

Statement on LGBT Teen and Young Adult Suicides

January 2011

The 8th Day Center for Justice mourns the number of Gay, Lesbian, Transgendered, and Bisexual teen and young adult suicides that have been occurring over the past months. These suicides have been the result of bullying from their peers in school and a society that prioritizes heterosexuality. We believe the teachings of the Church and the behavior of some members of the Church hierarchy have added to this atmosphere of bullying and intimidation.

Here are a few examples:

- 1) The Catechism of the Catholic Church states, “Homosexuality refers to relations between men or between women who experience an exclusive or predominant sexual attraction toward persons of the same sex... Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, tradition has always declared that ‘homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered.’ They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life...Under no circumstances can they be approved” (#2357).
- 2) The bishops of Minnesota mailed nearly 400,000 DVDs to Catholics throughout the state in order to prevent the redefinition of civil marriage to include same-sex partnerships. In this DVD, emphasis was placed on the nature of marriage as a life-long and potentially procreative union between a man and woman. One of the bishops stated that laws which allow for same-sex unions potentially weaken society’s already damaged foundation.
- 3) Washington, DC now legally recognizes same-sex marriage. Because of this, the Archdiocese of Washington decided to discontinue its foster care program and no longer offer benefits to the spouses of any new employees, thus avoiding benefits for same-sex couples.
- 4) The Archdiocese of Denver, Colorado, decided not to re-enroll two children in one of its elementary schools. The reason why this decision was made was because the parents of these two children are lesbian.

Despite claims to the contrary, these examples of discrimination clearly show that people of differing sexual orientations are not welcome in the Church. Moreover, such discrimination contributes to an atmosphere in society which promotes bigotry and violence toward the LGBT community.

One of 8th Day Center's primary goals is "to promote justice, equality and human dignity among all people regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, abilities, gender, sexual orientation, or socio-economic class. " Rather than rejecting or criticizing our youth because of their sexual orientation, we need to embrace and affirm them for who they are. In effect, we need to take note of a lesser-known teaching in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (#2358), which states: [People with a homosexual orientation] "must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided. These persons are called to fulfill God's will in their lives."

Staff of the 8th Day Center for Justice

N.B. For an earlier statement on LGBT issues, please visit "A Response to the Instruction from the Vatican Congregation on Catholic Education