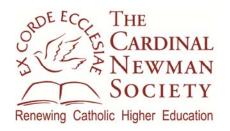


Dissent and Sacrilege at 'More Than a Monologue' Conferences

By Matthew Archbold & Patrick J. Reilly December 5, 2011

Special Report



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he "More Than a Monologue" conference series on "Sexual Diversity and the Catholic Church" in the fall of 2011 was billed by Fairfield University² as an "unprecedented collaboration" of two Jesuit, Catholic universities (Fairfield and Fordham Universities) and two non-denominational divinity schools (Yale Divinity School and Union Theological Seminary).

But what has clear precedent, sadly, is the involvement of leading Jesuit universities in public scandal, and these conferences were no different. The purported idea of the conference series—to bring together diverse voices to consider homosexuality with respect for Catholic teaching—was admirable and did, in fact, provide occasional insights of some benefit to the Church's bishops and pastors. Taken as a whole, however, the series appears to have been a well-orchestrated attempt to undermine the Church's doctrine and its stand against homosexual "marriage" and sexual activity, and not a serious attempt to address the challenges facing gay and lesbian Catholics who are faithful to Catholic teaching. The conferences featured a general theme of disdain for the bishops and Catholic teaching, some outright dissent, and even (according to participants) serious infractions against Canon Law and the Mass.

Moreover, the "More Than a Monologue" events as a whole, and multiple speakers specifically, disregarded promises reportedly made by the presidents of Fairfield and Fordham Universities to Archbishop Timothy Dolan of New York and Bishop William Lori of Bridgeport, Connecticut that the conferences would "not be a vehicle for dissent." The bishops raised concerns with the presidents after concerns about the conference plans were widely reported in the Catholic press, and they issued a rare, joint public statement reporting on the two Jesuit university presidents' assurances that the concerns were unfounded. Contrary to these assurances, we uncovered—based solely on information made publicly available by conference organizers and various press reports—that it seems "More Than a Monologue" did promote dissent.

Leaders with an Agenda

he purpose for the conferences was described in a <u>press release⁴ by Paul Lakeland⁵</u>, the Aloysius P. Kelley, S.J., Professor of Catholic Studies at Fairfield University, director of the University's Center for Catholic Studies, and a lead organizer of the "More Than a Monologue" series. "For too long," he said, "the conversation on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues in the Roman Catholic Church has been only a monologue—the sole voice being heard is that of the institutional Catholic Church. We must engage in more than a monologue by having a 21st century conversation on sexual diversity, with new and different voices heard from."

The conference series included four events:

- at Fordham University on Friday, September 16, on "Learning to Listen: Voices of Sexual Diversity and the Catholic Church;"
- at Union Theological Seminary on Saturday, October 1, on "Pro-Queer Life: Youth Suicide Crisis, Catholic Education, and the Souls of LGBTQ People;"
- at Yale Divinity School on Saturday, October 22, on "Same-Sex Marriage and the Catholic Church: Voices from Law, Religion, and the Pews;" and
- at Fairfield University on Saturday, October 29, on "The Care of Souls: Sexual Diversity, Celibacy, and Ministry."

Lakeland, a former Jesuit priest, was also the conference organizer at Fairfield University. As in his 2004 book *The Liberation of the Laity*⁶, he shows little regard for the Catholic bishops: "What we have is an episcopate of men selected more for their commitment to the party line on outmoded ideas about contraception, ordination, and homosexuality, more for their administrative capabilities than for their stature as spiritual leaders." In 2009 Lakeland opposed Bishop William Lori⁷ and testified in support of Connecticut State legislation that reportedly would have wrested legal control of Catholic parishes away from the diocesan bishop. In 2008 he publicly opposed Bishop Joseph Martino⁸ of Scranton, Pennsylvania, arguing that Catholics can vote for "pro-choice" political candidates if they find that the candidates' other positions weigh in favor of Catholic teaching. His 2007 book *Catholicism at the Crossroads* promotes a vision of lay ministry equal to the priesthood: "Some will be called to a ministry of leadership, including Eucharistic presidency, while others will be called to minister to the local community in a variety of different ways" (source here).9

The lead organizer of Fordham's conference was Christine Firer Hinze¹⁰, Professor of Theology and Director of the Francis & Ann Curran Center for American Catholic Studies at Fordham University. Hinze signed a 2009 advertisement in the South Bend Tribune¹¹ praising the University of Notre Dame for its commencement honors to President Barack Obama despite his support for abortion rights.

<u>Dianna M. Swancutt</u>¹², Associate Professor of New Testament at Yale Divinity School, directed the Yale conference. Not a Catholic, Swancutt specializes in reinterpreting the Bible in favor of homosexuality and has taught seminars including Gender in Early Christianity, Good Sex in the Church and Queer Praxis and the Church. In a 2006 essay¹³ in the book *Toward a Theology of Eros*, Swancutt argues that Saint Paul embraced homosexuality and a "hierarchical continuum of relative masculinity... which admitted multiple genders and allowed for endless (and endlessly troubling) mutations of gender."

