

## **Working towards a Gender Policy that will build the civilization of love**

Leela Ramdeen, Chair, CCSJ

Presentation at Jesus Explosion XI (Young Adult & Adult Explosion, Trinidad and Tobago)

Theme: “But when the Son of man comes, will He find Faith on Earth? – Luke 18:8

Sunday 21 July 2013 - held at Preysal High School.

Good afternoon my brothers and sisters. It is significant that we are meeting during the Year of Faith – a time when we are called more than ever to be defenders of our faith – of the “truth” about man and woman, each made in the image and likeness of God, each with a moral order imprinted in our minds – a moral order that guides us as we seek to promote the sanctity of life and the dignity of the human person and to build the common good.

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI urged us in his Apostolic Letter, *The Door of Faith*, to renew our faith during the Year of Faith; to make a concerted effort “to rediscover and study the fundamental content of the faith . . . faith commits every one of us to become a living sign of the presence of the Risen Lord in the world. What the world is in particular need of today is the credible witness of people enlightened in mind and heart by the word of the Lord, and capable of opening the hearts and minds of many to the desire for God and for true life, life without end.” (*Porta Fidei*, 15).

In a world in which so many have put God on the sidelines, our task is to keep Him centre-stage. But in order to be credible witnesses, our consciences must be well-formed so that we will know right from wrong, truth from falsehood, and avoid the pitfalls that are linked to moral relativism, individualism etc. The mantra of the moral relativist is: “If it feels good, just do it.” It is this kind of thinking that has led us to a point in history where some people act as though morality is subjective. Our Church teaches that there are objective moral norms that should guide our lives.

Our Catechism tells us: “Deep within his conscience man discovers a law which he has not laid upon himself but which he must obey. Its voice, ever calling him to love and to do what is good and to avoid evil, sounds in his heart at the right moment. . . . For man has in his heart a law inscribed by God. . . . His conscience is man's most secret core and his sanctuary. There he is alone with God whose voice echoes in his depths” (1776).

Blessed John XXIII said in his encyclical, *Peace on Earth*, which was written 50 years ago this year, that God imprinted in our hearts a moral order. So, if we are to be credible witnesses, we must listen to what our conscience tells us about certain kinds of behaviour and adhere to the moral order that is imprinted in our hearts.

To be credible witnesses, we must demonstrate that we are people of Faith. The Theme for Jesus Explosion XI is: “But when the Son of man comes, will He find faith on earth”? As Archbishop Joseph Harris says in his Foreword in your booklet for this important celebration: “This question may be framed differently and read: “If the Son of man came today would I be counted amongst persons of faith? In fact it should be framed in this second way if we are to understand our individual responsibility to be persons of faith.” He says that “the aim of Conferences such as these . . . is therefore to help us to be persons dedicated to listening to God’s Word and letting that

Word shape and form us so that we may be persons who speak with authority because our lives validate all that we say...”

If we are listening to God’s Word, we will know that, as Catholics, our duty is to live holy, virtuous lives, and to lead others to holiness. It is because of this that we must speak out when Government plans to enact Policies that could lead people down the wrong path. As you know, there is currently a draft National Policy on Gender and Development that is being considered by a small group appointed by Cabinet. I understand that it will shortly be submitted to Cabinet.

You will have read that religious groups held 2 long meetings in April and May (*the first one, held on 24 April lasted for about 4 hours and the other on 8 May lasted for about 2 and a half hours*) with Hon. Marlene Coudray, Minister of Gender, Youth and Child Development, and Officers from her Ministry, to share our concerns about provisions contained in the Draft Policy. It is important for us to understand, as the Hon. Minister reminded us, that attempts to introduce such a policy in TT go way back to 2002 when the then Centre for Gender and Developmental Studies at UWI was engaged as the consultant to produce a draft Policy. They submitted a draft in 2004 and after several reviews it was laid in Parliament as a green paper in 2009. It became stalled along the way and in November 2011, Cabinet appointed a committee to review comments and finalise the policy. That committee began its work in December 2011 and submitted a final report in June 2012. Issues were raised and it was decided to return to stakeholders – particularly the religious communities - for further consultation.

At every step of the way the Catholic Church has expressed our objections to aspects of the various draft Policies on this issue. You can access on CCSJ’s Website the Commission’s 10 page critique on April 17, 2005 about an earlier draft entitled: National Gender Policy and Action Plan. That was submitted to former PM, Hon Patrick Manning. Today, we continue to be vigilant. Freedom of religion means that we, as Catholics, must be able to express our views about any issue. We cannot afford to be armchair Catholics when what is being proposed could lead us down the slippery slope.

One of the main concerns we have about the draft Gender Policy relates to the definition of the word “Gender”. The entire document will be influenced by the initial definition of Gender in the Glossary. At the meeting with the Minister, our Archdiocese was represented by now Auxiliary Bishop-elect Robert Llanos and me. We both acknowledged that the draft policy contained some good recommendations. CCSJ and Auxiliary Bishop-elect Robert Llanos had issued a media release in June 2012 highlighting the fact that we would “welcome a Gender Policy that recognises the sanctity of all life from conception until natural death and the dignity of the human person; a policy that seeks to build the common good. We welcome a policy that will address gender issues relating to e.g. poverty and social exclusion, crime and violence, incest, housing, the breakdown of family life, education, elder abuse, domestic violence, human trafficking, drug/substance abuse, health care, unemployment/underemployment, environmental degradation, economic injustice and so on. We make a special plea to our Government to excise from the draft Gender policy that is expected to be taken to Cabinet for consideration shortly, any definitions or clauses that seek to

- redefine the term 'gender';

- legalise abortion; or
- open the door to allow same-sex unions.”

We made it clear in the media release that “The Catholic Church rejects any attempt to re-define 'gender' which, as the Holy See stated at a UN meeting in March 2011, "asserts that sexual identity can somehow be adapted indefinitely to suit new and different purposes, not recognized in international law.” We join with the Holy See to warn that "this agenda to re-define 'gender', in turn, calls into question the very foundation of the human rights system.”

Further, we outlined the Church’s position on Homosexuality:

“The Church views homosexual acts as being "contrary to the natural law...

Homosexual persons are called to chastity" (Catechism 2357, 2358). Those with this sexual orientation "must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided."

God imprinted a moral order in the hearts and minds of humankind and it is this order that should influence how we live our lives. We therefore reject any policies that are not consistent with the nature of the human person as created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26). We are mindful of the words of Blessed John Paul II who stated that:

“The natural law is itself the eternal law, implanted in beings endowed with reason, and inclining them towards their right action and end...”

The Catholic Bishops of our region have said: "The Church has always made a clear distinction between sexual orientation and sexual behaviour. Sexual orientation is morally indifferent while homosexual behaviour is immoral, objectively speaking. Homosexual acts are contrary to the creative plan of God about the complementarity of the sexes or to the openness to life intrinsic to sexual relations within marriage. While the Church is obliged to preach the truth, it is also obliged by the love of Christ to provide quality pastoral care to persons who have a homosexual orientation and who may be struggling with homosexual behaviour."

