

News travels some strange paths

Jerry Filteau | Aug. 17, 2010 NCR Today

Last April, when I attended a Tridentine Mass in Washington and [wrote a critical commentary](#) [1] on it for NCR, I knew it would provoke some interesting reader reaction.

But I was a bit surprised to find a reference to it four months later in a petition by gay and lesbian alumni of the University of Notre Dame and St. Mary's College seeking official recognition of their alumni club.

How did it get there? Well, in June Bishop Kevin Dowling of Rustenburg, South Africa, read the *NCR* report as the opening of a talk he gave to a group of lay leaders in Cape Town.

He intended the talk to be off the record, but a reporter who was present wrote about it and it created a news stir in South Africa.

In July a colleague of mine sent me a copy of the talk, a thoughtful, critical reflection on what the bishop called growing "restorationist" trends in the church. I passed it on to *NCR* managing editor Dennis Coday, who contacted Dowling and [got permission to run the talk in *NCR*](#) [2].

In August the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference issued a statement reflecting on issues raised by Dowling's talk, [which *NCR* also reported](#) [3].

On Aug. 15, I received a news release about efforts this summer by the 900-member Gay and Lesbian Alumni Association of Notre Dame University and St. Mary's College (GALA-ND/SMC) to achieve official accreditation as an alumni club of the university and college.

Notre Dame alumnus and longtime GALA member Thomas F. Field, a retired Army colonel who teaches law at Georgetown University, said that in correspondence with the chancery of the Fort Wayne-South Bend Diocese, where Notre Dame is located, he had been informed that the Bishop Kevin C. Rhodes would discuss the club's application for official recognition this fall with the university president, Holy Cross Fr. John Jenkins.

Among the materials Field sent Rhodes for consideration was a copy of Dowling's June talk as it appeared in July in *NCR*, with a question about whether or how Dowling's remarks on the principle of subsidiarity might apply to the diocese-university relationship with reference to GALA's request for recognition by the university.

We'll have to wait to see how that part of the story unfolds.

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