and lesbian children who had been thrown out of their families because they had come out. I was in nursing school at the University of San Francisco, a Jesuit school, and I was a Medical Mission Sister, wearing a habit at the time. By my presence, in a habit, I was saying to these kids, "I don't believe that God makes mistakes." We became Hospitality House, a drop-in center where these young people could come to get off the streets, get food and have fun in a safe place, and get the help that they needed so that they didn't have to sell their bodies to be able to have a place to sleep at night.

I long for a time when the Catholic Church also recognizes and respects them as God has created them and loves them.

(The Rev.) BETSY HAGUE

Chevy Chase, Maryland

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Fr. Peter Daly's article on caring for José Luis Sanchez moved me very much. It was a touching testament to the power of love.

MARK CLARK

Silver Spring, Maryland

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I felt deeply touched by Fr. Peter Daly's article, his honesty about celibate loving, his humility about what he learned, and his courage in sharing his experience.

For six years, I have been in a close, supportive and affectionate relationship with an addicted man in his 30s with a teenage son. He would describe himself as bisexual. I am a gay ordained man about Daly's age. We live in separate places. Working through to healthy boundaries has been a special challenge requiring a psychologist's regular help. Nonetheless, I have learned more about merciful, committed love these past six years than the whole 65 years before.

However, though he has stated that he believes I am faithful to my vows — I am — the bishop believes the relationship scandalous and requires that my continuing in it

include no longer identifying as a priest, even in retirement. I think Daly would agree that the church abides in aching need of conversion to trust, mercy, justice, and patient, discerning, accepting love!

(Fr.) MICHAEL L. PAPESH

Pueblo, Colorado

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What a beautiful essay about love by Fr. Peter Daly. It took my breath away. He captured the meaning of love. If only it was universally experienced by all people.

PAULA BRANDENBURG

Williamsburg, Virginia

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What a loving article by Fr. Peter Daly. He caught the essence of love.

JOHN J. MCCORMACK

Williamsburg, Virginia

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I just wanted to tell you that Fr. Peter Daly's love letter was one of the most courageous

articles I have read in a long time. The anguish of losing the love of his life filled me with tears for both of them, and for all priests, who live such a lonely life.

Kudos to you, Father, for being brave enough to live authentically, and to share your experience with others. May God fill you with his consolation, and may the church welcome with open arms the LBGTQ community in all aspects.

ANDREA BOGGS

Franklin, West Virginia

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Thank you, thank you, thank you for publishing "Caring for José Luis: A priest learns that love is love." It was so honest and showed the goodness of human love.

I often worry about celibate priests who are surely burdened by loneliness.

Furthermore, I agree with Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich of Luxembourg, the head of the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union that it is time for a fundamental revision of church teaching on homosexuality.

Thank you to Fr. Peter Daly for sharing his remarkable story of love.

JUDY BOCK

Columbia, Missouri

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I read this and felt a deep, beautiful pause; a pause that felt both the gift as well as the pain. Thank you for allowing us into this very personal and sacred space.

Peace and sincere condolences, my friend.

JOHN JULIANELLE

Los Angeles, California

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Thank you so much for the moving article of Fr. Peter Daly and his love of José Luis. I cried as I endeavored to read it. Thank you, Peter, for your courage as a brother priest.

As another gay man and priest, I am grateful for your writing and understanding of "love is love."

(Fr.) JOHN GIRDAUSKAS

Tasmania, Australia

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Following Jesus' life and applying his examples of love when and where needed to teach us and me, results in stories such as "Caring for José Luis: A priest learns that love is love."

Fr. Peter Daly demonstrates love in a way that is denied to priests where intimacy with touch, which Jesus did with some of his healing, is prevented with a vow. Shouldn't the priesthood be enabled to experience the same love we do, to complete living as Jesus did for us? After all the years of speaking of love and his non-selfish acts of love, Daly has to be sent José Luis to truly understand loving himself. F

earing to love means fearing the pain that love can bring. As Jesus met the ultimate fear with the love for us, Daly courageously faces any pain for having an intimate love. May God bless him.

TIMOTHY ORTIZ

Huntingtown, Maryland

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Just josh darn beautiful.

JOE LEHANE

Parma, Ohio

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What a beautiful heartfelt tale. Blessings be upon you Father Peter.

I support your hope that our church can realize that its teaching on sex, sexuality and gender are proven ill founded by more than a century of advances in knowledge.

Specifically, the sciences of medicine, genetics, psychology, and sociology. Research and study in history also explain how many of these "traditional" views and teachings originated in the contemporary prejudices and attitudes of medieval and older societies.

In your article you wisely quote Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich who went on to say: "that it is time for a fundamental revision of church teaching on homosexuality." The church needs to go further and completely review teaching on sex, sexuality and gender. Not because of changes in society but because of changed knowledge.

Finally, I ask you and all priests or religious to reflect upon the sometimes-unspoken assumption that celibacy is the superior state of human relations. Every married Catholic is trying to live a vowed life, vows also witnessed before God. Merely restricting doctrinal change to LGBTQ+ issues is not sufficient and plays into the hands of the usual culture warriors.

BARRY McGONIGLE

Omagh, Northern Ireland

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Fr. Peter Daly's exquisite sharing of his relationship with José Luis is all one needs to know about love. If this were required reading for church decision-makers, celibacy requirements would fly out the window. Love wins.

MARY E. HUNT

Silver Spring, Maryland

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