“Same-sex marriage:

The Catholic Church believes that “marriage is a faithful, exclusive and lifelong union between one man and one woman, joined as husband and wife in an intimate partnership of life and love."

“On March 9 2012 Pope Benedict XVI warned, of "powerful political and cultural currents seeking to alter the legal definition of marriage...marriage and the family are institutions that must be promoted and defended from every possible misrepresentation of their true nature. The contemporary crisis of marriage and the family, has led to grave societal problems bearing an immense human and economic cost." He stressed that “sexual difference cannot be dismissed as irrelevant to the definition of marriage.”

“In his encyclical, God is Love, Pope Benedict XVI reminds Catholics that the Church "cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice." We reject moral relativism which denies moral absolutes and calls on citizens who believe that moral truth is objective and not relative to the whims and fancies of the individual, to join us.

“Our response to all the threats to life is a moral test for our nation. We renew our resolve to defend and promote life in every phase as a blessing and a precious gift from God, never to be sacrificed, never to be compromised. At a time in our history when many are seeking to push religion off the public stage into the private realm, we urge all those who support our stance to stand together in solidarity. Let us make our voices heard as we seek to build a strong nation based on morals and values that will take our beloved country forward.”

At the meetings with the Minister, every single religious group that was present rejected the definition of the word “Gender” as stated in the draft policy. Let me tell you what is wrong with that definition. The draft policy states that: “Gender refers to the roles and responsibilities, attitudes and behaviours, and attributes and expectations associated with being male and female, which are denoted by the terms masculine and feminine. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women’s and men’s roles and responsibilities, access to and control over resources, and participation in decision making. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a man or woman in a given context. ***It is socially constructed and learned through socialisation processes.***”

Please note that we also reject the definition that has been used in the Ministry of Health’s *Draft National Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy*. I have written to Hon. Fuad Khan, Minister of Health, about this issue. “Gender” in the Glossary of the December 20, 2012 Draft National Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy is defined in the following way: “Gender is used to describe the various characteristics assigned to women and men by a given society and is socially constructed, learned, and can vary from culture to culture, generation to generation, and over time due to societal changes.”

On 14 May 2013, I sent an e-mail to Minister Coudray and Minister Khan stating: “On behalf of the Catholic Church, I write to ask if you would both kindly agree to use in both the above drafts, the definition of ‘Gender’ as outlined above in The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). There must be consistency in all Government Policies, otherwise we struggle in vain.”

From a Catholic perspective, these definitions in the 2 draft Policies to which I refer are “intrinsically flawed”. They are contrary to our Church teachings. Gender is NOT socially constructed. In Genesis 1 we read that God created man and woman, male and female. The definition in the 2 draft policies support gender fluidity which the Church rejects. I made it clear to the Hon. Minister that “Once we agree to enlarge the term gender, we will be going down the slippery slope.” I understand that some people are pushing for about 19 “Genders” to be recognised. Anything goes.

Babette Francis’ article entitled: “UN Gender Diversity Battle at UN Women’s Session” (April 2, 2011), highlights the fact that the Holy See has been challenging attempts at the UN level to adopt a definition of ‘gender’ that will take us down the slippery slope. At the 55th session of the UN’s Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), held in New York in February/March 2011, under the auspices of UN Women, “a new international entity with a billion-dollar budget.” Ms Francis said:

“The Holy See (Vatican) delegation...vigorously contested issues such as the European Union’s definition of “gender” as a fluid, changeable social construct, not biologically determined as male and female. The Holy See insisted “gender” be defined rigorously because sexual rights activists expand the definition of “gender” in UN documents to include a diversity of “genders”. “Consequences of such redefinition would be monumental as it could change the meaning of thousands of UN documents. Activists would use this expanded definition in their respective countries to try to strike down laws governing such things as heterosexual marriage which they see as discriminating against diverse sexual orientations...”

“The Holy See delegation stressed that in international law the only binding definition of gender is in the *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court*, which states that “*the term ‘gender’ refers to the two sexes, male and female, within the context of society. The term ‘gender’ does not indicate any meaning different from the aforementioned definition.*” CCSJ agrees with the Holy See’s warning that “this agenda to re-define ‘gender’ calls into question the very foundation of the human rights system.”

At the meeting with the Hon Minister, most of those present agreed with my recommendation that the definition of gender contained in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (article 7(3)) should replace the one in the draft policy. As I said earlier, the ICC definition states: “*Gender refers to the two sexes, male and female, within the context of society. The term gender does not indicate any meaning different from the above.*”

This is the only internationally-binding definition of ‘Gender’. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) was signed in 1999 and came into force in T&T in July 2002.

This definition was also contained in the document produced at the United Nations World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, which took place in Durban, South Africa in 2001.

Hyacinth Griffith, of Lawyers for Jesus, rightly said at the meeting with Minister Coudray that the draft policy was seeking to grant equality of treatment and protection from discrimination to the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) community in relation to an unclear and undefined class of behaviours and conduct.

The draft policy’s refers to “family in all its forms”. Rev Desmond Austin, president of the T&T Council of Evangelical Churches, rightly said that the policy in its current form could “tear the bonds of the family”. Rev Leslie Moses of the SDA Church argued that it was the first step toward the legalisation of same-sex marriage and abortion.

Evangelical pastor Rev Ethelbert Charles called attention to the divine rights of God as creator – who created male and female. Everyone agreed that divine rights are higher than human rights.

Shortly after our meeting with Minister Coudray, a newly formed group called I Am One, hosted a public meeting in Belmont, POS (28 May 2013). The Guardian (Thurs 30 May) quotes the founder of the group, Jason Jones, as saying that “it was time for the local LGBT community to

‘mobilise and vocalize’ in the struggle for equality...The topics discussed included marriage equality...and strategies for activism.” That is not the only group promoting the LGBTI agenda.

Let me make it clear, though, for anyone who may be listening and who may not be a Catholic. We are called to love everyone - including our brothers and sisters from the LGBTI (Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex) community. The greatest Commandment that Jesus gave us is to Love God and to love our neighbour. The Church condemns acts of violence or discrimination against members of the LGBTI community. While we love them, we love God’s Commandments also.

Catholics are not asleep. We know of the incremental approach that leads to full blown calls to change the definition of “marriage” and “family”.

In December 2012 I attended an International Conference entitled: Human Rights, International Law and the Family”. It was organized by the Jamaica Coalition for a health Society in association with the Lawyers’ Christian Fellowship. Among other things, the Conference “explored in detail the basis for new ‘rights’ and the threats which these ‘rights’ pose to the traditional, natural family”. Speakers included individuals from various countries around the world. At the end of the Conference participants were invited to sign The Kingston Declaration. This Declaration and a report of the Conference can be accessed on CCSJ’s Website.

