



Catholic Church of Eastern Montana

DIOCESE OF GREAT FALLS-BILLINGS

Founded 1904

Live the Gospel. Bring Light to the World

April 18, 2018

Dear Parishioners,

This week a local news story was put forth regarding an assertion on Facebook by a priest of this Diocese. The assertion implied that Billings Catholic Schools were unfaithful to Catholic teaching and practice. The issue involved a decision by the Billings Catholic Schools Foundation to include a gay couple as co-chairs for the annual Mayfair event. Several comments:

First, I strongly support the education and formation that students receive from Billings Catholic Schools. I know many of the teachers personally and judge that they adhere to the Catholic teaching and value it as a guide for their lives. In particular, it is my conviction that students receive a solid presentation of Catholic faith in the areas of doctrine and moral life.

Second, Billings Catholic Schools and the Billings Catholic Schools Foundation are separate entities though obviously have a connection. The Foundation is its own 501(c) (3) organization. With regard to Mayfair, I have never been directly involved in planning or implementation of the event which includes selection of chair persons. Nor am I involved in any fundraising planning for any of our Catholic Schools.

Third, reference has been made to Pope Francis' comments regarding homosexuality, especially to the soundbite, "Who am I to judge?" The context as well as the entire quote is usually left out. Pope Francis said that when he meets a gay person, he has to distinguish between their being gay and being a part of a gay lobby. He said, "If they accept the Lord and have good will, who am I to judge?" Later in his book, "The Name of God is Mercy," he explained he was referring to the Catechism of the Catholic Church. He also urged frequent confession as a means to address it.

In a nut shell I support Billings Catholic Schools and value the contribution they make toward the education and formation of children and youth. I also remind all that Catholic teaching is clear regarding homosexuality, distinguishing between the inclination and behavior that is contrary to the moral teaching of the Church.

[Catechism of the Catholic Church #2357-2359]

2357 Homosexuality refers to relations between men or between women who experience an exclusive or predominate sexual attraction toward persons of the same sex. It has taken a great variety of forms through the centuries and in different cultures. Its psychological genesis remains largely unexplained. Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

121 23rd Street South 406-727-6683
P. O. Box 1399 800-332-9998
Great Falls, MT 59403-1399 406-454-3480 (fax)
www.diocesegfb.org

depravity, ¹⁴⁰ tradition has always declared that “homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered.” ¹⁴¹ They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved.

2358 The number of men and women who have deep-seated homosexual tendencies is not negligible. This inclination, which is objectively disordered, constitutes for most of them a trial. They 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 and, if they are Christians, to unite to the sacrifice of the Lord’s Cross the difficulties they may encounter from their condition.

2359 Homosexual persons are called to chastity. By the virtues of self-mastery that teach them inner freedom, at times by the support of disinterested friendship, by prayer and sacramental grace, they can and should gradually and resolutely approach Christian perfection.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael W. Warfel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

Michael W. Warfel
Bishop of Great Falls-Billings

140 Cf. *Gen* 19:1-29, *Rom* 1:24-27; *1 Cor* 6:10; *1 Tim* 1:10

141 CDF, *Persona humana* 8.