

April 4, 2021  
Easter Sunday

Dear Bishop Crosby,

As members of St Joseph's Parish who work for justice and dignity for all, especially for those who are marginalized, we were deeply disappointed by the recent statement from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

While it was not surprising that the statement reinforced the current practice that priests cannot bless same-sex marriages, we found the language of the document to be insensitive and hurtful. The phrase "God does not and cannot bless sin," alienates 2SLGBT+ Catholics and their families. It does nothing to build bridges between the Church and faith-filled 2SLGBT+ Catholics who are longing for their Church to welcome them in some way. It fails to reach out in love towards a group of people who are marginalized in society and continue to be rejected by their Church.

The statement goes on to assure us that "God loves every person, and the Church does the same, rejecting all forms of discrimination." However we would argue that by calling homosexuality "intrinsicly disordered" the Church encourages homophobic behavior in some Catholics. The scientific facts regarding sexual orientation have been clear for some time. It is not a lifestyle choice; it is how we are created by God. It determines to whom we are attracted and with whom we find love. Does it make sense that a loving God sanctifies the loving, committed relationships of some members of creation but not others?

We stand in solidarity with the 2SLGBTQ+ community and want to assure 2SLGBT+ Catholics that we welcome and celebrate their presence in our church. We ask you as our Bishop to search for an inclusive path forward, one that affirms the inherent dignity and sacredness of all God's people. We pray that the Spirit of Love guide our Church to reach out to all who have been marginalized and alienated by its policies.

In Solidarity with all our sisters and brothers,

Rita Bailey and Donna McGreal, co-chairs, on behalf of St Joseph's Social Justice Committee

Catherine Pead, on behalf of Concerned Lay Catholics

Janet O'Sullivan and Jim Williams, co-chairs, on behalf of St Joseph's Refugee Committee

Ene Readyhough, on behalf of Our Neighbours in Need Committee