At the Conference, Jeff Ventrella, from Alliance Defending Freedom, a Catholic US-based organisation, outlined the demands from the LGBTI community that we should avoid. He said:

1. The first thing they work towards is to decriminalize homosexual behaviour.
2. Then they ask for safe zones and same-sex registers.
3. Then they register.
4. Next, they demand benefits for their domestic partner.
5. Then once the domestic partner is recognised.
6. They then demand same sex unions.
7. But then they say that ‘separate but equal’ is not equal, so they then want to de-construct marriage. Therefore, they fight for same-sex marriage – not just ‘unions’. Then they can do what they want to do.”
8. Initially they say: “We would never coerce a clergyman to perform a same-sex marriage.” Then they change their tune.

Jeff’s advice is to: “Stand when you can. Be vigilant. Be aware of competing worldviews vs a Biblical worldview.”

We cannot afford to be complacent. At the moment, there are about 13 countries that have legalized same-sex marriage. In the USA 13 States and the District of Columbia have legalized same-sex marriage.

On Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> July – this week, the Same Sex Marriage Bill (Marriage (Same Sex couples) Act) was approved by Queen Elizabeth II and will come into force in England and Wales in the Summer of 2014.

You may say that all these Countries are far away. Well, let's look at the Caribbean region. Same-sex couples may marry in the following places in the Caribbean:

Bonaire, Saba, Sint Eustatius, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Saint-Barthelemy. Same-sex marriages performed in the Netherlands are recognized in Aruba, Curacao and Sint Maarten.

On 18 May this year (2013), France legalized same-sex marriage. The implication for us in the Caribbean is that the law applies also to French overseas Departments and territories. Last month (June 2013) two women became the first to get married in Martinique. On 4 December 2012 – last year, the first such wedding took place on the island of Saba. Saba is a Public entity which falls within the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Let's look now at some examples of how these new 'rights' are taking us down the wrong path and how they are trumping religious rights. Just read some of the headlines across the world e.g. On 24 June, the Daily Mail, UK, carried a story with a headline stating:

**\* “A Colorado transgender girl, Coy Mathis, 6, has won the right to use the female restrooms (toilets) at her elementary (primary) school in a civil rights case.”**



\* On Monday 15 July, LifeSiteNews reported that “A Maryland couple is allowing their **six-year-old daughter, Kathryn**, to live as a boy, and are preparing her for eventual hormone therapy after they say that she demanded the change and it was sanctioned by a psychiatrist.

“When Kathryn was five the parents took her to see Michele Angello, a "clinical sexologist" who specializes in "transgender issues" and whose practice "is made up of people who identify as transgender, gender-variant, genderqueer or a variety of other self-identifications." Angello told the parents that Kathryn, who had been allowed by this time to call herself Tyler, had "gender dysphoria" and that she should be allowed to live as a boy.”

\* On 27 November 2012, the Daily Mail UK carried a story about a man who had had a sex change.

The headlines stated: “I'm tired of doing my hair and make-up”: Pensioner, 75, who became a woman in sex change operation 23 years ago wants to be a man again  
RAF veteran **Gary Norton, 75**, underwent a full male to female gender reassignment - but says it left her trapped in the wrong body. She's now ditched her wardrobe of women's clothes to live as a man again and is on the waiting list for a mastectomy. The pensioner, who is legally and still physically a woman, says she is desperate to return to her birth sex before it is too late.”

Gary had changed his name to **Gillian. His wife and 4 children had disowned him.**





**Pensioner (75) Gary Norton**, Coventry, England A pensioner is pleading with the NHS to turn her from a woman back into a man, after realising the sex change operation she had 23 years ago was a huge mistake. RAF veteran Gary Norton, 75, underwent a full male to female gender reassignment - but says it left her trapped in the wrong body. (see Daily Mail, UK, article 27 Nov 2012)

Gary Norton as a woman. Gary had changed his name to **Gillian**. **His wife and 4 children had disowned him.**



**\*\*\*I know of a Trinidadian couple in the UK** whose son-in-law has suddenly abandoned his wife and 2 children to live life as a transgender person. I do not have time to share some of the traumas that that family is going through. The old couple keeps telling their daughter not to visit her ex-husband's Facebook page as it only upsets her to see him dressed in fanciful women's clothes.

While we sit in our comfort zones, the world is rapidly changing. When you see other people's houses on fire, its time to wet our own.

\*It is important that you are aware of the way in which these "new" rights are trumping the rights of others. On **8 July 2013** it was reported that Tony Miano, who had been preaching on a London street corner during the Wimbledon Tennis Championships with a ministry group called Sports Fan Outreach International, was charged by police with "using homophobic speech that could cause people anxiety, distress, alarm or insult." Mr Miano is a retired deputy sheriff and former chaplain with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Dept. He is a member of the Evangelical Free Church.

Andrea Williams, the chief executive of the British Christian Legal Centre said: "It's clear that there is already a clamp down on freedom of speech where people publicly express mainstream Christian views on sexual ethics."

Todd Starnes reports on the incident for Fox News – see:  
<http://radio.foxnews.com/toddstarnes/top-stories/preacher-arrested-for-calling-homosexuality-a-sin.html>

This story was reported around the world. Here is Mr Starnes report:

*"He was preaching about immoral living – and cited homosexuality as an example of lifestyle choices that are contrary to biblical teaching.*

*"I never used any gay slurs," he said. "You would never hear me using slang or discriminatory language against homosexuals or any other group. That would be contrary to my faith."*

*At some point, the evangelist quoted I Thessalonians 4:1-2 – a passage of scripture that mentions sexual immorality.*

*"I talked about women addicted to romance novels, men addicted to pornography, people with lustful thoughts, heterosexual fornication and homosexuality," Miano told Fox News. "When I mentioned that the Bible was clear that homosexuality is a sin, a lady walked by and she glared at me and hurled the f-bomb."*

*Miano said the woman came back a short time later and began to videotape his sidewalk sermon. Then, she called the police.*

*“They were concerned about homophobic speech,” he said. “But I told them I don’t fear homosexuals. The language I used was not homophobic, as I was not promoting fear or hatred of homosexuals.”*

*Miano said he did not limit his remarks to homosexual acts.*

*“I did not speak solely about homosexuality as a form of sexual immorality but also about any kind of sex outside marriage between one man and one woman, as well as lustful thoughts,” he said. “All of these are considered mainstream Christian positions and have been taught and believed by Christians for thousands of years.”*

*Police took the retired deputy sheriff to a nearby jail where he was fingerprinted. Officers also took a sample of his DNA and then he was interrogated.*

*“It was very distressing to be arrested and interrogated for openly expressing my deeply held Christian beliefs,” he said.*

*According to a transcript of the interrogation provided to Fox News, the officers asked if he really believed homosexuality is a sin. He was also asked whether he would help a homosexual who requested a favor.*

*“I was made to feel that my thoughts could be held against me,” he said. “The detective also asked me if I thought I was 100 percent right in what I had done. I said yes.”*