The Union Theological Seminary conference was led by Kelby Harrison¹⁴, a post-doctoral fellow at the Seminary who has taught at Loyola University Chicago and Dominican University. Harrison's work focuses on "critical evaluation of cultural, theological, and secular sexual ethics" and "queer liberation theology." Her LGBT activism while a student at Northwestern University earned her the 2007 college student award from the Human Rights Campaign, which advocates for same-sex "marriage" and describes the Catholic Church as "intolerant" 15 toward gays and lesbians.

Media relations were handled by Geoffrey Knox¹⁶, founder and president of the New York communications firm <u>Geoffrey Knox & Associates</u>¹⁷, and his senior associate <u>Roberta</u> Sklar¹⁸. The firm specializes in advising clients in the areas of "women's reproductive health and rights, child welfare reform, sexuality and HIV/AIDS." Clients have included groups supporting abortion rights and same-sex "marriage," including Catholics for Choice, Sexuality Policy Watch, Freedom to Marry, the International Women's Health Coalition, Lambda Legal, the Guttmacher Institute and the International Planned Parenthood Foundation. Prior to founding his firm in 1993, Knox was communications director for Gay Men's Health Crisis¹⁹ (GMHC), where he helped advocate condom distribution in New York City high schools. A decade later, Sklar was also communications director for GMHC and the Empire State Pride Agenda²⁰, an advocate for same-sex "marriage" in New York State.

The Money Trail

unding for the "More Than a Monologue" conferences was provided by the Arcus Foundation²². Although Martha Milcarek, Assistant Vice President for Public Relations at Fairfield University, describes Arcus²³ in glowing terms as "a leading

global foundation pressing social justice and conservation issues," that description is misleading. In fact, Arcus concerns itself with only one "social justice" issue: according to its <u>website</u>, ²⁴ it "supports organizations around the world working to advance lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) human rights." And its only "conservation issue" is "to conserve and protect the great apes."

The Arcus Foundation's LGBT-related activity often targets the Catholic Church, and its official directly responsible for the Foundation's LGBT-related activity is "a former Roman Catholic priest." Tom Kam²⁵, vice president for "social justice programming," was ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of San Francisco in 1983 and earned a masters degree in social work from The Catholic University of America. He has been with Arcus since 2007, including as director of the Religion and Values Program. In September 2010, Kam's column²⁶ on the Washington Post "On Faith" blog urged opposition to Catholic teaching on homosexual activity, same-sex "marriage" and abortion rights. Previously in 2009, Kam had advocated a strategy²⁷ of recruiting clergy to counter religious opposition to same-sex "marriage": "It is time to respond to these voices with similar authority, fully incorporating within the leadership of the LGBT movement and the public debate, the LGBT and allied religious leaders whose lives and voices speak the truth about our civil and moral equality."

According to the Arcus website, Fairfield University received a 2010 grant²⁸ of \$100,000 "to hold and disseminate information from a series of forums at four academic institutions in order to expand the current discussion on homosexuality within Roman Catholicism to include the diverse opinions of progressive Catholic thought leaders and theologians." Fordham University reportedly received \$15,000 from Arcus²⁹ for its September 16th conference, but the Foundation's website does not report a direct grant to Fordham, so the funds may have come through Fairfield.

The "More Than a Monologue" conference must be understood as part of the Arcus Foundation's interrelated efforts to subvert the Catholic Church's teachings on sexuality. For instance, the lead conference organizer Paul Lakeland and two conference speakers repeatedly referenced a report³⁰ released this year by the Public Religion Research Institute³¹ (PRRI), purporting to show Catholic support for same-sex "marriage" and civil unions. But they failed to disclose the important fact that the PRRI report was <u>funded</u>³² by Arcus, the sole funder of the "More Than a Monologue" conferences, and commissioned by Arcus and Equally Blessed³³, an Arcus-funded coalition of dissident Catholic organizations (including Dignity USA, New Ways Ministry and Call to Action) advocating same-sex "marriage." They also failed to disclose that more than 60 percent of respondents to the PRRI survey were not "practicing" Catholics, and the alleged strong support of Catholics for same-sex "marriage" represents primarily Catholics who rarely go to Mass. (See the

analysis³⁴ by Thomas Peters of Catholic Vote.) These are egregious oversights by those who presumably know academic standards of disclosure.

