

Gay marriage supporter removed from ministries

Chuck Colbert | Oct. 29, 2009

One Catholic in Maine has paid a heavy price for supporting same-sex marriage.

Pamella Starbird Beliveau of Lewiston, Maine, was removed as a lector and Eucharistic Minister after her pastor read an opinion piece she wrote for the local newspaper approving of same-sex marriage.

Beliveau explained her position to NCR: "At every juncture of this debate, we have to remind ourselves that we are dealing with heart, soul, and flesh human beings who are in love called and wired for relationship, including intimate relationships."

"When anyone finds that other person in [his or her] life," Beliveau explained, "then we aspire to marriage, a noble and honorable way to live our lives."

Heterosexually married for 20 years, the mother of two daughters, and graduate student at Boston College's School of Ministry of Theology, Beliveau added, "To deny any couple [marriage] breaks my heart."

Perhaps most important, "People in same-sex marriage do not diminish my marriage or family." Rather, she said, "Anyone promoting committed, monogamous relationships enhance my life and that of my family."

After her guest column, "A Committed Marriage is a worthy Aspiration," Oct. 18, she received a letter from her pastor.

He wrote: "The Lewiston *Sun Journal* published a guest editorial by you which expressed views contrary to the Roman Catholic Church's teaching on the nature of marriage. ... In view of this publicly stated position of yours, I regret that you will not be eligible to exercise a public ministry in Prince of Peace Parish. More specifically, that means that I have decided that you are not to serve as a reader or minister of Holy Communion effective today ..."

[A frequent contributor to NCR, Chuck Colbert freelance journalist from Cambridge, Mass.]

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