

Jesuit magazine updates English text of pope's remarks on gay parents

Joshua J. McElwee | Jan. 7, 2014 NCR Today

The leading Italian Jesuit magazine has quietly updated the English version of a report by their chief editor that gives the text of Pope Francis' remarks to religious superiors in November, aligning it more closely to the Italian and Spanish version of the remarks.

La Civiltà Cattolica made the change to a portion of the pope's remarks, transcribed by editor Jesuit Fr. Antonio Spadaro, where the pontiff tells some 120 heads of male religious orders around the world that education is a "key, key mission" of religious.

Commenting on the pope's response, Spadaro states that the pontiff began recalling his own experience as archbishop in Buenos Aires speaking to young adults "who live in complex situations, especially family ones."

"I remember the case of a very sad little girl who finally confided to her teacher the reason for her state of mind: 'my mother's girlfriend doesn't like me,'" Spadaro quotes the pope.

"The percentage of children studying in schools who have separated parents is very high," the pope continues. "The situation in which we live now provides us with new challenges which sometimes are difficult to understand."

"How can we proclaim Christ to these boys and girls?" the pope asks. "How can we proclaim Christ to a generation that is changing? We must be careful not to administer a vaccine against faith to them."

Civiltà Cattolica [released Spadaro's account](#) [1] of the pope's Nov. 29 exchange with the superiors -- which spans 15 pages -- in Italian, English, and Spanish Jan. 3. While the English version originally translated the pope's description of the girl's words as "my mother's fiancé doesn't like me," the Italian version states it is the mother's *fidanzata*, which translates to a girlfriend or female partner.

A [new English version](#) [2] had been posted to the magazine's website by Tuesday, changing fiancé to fiancée, the feminine form of the word.

The report of the pope's comments about the mother, her girlfriend and her child quickly sparked debate in Italy after several outlets in the country alleged it indicated a new openness by the pope to same-sex unions. The Vatican spokesman, Jesuit Fr. Federico Lombardi, took to Vatican Radio Jan. 5 to deny those allegations.

"To speak of an 'opening to gay couples' is paradoxical," [said Lombardi](#) [3], "because the pope's comment is completely general and because even the small concrete example made by the pope in this regard alludes to the suffering of the child."

Civiltà Cattolica had also released a new version of Spadaro's text by Tuesday in Portuguese.

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