- On May 10, 2011, Lakeland cited the PRRI study in the opening paragraph of his column³⁵ about the conference series at HuffingtonPost.com: "The time has clearly come for a serious conversation. ... Strikingly, of all American Christian groups, Catholics are the most supportive of same-sex marriage and/or civil unions: a whopping 74 percent expressed support in a recent poll from the Public Research Institute. This is despite the strong opposition of their own bishops." This HuffingtonPost.com column was subsequently posted on numerous websites for homosexual audiences.
- On September 6, 2011, in a *National Catholic Reporter* article³⁶ announcing the "More Than a Monologue" conferences, Lakeland again cited the PRRI data, although the article seems to misidentify the source of the data: "He cited a recent survey by Georgetown University's Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate [CARA] in Washington, which found that 74 percent of Catholics support either same-sex marriages or civil unions. What this means, he said, is 'there's something to talk about." We could find no such study on the CARA website³⁷.
- On September 16, 2011, Lakeland cited the PRRI study in an "On Faith" column³⁸ about the conference series at WashingtonPost.com: "...Many people, not just gays and lesbians, would like to see the church change its teaching on homosexuality. Recent surveys show what may to some be the surprising fact that Catholics form the American Christian denomination most favorable towards either same-sex marriage or civil unions (74 percent at the last count)."
- During the "More Than a Monologue" conference at Yale University on October 22, 2011, Boston College Theology Professor Lisa Sowle Cahill cited the PRRI study according to the <u>New Haven Register</u>³⁹: "She added that it did not appear as if the Catholic bishops had a 'significant affect [sic] on the opinion of Catholic people' because a survey by the Public Religion Research Institute showed that 74 percent of Catholics were accepting of same-sex civil unions or marriage, and 60 percent believe same-sex couples should be allowed to adopt."
- National Catholic Reporter columnist Jamie Manson, while speaking at the "More Than a Monologue" conference at Fairfield University on October 29, also cited the PRRI study. She did the same in a column⁴⁰ on March 25, 2011, and in a column⁴¹ on November 11, 2011.

In a November 10, 2011, interview⁴² posted at The Bilerico Project, Lakeland said: "I think it is true, as far as we can tell, that the Catholic population isn't on board with the bishops. More and more have come to be accepting of marriage or legal partnerships. I think the latest polls show about 74% of them supportive of either same-sex marriage or civil partnership."

The ties between PRRI's report, the Arcus Foundation, and the Equally Blessed coalition's same-sex "marriage" advocacy are apparent. Last year Arcus granted \$200,000⁴³ to Dignity <u>USA</u>⁴⁴ to "increase the impact of Catholic pro-LGBT advocacy in the U.S. through the work of Equally Blessed, a coalition of pro-LGBT Catholic advocacy organizations." With funding from the Arcus Foundation, Equally Blessed presented a Capitol Hill briefing⁴⁵ in Washington, D.C., on March 30, 2011, featuring the results of the PRRI survey. Dignity USA reports⁴⁶ that it later briefed a *New York Times* reporter for an article⁴⁷ published on April 22, 2011, featuring the PRRI report without identifying the Arcus Foundation or distinguishing between the responses of active and non-practicing Catholics. On April 28 and 29, 2011, Equally Blessed representatives hand-delivered the PRRI report to nearly 400 U.S. congressmen and senators, according to a Dignity USA newsletter 48.

Other Arcus Foundation grants indicate its commitment to undermining Catholic teaching by working with dissident Catholic organizations and other groups:

- Last year, Arcus granted \$70,000⁴⁹ to the Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual⁵⁰ (WATER) "to create a cadre of Catholic lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and their allies that would assume a leadership role within the Catholic community on issues related to gender, sexuality, reproductive health, and other justice issues." WATER is led by Mary Hunt, a former Georgetown University theology professor, and her lesbian partner Diann Neu, who authored a "liturgy⁵¹" for Catholics for Choice to console women who have abortions.
- In 2009 Arcus granted \$36,000⁵² "to support a planning process that defines strategies to expand Dignity's national membership base of pro-LGBT Catholics." Although often described as an association of homosexual Catholics, Dignity USA is not in fidelity to the Catholic Church and "advocates for change in the Catholic Church's teaching on homosexuality."
- In 2009 Arcus granted \$152,625⁵³ to the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force⁵⁴ in "support of a collaborative strategic planning process focused on building a pro-LGBT movement within the Roman Catholic Church in the U.S." The organization advocates same-sex "marriage" and urges activists to "work with and within

communities of faith to reclaim from the right wing the true meaning of moral values."

- In 2009, while Maryland was deciding on the issue of same-sex "marriage," Arcus granted \$93,34555 to New Ways Ministry⁵⁶ to "educate Maryland's Catholic laity and lawmakers about marriage equality." In 1984, the Vatican required the organization's founders, Father Robert Nugent, SDS, and Sister Jeannine Gramick, SND, to separate from New Ways Ministry because of its dissent from Catholic teaching. When New Ways Ministry published the book Marriage Equality: A Positive Catholic Approach, Cardinal Donald Wuerl of Washington, D.C., announced, "No one should be misled by the claim that New Ways Ministry provides an authentic interpretation of Catholic teaching and an authentic Catholic pastoral practice. Their claim to be Catholic only confuses the faithful regarding the authentic teaching and ministry of the Church."
- Arcus sought to influence public opinion surrounding Pope Benedict XVI's visit to the United States in 2008. Arcus gave Dignity USA \$20,000⁵⁷ "to support media and advocacy activities in connection with the first visit of Pope Benedict XVI to the United States in April 2008." And Arcus granted \$23,000⁵⁸ to the Mainstream Media Project⁵⁹ "to work with four leading Catholic LGBT organizations to conduct a messaging campaign and schedule interviews in the broadcast media that promote pro-LGBT messages in connection with Pope Benedict XVI's visit".