*Miano said he would gladly offer assistance to a homosexual.*

*“The Christian faith is dictated by the two greatest commandments – to love the Lord your God and to love your neighbor,” he said. “As such, I am compelled to love all people. Had a gay come up and asked me for something to eat, I would have fed him.”*

*But what troubled Miano is the idea that a hypothetical situation could have been used against him in court.*

*“I was actually going to be tried for how I thought,” he said.*

*In an ironic twist, the officers made arrangements to provide the evangelist with a Bible to read in jail – the same book that led to his arrest.*

*“The same book I read from in public which resulted in my arrest, was now the same book the police were giving to provide me comfort,” he said.*

*Miano, who is a member of the Evangelical Free Church, has been open-air preaching for eight years. He said this is the first time he’s been arrested.*

*“It was a rather surreal experience,” the retired deputy sheriff said. “I’ve conducted many interrogations but I’ve never been the subject of one.”*

*Miano spent about seven hours in jail before he was released without explanation and without an apology.*

*Now back home in Southern California, Miano said he fears that what happened in Great Britain could soon happen in the United States.*

*“I believe that’s what our government is going to eventually do here,” he said. “I believe homosexuals or others who are sensitive to their point of view will be visiting churches to listen to what preachers say from the pulpit. And I believe that pastors will be arrested in their pulpits for teaching what the Bible says about homosexuality and other sins”...*

*Andrea Williams, the chief executive of the British Christian Legal Centre echoed those concerns.*

*“It’s clear that there is already a clamp down on freedom of speech where people publicly express mainstream Christian views on sexual ethics,” he said.*

- LifeSiteNews reports that on 24 April 2013 the head of the Catholic Church in Belgium, Archbishop Andre Joseph Leonard, knelt quietly in prayer with eyes closed as 4 topless women, members of the pro-abortion, pro homosexuality group, FEMEN, attacked him “with shouts and curses and doused him with water which they had filled in bottles formed in the image of the Virgin Mary. The attack lasted for a few minutes before they were taken away. See article below:

### **“Archbishop prays while topless gay activists shout curses and douse him with water**

by [John-Henry Westen](#)

Wed Apr 24, 2013

<http://www.lifesitenews.com/news/archbishop-prays-while-topless-gay-activists-shout-curses-and-douse-him-wit/>

BRUSSELS, April 23, 2013 ([LifeSiteNews.com](#)) - In an astonishing display of gentleness in the face of a vile attack, the head of the Catholic Church in Belgium, Archbishop Andre-Joseph Leonard, remained calmly seated with eyes closed in prayer Tuesday as four topless women attacked him with shouts and curses and doused him with water.

It’s not the first time the bishop has been attacked for standing up for the Church’s teachings on homosexuality and expressing his concern for those who live the homosexual lifestyle. The incident took place at the ULB University in Brussels where the archbishop was participating in a debate on blasphemy laws.

The four women, representing the pro-abortion and homosexual group FEMEN, took to the stage where they disrobed to reveal black-painted slogans on their bare chests and backs, such as ‘my body my rules,’ and ‘anus dei is coming.’ They also held signs reading ‘stop homophobia’. The women doused the archbishop with water from bottles formed in the image of the Virgin Mary.

For most of the attack, which lasted a number of minutes before the women could be forced off stage, Archbishop Leonard sat drenched with water with eyes closed in prayer. After the ordeal, the archbishop kissed the image of the Virgin Mary on one of the water bottles that was used in the attack. Le Soir [reports](#) that one of the interveners said of the archbishop: “He was very calm and maintained a position of prayer. I have to believe he was praying for us.”

According to FEMEN, Tuesday’s attack was spurred by an [interview](#) three weeks ago where Archbishop Leonard said that when speaking to Christians who are inclined to homosexuality he suggests celibacy, as is required for all single persons.

Already in 2007, as Bishop of Namur, Archbishop Leonard was [accused](#) of an offence against the Belgian anti-racism act for calling homosexual acts “abnormal”. In 2008 he was cleared of homophobia charges after [appearing](#) in court.

In 2010, as the new archbishop of Brussels, the archbishop was [targeted](#) by homosexualist groups, and condemned by the country’s prime minister, after he said that AIDS is a consequence of risky sexual behavior, including homosexual sexual activity.

Also in 2010 he was attacked at his Cathedral by a man who shoved a cherry pie in the archbishop’s face. [Again in 2011](#), homosexual activists at the Catholic University of Louvain-la-Neuve near Brussels threw a custard pie in the archbishop’s face. Archbishop Leonard has been a great supporter for the pro-life movement in Belgium, [speaking](#) at their inaugural March for Life in 2010.”



Archbishop Andre-Joseph Leonard kisses one of the bottles that was used to douse him with water by the gay activists. The bottles were in the shape of the Virgin Mary.

**\*In April this year (2013) – see article below – from:**

**<http://www.lifesitenews.com/news/judge-firing-teacher-who-called-homosexual-sin-reflects-modern-british-values/>**

**“Judge: Firing teacher who called homosexuality a sin reflects ‘modern British values of tolerance’ by Hilary White**

- Fri Apr 26, 2013 14:48 EST

*LONDON, April 26, 2013 (LifeSiteNews.com) – In 2010, high school science teacher Robert Haye was dismissed from his position at Deptford Green School after he responded to questions from high school students aged 15-16 by saying that homosexual activity is a “sin.”*

*Teaching authorities subsequently banned him “indefinitely” from teaching at any high school in the country, a ban that was later endorsed by Education Secretary Michael Gove.*



Robert Haye faces discrimination in the UK.

*A London High Court rejected Haye’s appeal, saying that his comments were “inappropriate” and that he was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, the campaign group Christian Concern reported, noting that this is the first case of its kind.*

*Haye cannot apply to return to the classroom for two years.*

*In his judgment, Mr. Justice King said that teachers must present positive information on homosexuality “to enable students to challenge derogatory stereotypes and prejudice,” and that this policy reflected “modern British values of tolerance.” He said Haye’s appeal was “misconceived and must fail.”*

*Robert Ogilvy, Haye’s representative in court, said that the ban is “fundamentally unreasonable, unfair and disproportionate” and **violated his client’s freedom of speech and religion.***

*The judge disagreed, saying, “This case is not about the right of a teacher to hold sincerely held beliefs based on the Bible in relation to homosexuality or attendance at church on Sundays. It*

*has been about how those beliefs and views are manifested in the context of teaching in schools with young people with diverse sexuality, backgrounds, and beliefs.”*

*Haye said in a statement that the ruling was likely to end his teaching career, but that he would not recant his beliefs. “God comes first,” he said. “Christians are now being persecuted in this country for believing in the Bible.”*

*“We have a right to believe and express what we believe, but people are now afraid of being punished for not being politically correct,” Haye said. “This country is a free and democratic society – but is it? Is it really?”*

*The Church of England and the Catholic Church, as well as other religious groups, lawyers and some parliamentarians have repeatedly warned the government that the civil rights of both clergy and believing laity who have religious or moral objections to homosexual activity are under threat from the government’s proposed “gay marriage” legislation.*

