

Australasian Catholic Coalition for Church Reform

MEDIA RELEASE

Statement in Support of LGBTIQ+ Catholics

24 March 2021

The Australasian Catholic Coalition for Church Reform (ACCCR) issues this statement in support of LGBTIQ+ Catholics, their families and friends following the ill-informed statement from the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in which it bans “the blessing of unions of persons of the same sex.”

On 15 March 2021, the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued a response to a growing call to support blessings for same sex couples.

The blunt response was a firm ‘NO’. Had they left it at that, it might not be so bad. But the document and explanation go on to justify their stand with arguments about ‘nature’ and ‘God’s order’, thus naming LGBTIQ+ Catholics’ love as disordered and therefore not possible to bless.

The argument that it can’t be done because it hasn’t been done before, or it’s not God’s plan, is used by the Vatican to justify limiting women’s roles in the church and indeed silencing many voices for church reform.

ACCCR members stand together with LGBTIQ+ siblings and allies in objecting to the statement. We affirm that all are children of God, equally blessed and equally a blessing to our world and church.

Even if we granted that the Vatican feel they are powerless to grant the right to bless same gender people in loving relationships, it is difficult to see how they can justify the pain, despair and distress this kind of document has on vulnerable people.

There is a failure to appreciate that this document contributes to the physical,

emotional and spiritual damage inflicted on LGBTIQ+ people. For many it is so retraumatising that they are filled with self-loathing or inflict self-harm. They often feel compelled to leave the Church.

The Vatican may see it as upholding the sacramentality of heterosexual marriage to support those asking the question. But how can that justify the very real harm to vulnerable people many of whom already suffer internalised homophobia and fear from their Catholic upbringing.

By restating the call of the Catholic Catechism for 'respect, compassion and sensitivity' for LGBTIQ people and the avoidance of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, the statement tries to claim its words should be seen as supporting LGBTIQ people. But Catholic groups around the world have recognised the real damaging effect on their LGBTIQ siblings.

ACCCR stands with these groups in supporting their concerns and recognising the damage that this kind of document does, not just to LGBTIQ Catholics, but to the many Catholics whose voices are silenced and whose experience is trivialised. We are all in God's likeness.

ACCCR is concerned at the alienating effects of ill-considered and ill-informed Vatican pronouncements.

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