Intent to Dissent?

n September 8, 2011, The Cardinal Newman Society (CNS) raised concerns about the upcoming Fordham conference in a letter to Fordham University president Rev. Joseph McShane, S.J. and the organizers of the Fordham event. A letter was also sent to Archbishop Timothy Dolan of New York.

The CNS letters were prompted by a September 7, 2011, press release from Fordham University announcing its September 16, 2011, event. The release said that the conference would address certain provocative questions that appeared to challenge Catholic teaching and the bishops' opposition to same-sex "marriage." Those questions included:

- "When the Catholic bishops speak, whom do they speak for?"
- "How do LGBT Catholics reconcile identity, behavior and beliefs with messages coming from the Catholic hierarchy? Do they leave the [C]hurch? Do they take a 'don't ask, don't tell' approach? Do they stay and suffer or stay and speak out?"

"Marriage equality is a civil issue, what does the Catholic Church have to do with it?"

CNS also had publicly reported concerns about the conference series on its Campus Notes blog⁶¹ since exposing the series on March 16, 2011, together with several online Catholic sites including Catholic Vote⁶² (Thomas Peters), Catholic Online⁶³ and Mirror of Justice⁶⁴.

Among those concerns were featured speakers at the conferences who had publicly dissented from Catholic teaching, such as New Ways Ministries co-founder Sr. Jeannine Gramick and gay sex columnist Dan Savage, and the apparent intent of the Yale conference to directly challenge the bishops' opposition to same-sex "marriage." Organizer Dianna Swancutt succeeded only in raising suspicions when <u>interviewed</u>⁶⁵ by *The New Haven Register*, "She said the teaching of the church also will be represented"—apparently in contrast to the remainder of the event. In a <u>press release</u>⁶⁶ announcing the conference, Swancutt said:

When the Connecticut Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage in the fall of 2008, the Connecticut Bishops responded first with a public statement offered on behalf of all the Catholic faithful in the state (without their deliberation or consent) condemning the decision and arguing that marriage was not a civil right to be exercised by gay and lesbian people. The Bishops then paid for an expensive television ad campaign seeking a Constitutional Convention, in an effort to define marriage constitutionally so as to exclude same-sex marriage. In neither their public statement nor their ads did the Bishops represent the voices of all the Catholic faithful. Other Catholic points of view—from expertise in ethics, theology, law and the special tasks of the laity in the world—can and must be heard for a more robust discussion. Same-Sex Marriage and the Catholic Church: Voices from Law, Religion and the Pews aims to provide that forum.

Resulting public concern about the "More Than a Monologue" conferences led Archbishop Dolan and Bishop William Lori of Bridgeport, Connecticut, to meet with Fr. McShane and Fr. Jeffrey von Arx, S.J., president of Fairfield University. The bishops issued the following statement in a press release⁶⁷ on September 22, 2011:

As Pastors, we have received thoughtful expressions of concern from many of the faithful regarding a series of four conferences on aspects of the Church's teaching on human sexuality entitled, "More than a Monologue." Two of these will take place at Catholic universities in our own dioceses, Fordham University and Fairfield University.

We shared those concerns and our own with the Presidents of Fordham and Fairfield Universities. Advertisements and commentary in advance of these conferences seemed to imply that they might encourage dissent from the Church's teaching and from her teaching authority while advocating for erroneous opinions about sexuality dominant in our culture. The Presidents of both universities listened to our concerns and brought them to the attention of the organizers of these conferences in their respective universities. Subsequently both Presidents helpfully assured us that these conferences, while sensitive to the experience of the participants, will not be a vehicle for dissent.

One of them wrote: "I am confident that the Church's teachings will be clearly stated and articulately defended, and in a spirit of dialogue that is proper to an academic setting, the strength of these teachings will be quite convincing, based as they are on revealed truth."

With the assurances we have received, we now must trust that the conferences will turn out as intended: not as a criticism or questioning of the faith and morals of the Church, but as a sincere attempt to listen to those who are trying their best to believe and live it, and who have some positive ideas about pastoral strategy to present it even better.

Lakeland, lead organizer of the "More Than a Monologue" series, seemed unfazed by the bishops' statement. In an <u>article</u>⁶⁸ in the *Hartford Courant*, he said that he knew the series could provoke "a certain amount of adverse publicity" and could cause "alumni huff and puff... It's the price you pay for tackling the issues." He tried to dispel concerns about dissent from Catholic teaching, but even his own statements seemed to contradict those assurances.