*Dozens of stories continue to emerge each year of British Christians being sacked and disciplined at work, sued in civil courts and even arrested for publicly objecting to homosexuality.*

*Speaking to Haye’s case, Andrea Williams, CEO of Christian Concern, said it is only one, with more to come should the government pass the bill into law.*

*“This case shows that even before any change in the law on marriage, people with strong beliefs on sexual ethics are being squeezed out of their jobs.”*

*“There is a deep irony that, in the name of ‘tolerance,’ people are being forced into accepting a set of values to which they have not subscribed,” he said. “The courts are actually propagating a growing intolerance and are failing to protect people’s freedom of expression.”*

*A new ComRes poll released in February found that one in 10 teachers would refuse to cover same-sex “marriages” in their lessons, while one in six said they “wouldn’t be happy about it.”*

*Campaign Director for the Coalition for Marriage, Colin Hart, responded to the findings, saying, “Tens of thousands of teachers face the real prospect of being disciplined, or sacked, over the government’s proposals to redefine marriage, creating a poisonous atmosphere in every staffroom in every school.*

*He pointed out that the “safeguards” in the government’s “gay marriage” bill – that they have called a “quadruple lock” – are all directed to clergy of the Church of England, that there is no wording included in the legislation that would protect lay people working in the public sector from legal action.*

*Michael Gove has reportedly agreed that teachers’ freedom of speech and religion will be curtailed by the bill. President of Gove’s Surrey Heath Conservative Association, Geoffrey Vero, told Radio 5 Live that Gove is “concerned” about the possible consequences.*



*“I think it has consequences for teachers, I think it has consequences for parents and children, and although Michael says in the Mail Friday that he has total confidence in the legislation, well that’s not what he told me only a week ago when I met him in Parliament,” Vero said. Even the “quadruple lock” that covers only Church of England clergy, is suspect, Vero said: “We don’t have total confidence that that is going to stand the test of time.” Brendan O’Neill, editor of online libertarian magazine Spiked, has expressed his shock at how quickly the public “space” for disagreement with “gay marriage” has shrunk.*

*In his April 17th editorial, “Gay marriage: a case study in conformism,” O’Neill wrote, “I have been doing or writing about political stuff for 20 years, since I was 18 years old, during which time I have got behind some pretty unpopular campaigns and kicked against some stifling consensuses. But I have never encountered an issue like gay marriage, an issue in which the space for dissent has shrunk so rapidly, and in which the consensus is not only stifling but choking.” He described being booed and receiving death threats after he criticised the proposal “from a liberal secular perspective.”*

**The Conference that I attended in Jamaica in December** was in part called because of the concerns expressed by many Christian groups in Jamaica about a book that had been introduced in primary schools there as part of the Health and Family Life Educational Curriculum for Grades 7-9 (primary school). See article in the Gleaner

(<http://jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20120916/news/news1.html>) which states that in September 2012, Education Minister Ronald Thwaites “ordered that the book, with questionable homosexual connotations and age-inappropriate sexual content, be pulled from the school system. This is not the first time the ministry has been forced to remove a controversial text with homosexual content from the school system, leading to concerns about whether the education ministry’s approval process works. Among the questions the curriculum guide asks educators to pose to students are:

- Have you ever had sexual intercourse?
- Have you ever had anal sex without a condom?
- What caused you to be a heterosexual?

These graphic sexual questions are totally inappropriate. The text also encourages educators to ask children to “get comfortable, close their eyes and imagine that they are the only straight person in a world of homosexuals.”

In campaigning for the withdrawal of the book, the Christian groups that came together to stand in solidarity with each other on this issue, said: “The questions posed to 11 and 12 year-olds...reveal particular value-based assumptions about sexuality that are incompatible with Jamaican laws and the values of the majority of Jamaicans.” They said "respect for all people is an entirely different thing from conditioning the minds of our young people to accept alternative lifestyles as normative... It must be made clear to the drafting and approval committees that Jamaica, whilst respecting all persons, is not under obligation to accept all sexual behaviours as normative,"

We here in TT need to be aware of the implications of introducing such material in our schools. Note that TT's Draft Gender Policy states categorically that the HFLE Curriculum in our TT schools will be developed to sensitize students to 'gender' issues and to help 'socialise' them. Since the drafters of this Draft Policy see 'gender' as socially constructed, then we must be alert or inappropriate textbooks and other material will be introduced in our schools.

At the Conference in Jamaica, Ruth Ross, Christian Legal Fellowship, Canada, highlighted how laws are shaping cultural attitudes towards Marriage and the Family. Nowadays, the strategies being used by those who are seeking these "new" rights is to take the issue to Court. The trend seems to be that many Courts find in favour of the LGBTI community. She said that in Canada, homosexual rights have trumped other rights. Since July 2005, the Civil Marriage Act in Canada changed the definition of marriage: "Marriage, for civil purposes, is the lawful union of two persons to the exclusion of all others." This is the Federal law.

In the 1866 case of Hyde v Hyde and Woodmansee, Lord Penzance had defined marriage as follows: "Marriage as understood in Christendom is the voluntary union for life of one man and one woman, to the exclusion of all others."

Today many countries are redefining marriage. Ruth rightly said that "rights" is the current buzzword and Christian beliefs are being eroded.

In the case of Halpern v Canada (2003), the Court of Appeal for Ontario found that the common law definition of marriage, which defined marriage as between one man and one woman, violated section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

She noted the shift in power from elected MPs to the Courts. Many groups that are pushing these 'new' rights are now using Courts and not the Legislature. Look at the cases in Belize and Jamaica. She said "there is a process of "normalizing" these issues via the Courts. All types of Christian individuals and organizations are being sued. Freedom of expression and freedom of religion is being eroded. Christians are being subjected to human rights Commissions and Tribunals.

**Polygamy and Prostitution:** Ruth rightly stated that if we abandon a conjugal conception of marriage, there will be no principled basis for resisting the extension of marriage licences to polygamist unions. Ruth referred to swingers clubs which are legal in Canada. Read LifeSiteNews.com article entitled: Legal swingers clubs fuel growth in Canadian group sex activity to understand what she is talking about. (p11).

- Dr Seyoum Antonius from Ethiopia told Conference participants that the Swedish Institute and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency gives scholarships to members of the LGBTI community to go to Sweden to learn how to promote their agenda. Here in TT the media reported last year that certain groups have received UN funds to assist them in promoting their agenda – including the LGBTI agenda.

**Also present at the Conference were:**

**Mr and Mrs Owen and Eunice Johns from Derby, England.** (p 65-68 my report)

28 February 2011 - BBC

Christian foster couple lose 'homosexuality views' case Mr and Mrs Johns said they could not tell a child homosexuality was an acceptable lifestyle. A Christian couple opposed to homosexuality has lost a battle over their right to become foster carers. Eunice and Owen Johns, 62 and 65, from Derby, said the city council did not want them to look after children because of their traditional views. The pair, who are Pentecostal Christians, say they were "doomed not to be approved". "All we were not willing to do was to tell a small child that the practice of homosexuality was a good thing" (Eunice Johns).

