

Catholics and same sex marriage

Maureen Fiedler | May. 10, 2012 NCR Today

I noticed in this morning's news reports, that President Barack Obama said that Vice-President Joe Biden was out "a little over his skis" when he declared his support for marriage equality on Meet the Press on Sunday, May 6.

However it slipped out on that occasion, Biden said he is "absolutely comfortable with the fact that men marrying men, women marrying women, and heterosexual men and women marrying another are entitled to the same exact rights, all the civil rights, all the civil liberties."

By all accounts, he was speaking from his heart, even if he may have forced Obama to voice his own support for marriage equality a bit earlier than planned.

Biden is, of course, Roman Catholic. So are Gov. Andrew Cuomo of New York, Gov. Martin O'Malley of Maryland and Gov. Christine Gregoire of the state of Washington. All of these governors have signed legislation this year in their respective states that legalizes same sex marriage.

Apparently, they "like many Catholics" have come to know gay and lesbian people in committed relationships and concluded that they pose no danger to the future of the republic. Obama said the same thing: people he has come to know helped move him.

(By the way, the untold story in the GLBT struggle is the "coming out" story ... the struggles of countless individuals who suffered a great deal by simply by telling others about their sexual orientation. In doing so, they changed the entire landscape on this issue.)

In the face of this reality, the bishops continue to campaign against marriage equality on various state referenda that would either ban same sex marriage, or overturn laws in states where it is legal.

Instead of spending energy on that, they might take a lead from Biden, Obama and the three Catholic governors, and spend some time with gay or lesbian couples in committed relationships. They might discover that "just as they are no danger to the future of republic" they are also no danger to the future of the church.

And they might decide that the overriding moral teaching of the church is not a condemnation of gay/lesbian relationships. It's love.

Funny thing -- that is exactly the focus of the gospel this Sunday? "Love one another as I have loved you."