The *National Catholic Reporter* <u>quoted</u>⁶⁹ Lakeland on September 14:

"All of these conferences are addressing issues that are left open by the [C]hurch teaching," he said. Though the hierarchy is explicit in its understanding of same-sex relations, he said there are questions that arise out of its teaching that have not and will not go away. "The title 'More than A Monologue' means that there is so much more to be said. ... The official [C]hurch teaching recognizes that what they are calling gay and lesbian Catholics to do is difficult," Lakeland points out. "What we're doing is exploring aspects of the challenges of the life of gay and lesbian Catholics in the [C]hurch."

In his Washington Post "On Faith" column⁷⁰ on September 16, Lakeland wrote that the conference series was "not set up either to explain or challenge the official position of the church. Their point is to take up issues that the official teaching does not address."

And he told "Father Tony" at The Bilerico Project⁷¹, "I want to clarify this dialogue/monologue thing. The monologue is the institutional teaching of the [C]hurch presented as only what ought to be taught. We are not talking about the challenging of these issues."

Yet also in his media interviews and columns, Lakeland repeatedly raised the issue of same-sex "marriage" and hinted at a desire to see changes in Catholic teaching and practice.

Announcing the "More Than a Monologue" series in his column⁷² at the Huffington Post, Lakeland cited the Arcus-funded Public Religion Research Institute poll finding support for same-sex "marriage" and civil unions among Catholics, then wrote:

The issue of Church opposition to same-sex marriage or civil union is not the heart of the problem. It is simply a symbol of marginalization. ... When the Church requires life-long celibacy of all people who are not heterosexual (the demand it makes of homosexuals who wish to participate fully in Church life), it imposes a sanction which is, in effect, the imposition of a life of less love and human relationship than is available to heterosexual Christians. A call to be less loving, body and soul, is a call to be less in the image and likeness of God.

Lakeland was quoted in the *National Catholic Reporter*⁷³ as saying that the "More Than a Monologue" program was inspired, in part, by growing support for the legalization of samesex marriages and civil unions in some states. "There's clearly something afoot in American society that is making people less prejudiced about gay and lesbian people—in general, not just Catholics—than they used to [be]," Lakeland said.

In his WashingtonPost.com <u>column</u>⁷⁴, Lakeland wrote:

Many people, not just gays and lesbians, would like to see the church change its teaching on homosexuality. Recent surveys show what may to some be the surprising fact that Catholics form the American Christian denomination most favorable towards either same-sex marriage or civil unions (74 percent at the last count). ... As to whether Catholic Church teaching will ever change on this topic, it's hard to say—though one should never say never. ...The biggest obstacle to change in the church is the centrality of 'the natural law' in official Catholic sexual ethics... So if the teachings on homosexuality are to

change, that will probably have to be part of a larger change in the way the church understands sexuality. ...Right now there is no sign that the [C]hurch is ready to make such a momentous move. But that is no reason to delay having an honest, open conversation about sexual diversity and the Catholic Church.

According to an October 28, 2011, article⁷⁵ in the *Hartford Courant*, Lakeland reportedly said that the Fairfield conference would not be "about the teachings of the [C]hurch on same-sex relationships—or about whether these teachings are adequate or not," and then he proceeded to criticize those teachings: "Because the [C]hurch says the only 'permissible sexual activity' is that between married heterosexual couples not using artificial birth control, Lakeland said, it assigns anyone who is not heterosexual to 'a life sentence of celibacy."

Asked about the future for female, married or openly gay priests, Lakeland reportedly told The Bilerico Project⁷⁶:

"I think whoever the pope is, our responsibility is to move the dialogue along. Many of the great changes in the [C]hurch have occurred in the body of believers before they were institutionalized. Slavery is a good example. It is only after centuries of usury that lending became an acceptable practice in the institutional [C]hurch. There is no way in which the conversation isn't going to move forward. Where it ends up will not please everybody, but you can't stop it, and who the pope is at any given moment will not stop that, even if they wanted to. Pope John Paul II tried to close the issue of women's ordination. You can't close any issue by fiat."

Fordham University

Ith particular concern for the conferences held at the two Catholic institutions, The Cardinal Newman Society reviewed videos of the Fordham and Fairfield conferences publicly posted online. The videos for the conference at Fordham are linked from the university's page about the conference⁷⁷.

The Fordham conference on September 16, 2011, was titled "Learning to Listen: Voices of Sexual Diversity and the Catholic Church." Although the speakers did not reflect much diversity—the overriding theme was disaffection with the Church on matters of sexuality the conference had a serious tone and included Eve Tushnet, a lesbian blogger who embraces Catholic teaching and practice.

Nevertheless, the conference at Fordham had its share of offensive comments from the speakers. The first session featuring the personal stories of LGBT individuals included Kate Henley Averett, a former Catholic who presented her "breakup letter" with the Church. She said she learned at an early age "that somehow girls must be less than boys" because they are excluded from the priesthood, and later was distressed by her diocese's policy of firing employees who participate in same-sex "marriage."

