

TRANSGENDER RIGHTS AND THE VISIT OF POPE FRANCIS TO IRELAND 2018

Hate speech is any speech that attacks, disparages, and/or demeans a person or group of persons on the basis of their race, religion, ethnic status, sexual orientation, disabilities or gender.

The transgender community is the number one target today of hate speech and the results are tragic. People are hurt by being told by religion that their true gender identity is not true and thus they are dehumanised. Religion always influences more than its own members – its opinions bleed into the outlooks of atheists as well as politicians. Transgenders are driven to suicide or murdered more than any other community. The transgender community is one of the smallest and therefore the most vulnerable targets.

It is a medical fact that people with gender dysphoria are not mentally ill but are made mentally ill by those who refuse to affirm their true gender. If gender dysphoria were an illness the attitude of the Church would not be in keeping with the fact that affirming the true gender of the sufferer is a critical and core part of treatment. The Church would be very harmful.

Issues of a right to freedom of speech in this case cannot override the right to have a safe non-judgemental and non-critical space in this country.

Here is the law.

2.—(1) It shall be an offence for a person—

(a) to publish or distribute written material,

(b) to use words, behave or display written material—

(i) in any place other than inside a private residence, or

(ii) inside a private residence so that the words, behaviour or material are heard or seen by persons outside the residence,

or

(c) to distribute, show or play a recording of visual images or sounds,

if the written material, words, behaviour, visual images or sounds, as the case may be, are threatening, abusive or insulting and are intended or, having regard to all the circumstances, are likely to stir up hatred.

(2) (a) In proceedings for an offence under subsection (1), if the accused person is not shown to have intended to stir up hatred, it shall be a defence for him to prove that he was not aware of the content of the material or recording concerned and did not suspect, and had no reason to suspect, that the material or recording was threatening, abusive or insulting.

(b) In proceedings for an offence under subsection (1) (b), it shall be a defence for the accused person—

to prove that he was inside a private residence at the relevant time and had no reason to believe that the words, behaviour or material concerned would be heard or seen by a person outside the residence, or

if he is not shown to have intended to stir up hatred, to prove that he did not intend the words, behaviour or material concerned to be, and was not aware that they might be, threatening, abusive or insulting.

Transgressors pay money to the church so what they have to say should be heard in the Church and doctrines that condemn them need to be revised and abandoned and apologised for.

The problem at the heart of this issue of hate speech is that civil regimes all over the world treat the RC Church differently than they do other religion or organisation and individuals.

This is partly due to the fact that The Vatican is treated as a sovereign state with more than 160 ambassadors - nuncios - around the world.

To address this problem effectively Italy should revoke its 1929 Concordat with the Vatican and take it back under Italian government control.

The current pope has unleashed severe hate speech against the transgender community. To hate the sin of transgenderism as the Church would describe it is to hate the transgender person for what they are is part of who they are.

Here are some quotations from the pope,

"Rather than contrast negative interpretations of sexual differences ... they want to cancel these differences out altogether, proposing techniques and practices that render them irrelevant for human development and relations."

National Catholic Reporter in 2015. "Let's think of the nuclear arms, of the possibility to annihilate in a few instants a very high number of human beings,- let's think also of genetic manipulation, of the manipulation of life, or of the gender theory, that does not recognize the order of creation."

"Today, in schools they are teaching this to children – to children! That everyone can choose their gender."

"It is painful to say this today. People speak of varied families, of various kinds of family, - the family [as] man and woman in the image of God is the only one." This is an attack on transgender parents.

Marianne Duddy-Burke, executive director of Dignity USA rightly said

"Pope Francis doesn't understand how his comments increase the vulnerability of transgender people to many forms of discrimination". He is bound to understand – he just does not truly care.

There is a real risk that the Pope could say something very damaging about transgender people when he is in Ireland. How can one feel supported or safe as a transgender person when people who are heavily taking this man's word for x or y being right or wrong are flocking to him? The pope needs to be warned to keep it shut for Irish law is supportive of and protects transgender people.

Four things are needed,

1 Assurance that the pope will be legally penalised should there be any hate speech against transgressors or accusations of murder regarding abortion (one of the worst forms of hate speech imaginable)

2 He must be warned.

3 Protests must be organised against his policies and against the collaboration with the pope that is coming from politicians and celebrities

4 Based on the principles, Daniel O Donnell and Nathan Carter etc should pull out of concerts as a sign of solidarity and support for those who are hurt and oppressed by this religion which has been one of the most damaging religious systems of all time. Scores die in poor countries for this religion will not grant a right to abortion. This man is as bad as Trump and a dictator on the personal level as documented in the book, The Dictator Pope.

LGBT rights are under grave new threats and the winds of change that reverse them are gaining momentum. LGBT is not a community but bickering communities trying to dubiously tell themselves they are united and also qualified to speak for all who feel their gender identity is differently ordered or who desire sex relations with the same sex. The last thing LGBT need is the Pope and his teaching and influence.