

Patrick H Gormley

IF AN LGBT FINDS THE CATHOLIC LABEL MEANS NOTHING MUCH TO THEM THEN THEY SHOULD NOT TICK THE ROMAN CATHOLIC BOX IN THE CENSUS

Nothing is more obvious that the Catholic Church, in its Bible which it says is the word of God, its tradition which it says is also the word of God and which safeguards the traditional interpretation of the Bible and the whole aura forbids sex between two people of the same sex. Yet some insane people in the LGBT community cannot see it. It is wilful blindness. I asserted that LGBT people who think the Church is false and who don't identify as members should be careful to put the truth down on the form and not tick the Roman Catholic box. That argument was printed in GCN Gay Community News.

In response I got this from a Matt.

MATT: "Gormley's claim that "to support the Catholic Church - actively or passively - is to damage the cause of gay rights", is just as negative as some of the Catholic hierarchy's assertions about the gay community."

Just as negative? There is no comparison between my alleged negativity towards the Church and its negativity towards gay people.

Matt cannot prove 100% that the Church is wrong about gay sex being a sin. What if he is wrong? Then he is damaging gay rights by supporting the Church.

Gay people do not want to stop Catholics marrying. The Catholic Church works hard against gay marriage. Catholics who support gay marriage actually gave up the right to when they got confirmed into the Catholic faith with its doctrines and mysteries. Being Catholic is implicit support for limiting wedlock to heterosexual magic. Explicit support is only for hypocrites.

Gay people do not issue propaganda against the Church. The Church in the form of the Irish Catholic, Papal Encyclicals, Alive? and Catholic Voice vents a lot of abuse against LGBT people and calls for many of their rights to be stripped away.

Gay people help suicidal Catholics. The Catholic Church does nothing to save gay men from suicide. It does not give us the approval we need.

Gay men commit suicide because their rights are opposed. Nobody commits suicide because they can't be part of the Catholic Church.

Christian marriage is not about love - a married couple who often hate each other is still expected to stay married. By implication, if marriage is not about love then homosexuality is even less about it.

Ask your priest if its better for a gay person to go insane and commit suicide than to commit the serious sin of homosexuality. Ask him. He will reiterate the teaching of the Church that its better to commit suicide through insanity for that way you cannot be damned in Hell forever for the suicide. You were unwell - it was not your fault.

LGBT are not religious fundamentalists. Catholics frequently are.

I could go on for a year.

To support the Church - actively or passively - is to damage the human right to truth and transparency. If you think the Church is merely human then you should not be in it. A God would you to worship him in the true religion. By adhering to the Church, Matt implies it is divine after all. That means he logically has to agree with its ban on homosexuality.

It is outrageous that somebody would support the Catholic Church and expect us to take him seriously as supportive of LGBT rights. He is not even truly supportive of Catholicism because he stands for disobedience to the head of the Church and knows that a Church full of disagreements and divisions over doctrine cannot stand. God said in Leviticus 20:13 that if a man lies with a man as with a woman it is an abomination - something to be greatly detested. The notion that this was a cultural taboo and not a sin is a ridiculous lie. Why would God single out that taboo for mention and approval? And if culture tells you to hate you don't have to actually hate but just act as if you do to fit in. Matt even regards the disobedience of Catholics who refuse to treat the homosexual as one who commits abominations as progress! Defiance is not progress unless its defiance that involves separation from the problem. Defiance can be a form of support in its own indirect way.

Matt's statement makes no sense. The Church would say that to support gay rights actively or passively is to damage the influence of the Church and undermine its teaching. But that is not negative but the truth. Thus to support the Church in any sense is implicit support for its essential teachings - one of which is that homosexuality is not just a sin but gravely sinful. Supporting gay rights is opposing an official doctrine of the Church and opposing the unity of the Church and to deny its alleged right to have standards of doctrine. Therefore to support the Church is to support that doctrine at least by implication.