The High Court ruled that laws protecting people from sexual discrimination should take precedence. The Pentecostal Christian couple had applied to Derby City Council to be respite carers. They withdrew their application after a social worker expressed concerns when they said they could not tell a child a homosexual lifestyle was acceptable. At the High Court, they asked judges to rule that their faith should not be a bar to them becoming carers, and the law should protect their Christian values.

Moral opinions : But Lord Justice Munby and Mr Justice Beatson ruled that laws protecting people from discrimination because of their sexual orientation "should take precedence" over the right not to be discriminated against on religious grounds. They said that if children were placed with carers who objected to homosexuality and same-sex relationships, "there may well be a conflict with the local authority's duty to 'safeguard and promote the welfare' of looked-after children".

**Court: Gay Rights Trump Religious Rights**

FOX News **June 5 2012**

<http://newmediajournal.us/indx.php/item/5809>

**The New Mexico Court of Appeals upheld a ruling by the state's Civil Rights Commission that a Christian photographer who refused to take pictures of a gay couple's commitment ceremony violated the state's discrimination law.**

"Elane Photography may not discriminate in its commercial activities against protected classes as the basis for expressing its religious freedom," Judge Tim Garcia wrote in a 45-page ruling.

The case dates back to 2006 when Vanessa Willock tried to hire Elane Photography for a "same-gender ceremony." New Mexico law does not recognize either marriage or civil unions between persons of the same sex.

Elane Hugenin declined to accept the job and explained to Willock that because of their Christian beliefs the studio only handled "traditional weddings."

In 2008 the New Mexico Human Rights Commission found Elane Photography guilty of "sexual orientation" discrimination. The studio is owned by a young Christian husband and wife who

based their refusal on their religious beliefs.

The Court of Appeals determined that a photo studio is considered a public accommodation -- much like a restaurant or a store. As such, the photo studio may not refuse services based on sexual orientation or gender identity -- even if doing so would violate the religious principles of the owners.

“The owners of Elane Photography must accept the reasonable regulations and restrictions imposed upon the conduct of their commercial enterprise despite their personal religious beliefs that may conflict with these government interests,” Garcia wrote..

The Alliance Defense Fund, a Christian legal advocacy group, represented the photography studio. They plan to appeal the ruling.

***Editor's Note:** So, freedom of religion doesn't mean anything anymore, even though it is absolutely protected in the First Amendment. Let us say that in another way. A legislated definition of a "protected class" of people -- in a country where everyone is supposed to be equal -- supersedes a constitutional right. If this is allowed to stand then our judiciary has ascended to the ranks of tyrant.*

\*\*\*See also **Todd Starnes (Fox News) report on this story on 5 June 2012:**

[radio.foxnews.com/toddstarnes/top-stories/court-says-gay-rights-trump-religious-rights.html](http://radio.foxnews.com/toddstarnes/top-stories/court-says-gay-rights-trump-religious-rights.html)

**The New Mexico Court of Appeals** upheld a ruling by the state’s Civil Rights Commission that a Christian photographer who refused to take pictures of a gay couple’s commitment ceremony violated the state’s discrimination law.

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“The owners of Elane Photography must accept the reasonable regulations and restrictions imposed upon the conduct of their commercial enterprise despite their personal religious beliefs that may conflict with these government interests,” Garcia wrote.

The Alliance Defense Fund, a Christian legal advocacy group, represented the photography studio. They plan to appeal the ruling. “Americans in the marketplace should not be subjected to legal attacks for simply abiding by their beliefs,” senior counsel Jordan Lorence said in a statement. “Because the Constitution prohibits the state from forcing unwilling artists to promote a message they disagree with, we will certainly appeal this decision to the New Mexico Supreme Court.”

But the court ruled that once a business offers a service publicly, they must do so “without impermissible exception.” Elane Photography posed a hypothetical situation to support its argument – imaging what would happen if an African-American photographer refused to photograph a Ku-Klux-Klan rally because the photographer “wanted to refrain from using her photography to communicate a message that she finds deeply offensive.”

However, Judge Garcia said the argument fails as a matter of law. “The Ku-Klux-Klan is not a protected class,” he wrote. **“Sexual orientation, however, is protected.”** The court ruled that the Christian photography company must pay fines totaling nearly \$7,000.

**\*\*\*Then there is the case of the Christian couple who were charged for refusing to let a room at their Guesthouse in Cornwall, England, because of their sexual orientation. See below: Article by [Steve Nolan](#) 21 March 2013**

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2297171/Christian-B-B-broke-equality-laws-refusing-let-gay-couple-share-room-legally-turn-away-homosexuals-non-profit-organisation.html#ixzz2ZmXK7T2y>

“Christian B&B which broke equality laws by refusing to let gay couple share room can now legally turn away homosexuals after becoming non-profit organisation

- Peter and Hazelmary Bull were fined in 2011 for breaching the Equality Act
- They refused to let a gay couple stay in the same room due to their beliefs
- Now they are to turn their guesthouse into a respite centre for Christians

A Christian couple who were sued after refusing to allow a gay couple to stay in a double room at their seaside guesthouse will be legally allowed to turn away unmarried couples after becoming an non-profit organisation.

Peter and Hazelmary Bull found themselves at the centre of an international furore after telling civil partners Martyn Hall and Steven Preddy that they could not share a room at the Chymorvah Hotel in Marazion, Cornwall, on account of their religious beliefs.

But now they will be able to turn away unmarried gay and straight couples from the Bed & Breakfast, which doubles up as their home, after becoming a not-for-profit organisation.

Mr and Mrs Bull were forced to pay £3,600 to the couple in a landmark case in 2011 after they were found to have discriminated against them on the grounds of sexual orientation under Equality Act regulations.

The couple insisted that their policy of not allowing unmarried couples to share a bed extended to heterosexual couples as well as homosexual pairs. But the courts disagreed.

The hotel is now to be turned into a respite care centre for Christians and anyone staying under their roof will now have to abide by the Bull's rules as long as they are set out in the company's articles. The Bulls have since taken their case to the Court of Appeal, where it was dismissed and have now had permission to have it heard in the country's highest court, the Supreme Court.

Mrs Bull, 69, said the incident had changed their lives. She said: 'We have been through the mill since 2008. It has stepped up since the trial.

'In 2010, when the trial happened it was given a lot of press attention because it was a precedent and also dealt with quite a touchy subject. Most people have quite strong feelings one way or another. We are not fanatics. We have often been portrayed as being bigoted. I am not homophobic. I have no problem with them - I have always thought of them as people and enjoy their company. It is just that we thought it would be wrong for here. It had nothing to do with homophobia.

