

Boulder parents: Adult child of gay parents speaks from experience

Thomas C. Fox | Mar. 26, 2010



Sacred Heart of Jesus elementary school in Boulder, Colo.

The pastor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Boulder, Colo., earlier this month informed a lesbian couple, active in the parish for three years and with two young girls in preschool that their children would not be able to attend the elementary school beginning in one year. The decision, leaked to the media apparently by a teacher at the school, has caused uproar in the community, and divide the parish.

[The women shared their story](#) [1]with *NCR* editor Tom Fox. The pastor, Fr. William Breslin, [explained his decision](#). [2]

Fox interviewed a number of parents with children at the school to see how the decision is affecting their families. Following is the fourth of these interviews, edited for length and clarity.

Sarah Kellerman (not her real name) has three students at Sacred Heart of Jesus school in Boulder. As the adult child of a lesbian couple, she says she offers a unique perspective into the situation at the school where the children of a lesbian couple are not being allowed to continue after next year with their schooling.

I am a parent of three students at Sacred Heart, and I'm an active Sacred Heart parishioner, volunteer and am very involved with the school. I am also the adult child of gay parents. My mother had a 13-year relationship with another woman. We grew up in the same house. She had a son who is not related to me biologically, but we were raised as brother and sister; we are very, very close. In fact, he walked me down the aisle at my wedding.

So we were raised as one, big, happy family. I mean, we had the same ups and downs as any other family, but from the time I was three until 16, that was my family structure. So this whole issue pains me tremendously from the perspective of the children.

I'm not going to argue the gay/lesbian thing because there are people who are more qualified, but I have a very unique perspective from the perspective of the children. We children of gay relationships are seen as collateral damage. I've heard a number of people say, "Oh, it's so sad about the children," and, "The children will suffer," but then that's the end of it. Nobody is speaking up to say: "Well, what should we do for these children

going forward??

It's like in a military situation, where 25 women and children are killed in some sort of military operation and they'll say, "Well, we're so sorry about those 25 women and children, but we got the one we were after, so it was worth it." But then you don't hear anything more about those 25 innocents.

There are two souls who are baptized Catholics that nobody seems to really be standing up for in a real, concrete way and even though the two children are young, they're still going to hear about this situation when they're older and it's going to be one in a long stream of lifetime rejections that they're going to experience.

I would think that the Catholic church would want to have them in the fold, to "convert from within," is one term that I heard. But they're being turned away - even though they are baptized, legal Catholics. They are just as Catholic as my children, as any other baptized child in that school. I'm quite upset that the church has reneged on their baptismal promises. They promised, through baptism, to make available to these children all of the resources that the Catholic church has to offer.

Those children were received and welcomed into the church. They were presented to the church. The church clapped for them and said, "Welcome to our community." They were given a white stole and a candle and blessings and prayers, but now they're being told that they're not good enough to be in a Catholic school and to have a Catholic education, and that, to me, is a sin.

One thing that I heard a lot growing up with lesbian parents. It is said, "Oh, well, you must be indoctrinated into this lifestyle." I'll tell you what, my mother was a very private person. She's passed away seven years now. She was a very private person. We never discussed it. Of course we knew and all our neighbors knew. It wasn't until I turned 18 that my mother's partner sat me down and she said, "You know what I am, don't you?" and I said, "yes?" and that was it?that's all that was ever discussed. There was no discussion.

Of course my brother and I we knew who our parents' friends were and we knew what was going on, but it was never discussed. So the indoctrination piece never occurred, and then some other people will say, "Well, you're going to inherit some gene and it's going to make you gay or lesbian," and I assure you, I am very heterosexual, so that's not the case either.

There was one point that Father Bill made. He said, "Well, we don't want there to be confusion in the classroom. We don't want them to go home and be confused between what is being taught in the classroom and what's being taught at home." Every family has that situation to deal with. It's not the church place to decide anyway. Just because their parents are gays and lesbians doesn't mean that they can't be Catholic. I'm very Catholic.

It's the children who are going to suffer greatly by this and the Catholic church is losing two souls. The Catholic mission is to save souls and to minister to the community no matter how diverse that community is. They have failed on both counts.

It is one thing that the Catholic church is making this decree, saying gays and lesbians are not full members of the church, but now the kids too. How many generations is it going to go? Is it going to be grandchildren and great grandchildren? But now they're basically saying two generations?the parents and the kids can no longer be full members of the church, which I think is very wrong.

[Tom Fox is NCR editor. His e-mail address is tfox@ncronline.org.]

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- [Children denied Catholic schooling, lesbian couple speaks out](#) [4]
- [Boulder pastor says Jesus turned some away](#) [5]
- [Boulder parents: 'Our children could be the next to go'](#) [6], March 23
- [Boulder parents: 'They told us in church to love everyone'](#) [7], March 24
- [Boulder parents: 'This alienates people from church'](#) [8], March 25
- [Boulder parents: Adult child of gay parents speaks from experience](#) [9], March 26

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