By passive support, I meant merely allowing your name to be on the membership rolls and ticking the Catholic box. Active would refer to going to Church and/or paying the Church money for its support and promoting the faith of the Church as true and correct. Merely having the name on is saying, "Yes, I support Catholic teaching." If you don't believe in the teaching you are still saying that you support it. If I do not believe in it, this is not a sin as I am on a journey that I intend to end in belief". Paying money and going to Mass are giving stronger support. Without passive and/or active support there would be no Church. So such support does at least damage LGBT rights by taking at least an implicit stance against them.

Matt would have you support the Catholic Church at least by letting yourself be counted as one in the form. He pretends there is nothing in the slightest wrong with this. Yet he would hold that there is something amiss for example if you let yourself at least in name only be a member of the Communist Party.

What do I mean by damaging? Damaging can start with by implying that the Church has a right to be homophobic and that is done by joining the Church or keeping one's name on the membership rolls. It is implying approval or at least support. Going to Mass and the sacraments and paying money to the Church imply this even more strongly. If the Church had no members it would have no audience for its homophobia and no system with which to spread it. It wouldn't have people to set belief standards for. In other words, with no members, there would be no teaching that one is obligated to believe that homosexuality is wrong.

Merely being a member is taking a share in the responsibility for the harm it has done to LGBT people.

How dare you refuse to admit that mere membership of an anti-LGBT teaching body is inconsistent with support for gay rights. It compares to a Catholic saying their membership of the Church does not imply that they think there should be a pope at all!

And some of the hierarchy may say negative things about the gay community. We are not to take comfort from the fact that others do not. They are still members and representatives of an anti-LGBT ideology. They might not express their negativity and bigotry but its still there.

There is no comparison between what members of the hierarchy say about LGBT people and how dangerous LGBT rights are and my assertion that to support the Church even by allowing your name to remain on its membership books is inconsistent with support for gay rights. You say one is as negative as the other. There is nothing aggressive or nasty about having the name removed for the sake of principle one believes in namely LGBT rights. It does nobody any harm. The same cannot be said about what the Church teaches about LGBT people. Matt what you wrote is just vicious and pro-Church and anti-gay. You have no respect for my position when you feel the need to make it look as narrow and negative and therefore nasty as the anti-LGBT statements of the Church. The implication is that those LGBT people who have suffered horribly due to the teaching of the Church should get a life!

Catholicism cannot be trusted when it claims to love the sinner despite finding the sin disgusting and repulsive and hateful. It has a record of lying. Let us prove this. The Church has even started saying that to say that the homosexual desire is a disorder is not to say that homosexuals have a disorder! Or that homosexuality is a disorder but homosexuals are not disordered. This is gross hypocrisy and it is only spouted to save the Church from recriminations for preaching hate. If homosexuality is a sickness or a disorder, then homosexuals are sick. End of. Sin is more personal than sickness. A sickness happens to you but a sin is something you cause to happen. Therefore if sin is evil then the sinner is evil. The sin cannot be separated from the sinner. If having a sickness means you are sick then how much more does having a sin mean that you are sinful, that the sin is your bad character or bad nature? The loving God of Catholicism is an idol for he is a lie. To adore him is to adore what you want God to be while not giving a toss about what he is.

MATT: Gormley maintains that the state will only use information about numbers of Catholics in Ireland to "formulate policies and laws that reflect the teachings of said Church", yet ...Ireland has been able to move on forward in LGBT rights.

I did not write that the state upon seeing that the Catholic Church dominates that it will formulate polices in accord with the Church. I did not write will but may. I wrote that it may do that. I resent the misrepresentation of my point. You deliberately lied when you wrote that. You are trying to make my article look extreme and silly.

What about the principle? The principle is that the nation cannot please every faction. So it must at least seriously

contemplate of law enforcing the major principles of the majority faith. If the state ignores the Church, that is against the principle. If Matt advocates that then let him look up tolerance, a word he used in his letter, in the dictionary.

Ticking the Roman Catholic box is taking a political stance in favour of the Church and its policies whether one realises it or not. It is politics that is asking the question. It is politics that needs the question answered. It does not want to know the answer for nothing.