Michael Campos explained how his theological education at a Catholic university introduced him to liberation theology and the idea that the Church could change to accept his homosexuality.

Hillary Howes took several swipes at Church teaching, including the argument that "rigid gender-stereotyping is important to a controlling patriarchy," and that "sex change" operations and marriage among "transgendered" individuals are "unacceptable for organizational reasons, not for morality."

Deborah Word said that being a mother of a gay son meant that she "needed to trust God in ways that my Church does not," while hoping for the opportunity for homosexuals to be married within the Church.

The second panel addressed experiences in the workplace. Physician Mark Clark spoke glowingly of his first homosexual relationship while a student at Fordham University, and he accused the Church of "medieval closed-mindedness" for failing to conform its teaching to the conclusions of scientific and psychological organizations about the positive value of homosexual activity.

Teresa Delgado, assistant professor of religious studies at Iona University, discussed her experiences teaching at a Catholic, Christian Brothers institution which welcomed a professor who had a "sex change" operation and a student "gay-straight" club that promoted "safer sex" practices. As a theologian and ethicist, Delgado acknowledged that she must be attentive to official Catholic teaching, but:

I am called to challenge that doctrine when it is death-dealing instead of lifeaffirming, when it breaks rather than builds up the spirit, when it leads to attitudes and actions that cause one to jump from a bridge or to slit one's wrist or inject poison into one's veins. I know who I want to dance with.

... My stance is one who is open to and affirming of LGBT persons and experiences—and I emphasize that, and experiences—which means that, as a Catholic theologian, I am unwilling to assert the primacy of Catholic moral

theology as the definitive norm on matters of sexuality. Okay. I said it. There I go. I put it out there.

Fr. John Duffell, pastor of the Church of the Ascension in New York City, showed little regard for the Catholic bishops and even the late Pope John Paul II. He joked that the late Cardinal John O'Connor's motto was "ready, fire, aim." Dismissing concerns about being punished for his activities, Father Duffell said, "There's always the risk that someone's going to go crazy and crack down. ... You have crazy people, and are some crazy people bishops? Yes. Some of us have difficulty calling John Paul 'blessed'."

He also questioned Catholic teaching on homosexual inclinations:

The whole business about being disordered—well I know a lot of disordered people. They're not gay! Some of them are. They're not all straight. Some of them are. ...You know, that's not determined by one's sexual orientation. So I know that the Pope has come out with those words, but...

In perhaps the most shocking moment of the conference, Father Duffell responded bluntly to a question from a gay man who felt called to the priesthood but feared answering his seminary superiors about whether he had engaged in homosexual activity. "You're not broken," Father assured him. "The system is broken. And therefore you deal with it as a broken system: You lie." He later added:

It's harder to rock the boat from the outside. Get inside. ...If God is calling, you've got to respond. And sometimes you have to kind of work against the 'evil one' that can get hold of lots of people. We have some people in positions of authority who are not the sharpest tacks on the board, unfortunately, so we're going to have to work around that... And if the first question is, 'Have you ever had any homosexual activity?' or if you're an active homosexual or something, and that knocks people out, I would just simply say maybe you have to kind of color the truth a little bit.

John Falcone, a doctoral candidate in theology at Boston College who is "engaged" to his gay partner, revealed what he is learning at the Jesuit institution: "One of the priests who teaches at the Boston College theology department said the future of ministry in the Catholic Church is any place the bishops are not, and I think he's right probably in this moment in time." So Falcone said that he seeks teaching jobs "in places that are independent of the heavy hand of the upper hierarchy."

Then his words became more strident: "I'm not particularly in love with the institutional structure of my Church. So if it needs to collapse, it will collapse—and all the better."

During the evening session, Jamie Manson, a self-described lesbian columnist for the *National Catholic Reporter* and affiliate faculty member of religious studies at Fairfield University, accused the Catholic bishops of allying with Mormons and Evangelicals "because we are united in a common hatred with them, a common hatred of gay marriage."

She lashed out at priests who refuse to attend same-sex "marriage" ceremonies:

By refusing invitations like this they perpetuate the myth that same-sex relationships do not have the same potential for goodness and holiness as heterosexuality. They know this is a myth, but they will not attempt to shatter it.

And further:

Even in small ways, gay and lesbian religious leaders and ministers who stay silent act in collusion with the aching shame and the outright bigotry that many in the hierarchy perpetuate about gays and lesbians.