'All the way through we have always said no unmarried couples; it just happens that homosexuals fit into that category ... it is a terribly difficult subject.' The Chymorvah has been struggling to attract guests since the Equalities Act was brought in 2007, meaning they are no longer able to be rated by Visit England because of their policies and therefore are unable to advertise in many of the guides that used to bring in the majority of their customers. Mrs Bull says that the recession has added to financial difficulties and she has hope for the future. She added: 'We have come through two and a half years now and we are coming into a new chapter in that we are revamping this place and relaunching it.'

Not only have visitor numbers declined, but Mrs Bull says that the couple has had death threats and suffered vandalism. But she said that messages of support have far outweighed any negative correspondence since their day in court. She said: 'All we wanted was to be able to support marriage, to say no here.

'This (the result of the trial) is the men's human rights and they come into a collision with our human rights. Nobody ever thought it through when this legislation was first brought in. Can't somebody work out a formula that keeps them happy and us?'

To try to encourage more people to stay, the Bulls are trying to innovate. The first event they have planned is an educational supper on the Jewish festival of Passover for Christians next Friday.

They will also be offering branch line breaks from June, where visitors will be offered guided tours of the five branch lines in Cornwall. Mrs Bull said she hoped it would attract rail enthusiasts.

As for the legal battle, the Bulls won permission in August to take their case to the Supreme Court and their case is set to be heard on October 9 and 10. The Bull's appeal will be heard at the Supreme Court in October.”

\*\*\*And see: **JAMES JOYNER WROTE:** Supreme Court Declares Gays a Protected Class

<http://www.outsidethebeltway.com/supreme-court-declares-gays-a-protected-class/>

On 26 June 2013, in the U.S. v. Windsor, the DOMA case in the USA, the five justices in the majority have made sexual orientation a full-fledged protected class under the 5th (and presumably 14th) Amendment. That is indeed truly historic. After quite a lengthy explanation as to why they have jurisdiction to rule in the case, Kennedy explains,

2. DOMA is unconstitutional as a **deprivation of the equal liberty of persons that is protected by the Fifth Amendment**. Pp. 13-26.

(a) By **history and tradition the definition and regulation of marriage has been treated as being within the authority and realm of the separate States**. Congress has enacted discrete statutes to regulate the meaning of marriage in order to further federal policy, but DOMA, with a directive applicable to over 1,000 federal statutes and the whole realm of federal regulations, has a far greater reach. **Its operation is also directed to a class of persons that the laws of New York, and of 11 other States, have sought to protect**. Assessing the validity of that intervention requires discussing the historical and traditional extent of state power and authority over marriage.

\*\*\*At the Conference I attended in Jamaica, Rev Pearl Kupe told us of a landmark ruling in 2008 against a Church in South Africa (p16 of my report). It involved a case brought against the Dutch Reform Church. Johan Strydom was employed as a music teacher in the Church, but was fired in 2005 when the Church discovered that he was in a homosexual relationship. The Judge said the constitutionally-protected right to equality outweighed the Church's right to religious freedom. The Church had to unconditionally apologise to him and pay him damages of almost \$60,000 TT for the impairment of his dignity, emotionally and psychological suffering and loss of earnings.

I have quite a few pages of examples showing how the new 'rights' of the LGBTI community are trumping religious freedom around the world. We must be aware of the threat to religious freedom and freedom of expression. See the following link:

•**SEXUAL ORIENTATION trumping RELIGIOUS FREEDOM: A ...** Jun 5, 2013

[www.plustvbelize.com/news/sexual-orientation-trumping-religious-freedom-a-worldwide-chronicle/](http://www.plustvbelize.com/news/sexual-orientation-trumping-religious-freedom-a-worldwide-chronicle/)

\*\*\*Then there is the challenge that the Catholic Church faces with respect to Catholic Adoption agencies in e.g. the UK and the USA.

See: English court rules Catholic adoption agency must serve same-sex couples

[CWN](#) - November 02, 2012

<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/headlines/index.cfm?storyid=16123>

“A Catholic adoption agency representing three English dioceses has lost a 5-year court battle, and now faces a choice between placing children with homosexual couples or ending its adoption services.

An appeals court has upheld the ruling of the Charity Tribunal, which argued that **Catholic Care** had adopted a “divisive, capricious, and arbitrary” rule that excludes same-sex couples from adoption services. The court ruled that Catholic Care—which serves the dioceses of Leeds, Middlesbrough, and Hallam—had not demonstrated a convincing reason for that policy. In arguments before the court, a representative of the Charity Tribunal had insisted that the Catholic agency could not be allowed to restrict adoption services to male-female couples, because: “To do so would be to offer protection to the substance of the Church’s belief that homosexuality is sinful.”

A spokesman for Catholic Care said that the organization could be forced by the decision to end its adoption services. The result, he pointed out, would be a reduction in the number of children placed in adoptive homes, and thus a net loss for the children in need.”

See also:

**[Catholic Care loses its five-year legal battle | CatholicHerald.co.uk](#)**

[www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2012/11/02/catholic-care-loses-its-5-year-legal-battle/](http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2012/11/02/catholic-care-loses-its-5-year-legal-battle/)

UK legislation has impacted adversely on Catholic Adoption Agencies. All 11 of them across the country has either had to close altogether or, as has happened in Illinois and in other parts of the US, they have become non-affiliated with the Church.

For the situation in the USA, see article below:

**[Gay adoption bill could downsize Catholic agencies - Catholic News ...](#)**

[www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/gay-adoption-bill-could-downsize-catholic-agencies/](http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/gay-adoption-bill-could-downsize-catholic-agencies/)

By Carl Bunderson Credit: Vera Kratochvil.

Chicago, Ill., **May 17, 2013** / 02:04 am (CNA).- As a new bill aims to bar federal funding of adoption services that do not place children with gay couples, an Illinois Catholic leader warned a similar law there downsized faith-based agencies.



The Every Child Deserves a Family Act was introduced May 7 in the U.S. House, with bipartisan backers. Under the bill, adoption agencies receiving federal funding may not delay or deny foster parenthood on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status.

Nor would federally-funded agencies be able to require “different or additional screenings, processes, or procedures” for same-sex couples or individuals seeking to adopt a child.

A similar measure was enacted in July 2011 in Illinois. At that time, the state children and families department ended its contracts with Illinois Catholic Charities because the agencies’ practice of placing children only with married couples discriminated against unmarried and homosexual couples.

As a result, “the nature of all the Catholic Charities agencies have changed, and obviously the biggest thing you'd notice is the smaller number of employees,” Robert Gilligan, executive director of the Catholic Conference of Illinois, told CNA May 16.

“They all had significant numbers of people that were being funded by state contracts to do foster care and adoption,” he explained. “In some ways, the presence of Catholic Charities is reduced, in that obviously there are fewer employees working.”

“But on the other hand...what happened now is they're doing things they didn't do in the past. They're engaged in more creative service delivery, they're doing it with less money, and with more volunteers, and I think you could say there's a move back towards the community and to parishes.”