You wrote that I stated there is a conflict between "the Catholic Church and a homosexual orientation". That is another distortion. I was not asking people with a mere orientation to reconsider ticking the Roman Catholic box. I was asking LGBT people to do it if they do not believe that the Church really has supernatural knowledge from God about right and wrong and truth. There is no contradiction between a person being homosexual but not practising and that person being a Catholic in good standing.

I wish to understand why somebody who claims to be concerned for LGBT rights would actually distort my reasoning. Your own letter is based on emotional reasoning and you have not thought about or absorbed what I wrote. I would not have minded had I been answered rationally and with fairness on every major point. I got none of that from you but just a sense of your sentimental bias in favour of a homophobic religious system and your unease with LGBT rights.

The Church does have a lot of influence through the electorate and the people over the decisions of the government. You cite some astonishing examples to refute the idea that supporting Catholicism in the census may lead to Catholic concepts of human rights being endorsed to the detriment of those who don't accept that faith's teachings. The people did not vote Civil Partnership Law in. The government bought it in without asking the people. And in doing so it broke the law of the Church that it is wrong for Catholic politicians to drop their Catholicism when they form laws. David Norris being a gay candidate for Presidential election and the gay TDs being elected reflects not the acceptance of the Catholics in general for gay people, but their acceptance of the fact that these issues are irrelevant to how they may perform as politicians. And this acceptance has been reversed if current events are anything to go by - the Christian homophobes have fought the Norris campaign and in the process have made homophobia fashionable. So your example of how Catholics have made progress shows the opposite and how dangers support of the Church is. The Church does not see a few gay politicians as a threat. Catholics being open to human rights in spite of the Church not because of it is as far from an endorsement of the Church as one can get. Your logic that Catholics suffering from apathy towards the laws of their faith and ignoring the teachings of the faith counts as progress is ridiculous. Such indifference has happened before time and time again and been the prevailing mood only to make way for more conservative and bigoted and traditionalists prevailing moods. The Church was riddled with disobedience and indifference and corruption until the reformation and at that point it became rigid and fundamentalist. Today's liberalism and disobedience among Catholics will give way to Fundamentalism and obedience to Rome. Don't pave the way for that Matt.

Update: The Christians who accepted the Bible prohibitions against homosexuality won in the end in relation to Norris! They ruined his campaign.

Try telling gay children in rural Catholic schools that to support the Church and the Catholics who mistreat and bully them is not harming their own rights. I do not suggest that the children should criticise the Church but they should certainly inform themselves and ask the Catholics challenging questions. If the Catholics are less sure that their faith is true, then they will be less likely to hurt others and practice intolerance in the name of their religion.

Matt, until you get the Church to at least stop getting gay teachers fired from Catholic schools don't you dare pretend that progress is being made.

Every religion has a problem with the huge proportion of members who do not understand that they are obligated to believe in what that religion says is revealed by God. And there is a problem with those who do understand but who disobey and misrepresent the doctrine. Less than 10% of Mormons for example are considered worthy to participate in the religion's holiest rites in the Temple. The Roman Catholic Church does not have the support and the manpower to implement its policies as it would wish. It is foolish for an LGBT person to feel comfortable in the Roman Catholic Church when those are the reasons for most Catholics coming across as moderate and even open-minded. Catholics can be wonderful human beings but only in spite of the Catholic system and its doctrines. Nobody should be in a religion that they have to go against in order to do the right thing. And to suggest that one religion is as good as another is incredible ignorance.

The Church claims its teaching is good for people. It is in fact a superstitious system that keeps people away from the knowledge they have a right to have. That knowledge is the principles and the application of secularism. People are not told exactly how to be secular - to keep religion out of politics. Indeed the Church attacks that model.