Fairfield University

he Cardinal Newman Society also reviewed <u>video footage of the "More Than a Monologue" conference at Fairfield University</u>⁷⁸ [Editor's note: to watch the video follow the link and then click the "On Demand" tab and then click "Watch."] on October 28, 2011, titled "The Care of Souls: Sexual Diversity, Celibacy, and Ministry

The conference consisted primarily of three "plenary sessions" featuring strident voices on homosexual issues. The first was Mark Jordan, the Richard Reinhold Niebuhr Professor of Divinity and professor of studies of women, gender, and sexuality at Harvard Divinity School, and author of several books including *The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology* (1997), *Telling Truths in Church: Scandal, Flesh, and Christian Speech* (2003), and *Recruiting Young Love: How Christians Talk about Homosexuality* (2011).

A frequent lecturer and author in support of same-sex "marriage," Jordan also wrote Blessing Same-Sex Unions: The Perils of Queer Romance and the Confusions of Christian Marriage (2005), arguing for the acceptance of same-sex "marriage" in Christian traditions. He edited Authorizing Marriage? Canon, Tradition, and Critique in the Blessing of Same-Sex Unions (2006), which seeks biblical support for same-sex "marriage."

Notwithstanding Paul Lakeland's assurances that the Fairfield conference would not challenge Catholic teaching, Jordan's lecture was titled, "Imagining a Hierarchy that Wanted to Change Teachings on Homosexuality." That's what he did—and more:

...It's possible that one day the Holy Spirit will one day change the hearts of all in the Vatican, but if she does change the Curia, the immediate result will not be a revision of sexual morality, it will be a rejection of the idea of a Vatican. A Pope whose heart has been converted by the Spirit would renounce on the first morning, not the teachings about homosexuality but the peculiar fantasies of absolute power and of its gender.

Jordan said that after much work on the arguments that could change Church teaching about homosexuality, he realized that argument alone could not succeed:

The last 40 years have seen both the flowering of LGBTQ-affirming Catholic theologies and the intensification of official repression. ... Changing [C]hurch teaching on homosexuality requires not the revision of doctrine but the transformation of structures of power, because the doctrinal or regulatory homophobia is the mask of a homoerotic power that animates those structures.

To Jordan, "Patriarchy is an erotic system among men, not just a system for the domination of women." But he cautioned that the homoeroticism of the male clergy "is actually not love between men. It's nothing as healthy as that. It's nothing as concrete and vulnerable as that. We'd be so much better off if they were all having sex with each other... What we're describing is a system of sexual repression that then leads to a fantasy of desire that is very unhealthy...."

We have an institution that creates a system... an institution that creates a privileged ruling class. The requirement of the ruling class is you have to be male and you have to be celibate. Into that ruling class historically, we have a lot of anecdotal evidence to suggest that a disproportionately large number of homo-erotically inclined men are attracted. ... Why wouldn't this institution approve gay sex as its first order of business? Answer: Because then you give the game away. The operation of the system of power depends on the masking of actual male-male desire in favor of this fantasy.

Taking that power away requires controlling the Sacraments, Jordan said, with the aside: "You're going to see all my heresies on display this morning, I'm afraid."

...If the bishops won't send us priests, we should ordain our own. I really believe that reclaiming a certain sense of sacramental agency is essential to surviving in a dysfunctional system. You can't let them take the [S]acraments from you. That's key.

The second plenary session featured Sr. Jeannine Gramick, co-founder of New Ways Ministries. In 1999 the Vatican ordered⁷⁹ Sister Gramick and Father Robert Nugent to stop ministering to homosexuals, because their dissenting statements "have caused confusion among the Catholic people and have harmed the community of the Church." Nevertheless, Sister Gramick has continued to be engaged⁸⁰ in homosexual issues and is a vocal critic⁸¹ of the Catholic hierarchy.

Sister Gramick's books include *Homosexuality and the Catholic Church* (1983), Homosexuality in the Priesthood and Religious Life (1989), The Vatican and Homosexuality (1988), Building Bridges: Gay and Lesbian Reality and the Catholic Church (1992) and Voices of Hope: A Collection of Positive Catholic Writings on Lesbian/Gay Issues (1995).

The choice of such a prominent dissenter as conference speaker would seem to contradict assurances that the event would not be a vehicle for dissent. Nevertheless, her lecture about lesbian nuns—"the most silent, the least visible of lesbian and gay Catholics"—was not especially problematic, except for a statement seeming to encourage seminary officials to disobey Vatican guidelines for the priesthood: "The Vatican can say gay men can't enter the seminaries, but if the gatekeepers at the seminary are saying let gay men enter, they enter."

Responding to Sister Gramick was Jamie Manson, the National Catholic Reporter columnist who also addressed the Fordham "More Than a Monologue" conference and led a Fairfield University conference in April 2011 titled "The Church and Young Catholics: Is There a Future?" Manson lamented the plight of lesbian nuns who cannot become priests:

By banning women from serving as priests, the hierarchy says in its great cosmic hubris that God simply cannot work sacramentally in the body of a woman. ...I cannot stress enough how corrosive it is to the spirit to have never seen a woman's bodily form wear a stole, stand behind an altar, raise the bread and wine, place her hands in the waters of the baptismal font, step through the center door of the confessional.