Gilligan said that prior to the de-funding in Illinois, Catholic agencies were “beholden” to “the state's way” of providing social services.

He added, however, that “ it's a sad commentary that an organization can't abide by what everybody knows to be true – that children are best raised in a home with a mother and a father – and get state funding to supplement those activities.”

The Every Child Deserves a Family Act is meant to “decrease the length of time that children wait” to be placed in a foster home “by preventing discrimination” of prospective parents, enlarging the pool of potential foster parents.

The bill notes that in 2007, 51,000 children were adopted, but another 25,000 “aged out” of the foster care system, which put them at a high risk for poverty and incarceration.

It also states that “professional organizations in the fields of medicine, psychology, law, and child welfare have taken official positions in support of the ability of qualified gay, lesbian, bisexual, and unmarried couples to foster and adopt.”

In Illinois, Catholic adoption agencies either closed altogether, or became non-affiliated with the Church.

Gilligan called it unfortunate that American society is experiencing “a movement away from policies that prioritize children being at home with a mother and a father.”

He found, however, a silver lining in the de-funding of Catholic Charities in Illinois.

“The fact of the matter is there are a lot of needs in our communities, and Catholic Charities and the Catholic Church has always sought, and will continue to seek, ways to provide comfort and services to people in need. Whether its through the state or individuals or some other means, we'll try to meet those needs as best we can.”

Since the loss of public funding in Illinois, Gilligan has noticed “a movement back towards what Dorothy Day was espousing – good works done by individuals.”

Day was a social activist, tireless advocate for the poor, and co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement. The sanctity of her life is under investigation as part of her cause for canonization.

Gilligan noted that “that's how we experience the poor, on an individual basis.”

“Maybe sometimes when we create these bureaucracies we distance ourselves from serving the poor, and maybe this is the Holy Spirit working through the Church: we have an obligation to know the poor personally.”

“Bigger is not always better,” he reflected. “The way we serve the poor is noteworthy, and to the degree that an individual can personally experience serving the poor, I think it helps that individual truly understand what that other person is experiencing.”

“Sometimes when we create those larger bureaucracies we lose that personal appeal, and I think at least in Illinois, that is what's going on.”

**Conclusion:** Finally, I wish to link all the above to attempts by some to take God out of the Constitution. It is only when people remove God from centre-stage that they think that they can do what they like. But God is always in control. As Mother Teresa says: “God does not ask us to succeed, just to be faithful.” The situation in our world today may seem bad. But can you imagine what it would be like if we did not have faithful, praying persons? Keep the Faith! I urge you to keep the Faith. Good must triumph over evil in the end. It is God’s will. Read Pope Francis’ first encyclical which was released recently – entitled: The Light of Faith. Let us commit to follow this light; to allow the light of our faith to illuminate and dispel the darkness that surrounds us and that threatens to overwhelm us.

On Sunday May 5 Catholic News reported on CCSJ’s submission to Legal Affairs Minister, Hon Prakash Ramadhar, Chair of the Constitutional Reform Commission, expressing the Catholic Church’s belief that we must Keep God in the Constitution. His Grace approved CCSJ’s recommendations to the Constitutional Reform Commission. Our submission made it clear that the Catholic Church will oppose any move to delete the reference to God in the Constitution of the Republic of T&T.

At the first meeting of the Constitutional Reform Commission a well-known person in our society – who belongs to the Humanist Association, got up and tried to make the case for withdrawing God from the Preamble of TT’s Constitution. The Guardian reported that he said: “Leave out the God thing. Or any reference to God. The original draft (of the Constitution) did not have any reference to God.”

“Oswald Pierre, assistant secretary general of the Caribbean Religious Liberty Association (CARLA), one of the earliest participants to take the floor, seemed quietly shocked. ‘If you take God out of this, you will have to take Him out of the national anthem. You see how it’s all being slowly eroded,’ he said softly.”

Inter alia, CCSJ said in our submission to the Chair of that Commission:

“The framers of T&T’s 1976 Constitution rightly understood that the “People of Trinidad and Tobago”

- acknowledged the supremacy of God;
- recognized the fact that our rights are bestowed upon us by our Creator;
- recognized that men/women and institutions “remain free only when freedom is founded upon respect for moral and spiritual values and the rule of law.”

Since 1976 our people continue to support the principles outlined in the **Preamble** of our Constitution. In fact today, in the midst of all our social ills, more and more people are turning to God for deliverance from e.g. crime and violence, poverty and social exclusion and so on.

While CCSJ accepts that in our fledgling democracy there are a few who wish to take

God out of our Constitution, and they are within their right to make this request, it is an indisputable fact that T&T is populated by people of various faiths all of whom will wish to keep God in our Constitution.

The Catholic Church is the largest faith community in our country and, on behalf of the Catholic Church, CCSJ urges the Commission to keep “God” in our Constitution. People of faith will continue to stand strong in the face of moral relativism and the negative aspects of secularism which threaten to overwhelm us. Our cry is: “Not on our watch!” No, we will not capitulate. God bless our nation!”

So, I ask you today, be true witnesses to your faith. Respect and love all members of the LGBTI community. Remember that our Church teaches that members of this community must be treated with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every act or thought of hatred, violence, or persecution toward any member of the LGBTI community is to be condemned. Our parishes must be open and ready to offer pastoral care to members of the LGBTI community. Find out about the organisation called Courage, an apostolate of the Catholic Church which “ministers to persons with same-sex attractions and their loved ones.” Courage has been endorsed by the Pontifical

Council for the Family and Blessed John Paul II who said: “Courage is doing the work of God.” The organisation also has an outreach called [EnCourage](#) which “ministers to relatives, spouses, and friends of persons with same-sex attractions.” Courage urges members of the LGBTI community to “experience the freedom of interior chastity.”

Read also the 1 Oct. 1986 Letter to Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons – written by the then Cardinal Ratzinger (later Pope Benedict XVI) and issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Inter alia, the Letter states that: “...although the particular inclination of the homosexual person is not a sin, it is a more or less strong tendency ordered toward an intrinsic moral evil; and thus the inclination itself must be seen as an objective disorder.” However, he also wrote that “It is deplorable that homosexual persons have been and are the object of violent malice in speech or in action. Such treatment deserves condemnation from the Church's pastors wherever it occurs.

“The human person, made in the image and likeness of God, can hardly be adequately described by a reductionist reference to his or her sexual orientation. Every one living on the face of the earth has personal problems and difficulties, but challenges to growth, strengths, talents and gifts as well.”

Our Church recognises the struggles that members of the LGBTI community will have, but asks that they strive to live chaste lives. As Fr Clyde Harvey said some time ago, members of this community are called to the same high standard that we all are - - to strive to live holy, virtuous lives.

**Let us continue to pray for our nation, that our leaders will make the right decisions with regard to the policies that they seek to develop and implement. And while we pray, let us be forever vigilant. Be prepared to stand up for what you believe. I thank you.**