The believers say that God must take supreme importance in the world and in your life. Even when they support secularism, they teach that it is only acceptable in the sense that God gave the state a separate job to do from the Church. So

even their secularism is religious at least in intention. (It is saying, "We believers support the separation of Church and state on religious grounds and because God asks for it. If our religion tells us different or if God tells us different we will oppose this separation. We only accept because we think God wants us to. If we are wrong we will change our minds." Their secularism only looks like secularism - it is not secularism. Their secularism contradicts and therefore opposes true secularism

True secularism is a protector of human liberty and rights. Secularism has to act as if there are no spirits or Gods to worry about. For example, the secularist will not wish to make it illegal to spit out the body of Christ in the form of the communion wafer. The good Catholic would. A person working for gay rights and being a financial supporter of the Catholic Church and a member is just a hypocrite. The Church's influence undermines human rights in all sorts of subtle ways.

In fact, in a democracy the will of the majority must come first. Therefore if most people claim to be Catholic - although that is not the same as really being Catholic - the state should check what Church teaching is and legislate as best as it can to suit that teaching. The fact of the matter is, if a person does not like their Church's teaching, nobody forced them to be confirmed into the membership of the Church. Therefore the state should contemplate the official and real teaching of the Church and implement it through law.

MATT: "I checked the Catholic box on the census because I identify as a Catholic. I also identify as a gay man. The two are not mutually exclusive."

Fine. But make up your mind which is the most important. Your sexuality is more integral to your personhood than your religion. Any religious affiliation can be changed and changing does not make you more or less of a person. You can be fully human and have no religion. But you can't be human without a sexuality. It is not a matter of polarising sexuality and religion. It is matter of seeing that sexuality comes first. Honour it by going your own way and being your own Church rather than supporting a network and a system that condemns it. Whether you like it or not, and whatever liberal Catholics say (they are mavericks anyway who act like they have authority to decide Catholic doctrine - a right they do not have) you are supporting a system that condemns you allowing yourself to sexually want a person of the same gender never mind what can happen in the bedroom. A religion is not the people who comprise it. It is a system. It is ultimately the system that is the problem not the Catholic people. The system is what must be rejected. Its not worth more than the people who compose its membership. To change the system is to make a new one. To say you can be part of it while rejecting anything it stands for is to misrepresent it and to deceive. Matt if you want to see Church teaching on gay people changed why stop there? If you start to find the notion of God offensive which you may do should you lose a loved one in a horrible manner why not try and get it stopped too? The point is, refusing to admit that opposition to gay sex is part of Catholic doctrine and Catholic identity is absurd and dishonest. To repudiate one official Catholic doctrine is by implication to invite Catholics to repudiate the rest and to pretend that they are a Church.

We always say that when a Christian is malevolent that he is not very Christian or not acting as a Christian when he does this. Our religious identity is never fixed. For example, even the Pope must have his times when his faith is gone and he is really a secret apostate or heretic. Our sexual identity is more set than our faith identity. Therefore sexual identity comes first.

Nobody should be in a religion that contains official teaching that is not right for them. It is not fair on the religion or them. They are not exercising honesty. They are undermining the right of the religion to set standards of membership and devotion.

A self-declared Catholic and a Catholic are not necessarily the same thing.

FINALLY:

I would not like to have written a piece in defence of LGBT membership of the Church when I could write about something more conducive to LGBT rights for example about how the Church has set in force political manipulations to make sure that LGBT people are executed in certain parts of the world. Distorting valid points made against lapsed and unbelieving LGBT ticking the Catholic box makes it even worse. Do you know the Catholic faith as well as I do? Whose side are you on Matt? Your distortion shows the shakiness of your regrettable and bizarre position and for that I am grateful for your letter which contains nothing profound or persuasive. Matt the homophobia of the Church is extreme - it praises evil scriptures that condemn gay sex and its tradition says even worse and it is part of core Catholic doctrine that sex is only between husband and wife in a lifelong valid marriage so it is an insulting and gross understatement to call it a "problem" as you do.

Matt, in conclusion, your stance is frankly a refusal to see the inequality for LGBT people as shown by the Church as seriously intolerable and as bad as racism. You infer that those who consider LGBT rights among their highest principles

should still support the Church - ie betray them! LGBT people who don't identify as Catholic must make it official. They will walk and they will do it for LGBT rights. They will do it in spite of dishonest, stubborn and arrogant people who are immune to commonsense and rational argument.