She also was critical of the fact that lesbian nuns often have to be careful about disclosing their sexual identity and must live "under the radar" of Episcopal oversight and Catholic teaching:

There is a part of me that understands why the lesbian sisters ignore the hierarchy's teaching. The hierarchy ignores them. It ignores the voices of all women, and lesbians in particular.

...[But] the truth is that the hierarchy is getting harder and harder to ignore. They are funneling tens of millions of dollars into this great anti-gay marriage culture war. ... The hierarchy is choosing to abandon foster children, rather than face the ability of allowing loving, stable, same-sex couples to adopt them. ... This culture war against gays and lesbians that the Church is waging may be the 21st-century battlefield where our sisters are most needed. Most than ever, we need them on the frontier of opening up for us a true and just church.

The third plenary speaker was Fr. Donald Cozzens, former president-rector of Saint Mary Seminary and Graduate School of Theology in Cleveland, Ohio, and currently writer-inresidence at John Carroll University. Father Cozzens is a noted critic⁸² of mandatory celibacy for priests and of what he calls 83 "powerful curial and episcopal archconservatives" in the Catholic Church. In his book⁸⁴ The Changing Face of the *Priesthood* (2000), Father Cozzens claims that as many as 50 percent of priests may be gay, and he suggests that "the priesthood is, or is becoming, a gay profession."

Father Cozzens' lecture, "Gay Ministry at the Crossroads: The Plight of Gay Clergy in the Catholic Church," was at times offensive. He compared Catholic Church policies for seminarians and priests to the former "don't ask, don't tell" policy of the U.S. military:

It will be a step forward when the Church supports gay clergy and religious who choose to claim their orientation to friends, family and beyond, to parishioners.

He also compared the "plight of the gay priest" to "Jewish men, women and children during the Third Reich. To escape the Nazi death camps they had to hide and perhaps deny their identity as Jews."

Respondent Gerard Jacobitz, assistant professor in theology and religious studies at Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia, questioned the ability of the Church to hold onto its teaching that sexual orientation is "disordered" in light of the growing conviction that sexual orientation is essential to individuals' personality.

CatholiQ Eucharist

uring the final question and answer period at the Fairfield University conference, an audience member raised concerns about a "CatholiQ Mass" celebrated during the Union Theological Seminary conference, with the "Q" apparently indicating "queer."

The questioner said the service "seemed to me at that moment to depart quite seriously from the Church" because "the laity are presuming to consecrate the elements."

Paul Lakeland said he believed the service "was done very tastefully":

There was no celebrant of course, or we were all celebrants depending on the way you look at it. We all recited the prayers together and we all received the bread and the wine...

I don't think we were presuming to consecrate the elements. I think we were—after all, the priest doesn't really consecrate the elements. The Holy Spirit is the actor in the liturgy, and the Holy Spirit in the Catholic tradition is understood to be called down upon the bread and wine through the prayers of the celebrant. And if you don't have one, well that does not necessarily mean that the Holy Spirit is absent. How the Holy Spirit is present is really the Holy Spirit's business. That's certainly the way I would look at it myself...

In some ways that ceremony in which we all recited the words of the institution, in some ways that may be a foretaste of our future in the Church as we begin to have fewer and fewer parishes staffed by permanent clergy...

Right now the teaching of the Church, the instruction of the Church is when you're in that situation you pray together. You don't pray the words of institution, and if you do have the sacrament reserved, you can receive the Sacrament.

As Mark [Jordan] hinted at this morning, there are some theological reasons to believe that's not necessary. That it is possible to think about simply the gathering of the community around the table and the calling down of the Holy Spirit. The way I would put it is, nobody has to say, "Is it Real Presence or is it not?" You know, just get on with it.

Sister Jeannine Gramick added:

This is a comment about Eucharist. Just to share with you that I took several years ago a course at the Washington Theological Union on Eucharist, and it was very enlightening for me to hear the professor talk about Eucharist and how it was celebrated in the early Christian community. She said that if you asked people in the early Church, "Well, can only the priest say the words of institution making Christ present here among us?" She said they would look at you like you had three heads. "What do you mean words of institution? What are words of institution?" Christ is present. The whole community calls forth Christ because Christ is among us.

And she, in the course of the course, we found out it was in like the ninth century that the clergy kind of subsumed power to themselves to make Christ come through the clergy. They then became the gatekeepers. And I think that opened up for me a whole new understanding of Eucharist and how Eucharist has changed."

Conclusion

as a whole was just another in a series of coordinated efforts to question and perhaps even undermine Church teaching on sexuality and marriage. The one-sided and dissident approach of too many of the sessions and speakers was inappropriate for a Catholic academic setting. The series seems to have been the "vehicle for dissent" that it was reportedly promised not to be, instead of the valuable opportunity for dialogue that it might have been.

This full report is available on The Cardinal Newman Society website at <u>CardinalNewmanSociety.org</u>.

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