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Bishops & Bullying

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Distinctly Catholic

Anti-gay bullying has been much in the news since the tragic suicide of Tyler Clementi, the young man who jumped off the George Washington bridge after fellow students videotaped him having sex with another male student. They posted the video on the web and Clementi became desperate, committing the ultimate act of desperation.

Two bishops addressed the situation, one explicitly and the other obliquely, in recent comments that flew under the radar screen.

Bishop Arthur Serratelli of Paterson wrote a column about the incident in his diocesan newspaper, rightly noting that the students had violated Clementi's privacy in an unconscionable manner.

And, in a videoblog discussing pro-life month, Archbishop Gregory Michael Aymond of New Orleans said that teen suicide was a pro-life concern, along with poverty and homelessness. The entire video is worth watching but the relevant part is around 4:50 on the tape.

Of course, when Notre Dame invited President Obama to its commencement, plenty of bishops jumped on the anti-ND bandwagon, expressing all manner of shock and scorn. Here, in the face of a true tragedy, we have only two who stood up to say that the Catholic faith does not endorse anti-gay bullying. I wish there were more. But, hats and miters off to Serratelli and Symond for speaking up and speaking out.

Bishops, and all Catholics, have a moral obligation to make sure that their efforts to defend marriage are kept distinct from anti-gay bigotry. I wish there were more who had the courage to speak up for the Tyler Clementis of the world.

(H/t to Rocco Palmo for sending me the links.)

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