News



Chicago Cardinal Blase Cupich is pictured in 2023. (OSV News/Gina Christian)



by Camillo Barone

NCR staff reporter

View Author Profile
cbarone@ncronline.org

Join the Conversation

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

January 15, 2025

Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

Chicago Cardinal Blase Cupich wants Catholic leaders to listen and be more empathetic to LGBTQ Catholic individuals.

"We do better when we listen to others before we speak or make judgments about them," Cupich wrote in a Jan. 6 column for Outreach, an online resource for LGBTQ Catholics.

"This approach of putting aside our preconceptions and really listening also applies to how church leaders ought to consider people in a variety of life situations," he said, about those in irregular marital situations, single people, and those living with physical or psychological disabilities.

Cupich said he has held listening sessions with various groups in the Chicago Archdiocese including LGBTQ Catholics who described their feelings of alienation, often stemming from judgment and exclusion by both family members and church communities.

"One person told me that the way they were banished, shunned, and even hated led them to the conclusion that being gay made them a modern-day leper," he wrote. Some also shared experiences of being denied sacraments or access to Catholic schools for their children. The cardinal noted that such exclusion can have severe consequences, including mental health struggles and suicidal thoughts.

Cupich linked these personal stories to the teachings of the 1962-65 Second Vatican Council, quoting from *Gaudium et Spes*: "The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ."

Cupich also said that church leaders must engage deeply with people’s lived experiences to make this affirmation meaningful.

Advertisement

Despite these difficulties, Cupich said he has observed a strong sense of resilience among many LGBTQ Catholics. Many remain active in their faith, he said. "They become involved in parish life where they are welcomed. They pray daily and practice works of mercy, especially outreach to the poor," he wrote.

The cardinal also addressed stereotypes about LGBTQ individuals, rejecting the notion that they are uniquely preoccupied with sexual gratification. "Contrary to what others often say or think about LGBTQ people, the idea that they are uniquely obsessed with sexual satisfaction is a myth," he said, emphasizing their focus on love, stability, and intimacy.

He argued that many LGBTQ Catholics prioritize relationships as a source of stability and commitment, contrasting this with "promiscuity that is sometimes present in both the gay and straight communities."

Cupich acknowledged the contributions of LGBTQ individuals, saying many have taken on the role of parenting children who might otherwise be without homes. He said others in volunteer work often draw on their experiences of exclusion to empathize with others.

He also pointed out that LGBTQ Catholics often see themselves as contributors to the church with gifts to offer which underscores their desire to participate fully in the life of the church.

The cardinal urged Catholics to move beyond exclusion and judgment with its LGBTQ members and said church leaders should leave behind "preemptive exclusion and the shunning of those we have easily, if not lazily, judged as unworthy of our companionship."

Instead, he encouraged fostering a sense of shared humanity. "If we talk with and, even more important, listen to each other," he said, "we may actually come to recognize what all God’s children share as members of the same family."