

“You are the light of the world...Let your light shine before others!”

Matthew 5:16

A majority of Catholics in the US believe that discrimination against our lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender loved ones is unequivocally wrong. In fact, because of their faith and Catholic formation, many Catholics support the dignity and sacredness of LGBT persons and their relationships. The Spirit of God is alive in the Church!

Something amazing is happening

People are speaking, actively standing with our LGBT loved ones. Silence is not an option as we let the light of our love and justice “shine before others.” The stories of our gay kids, of same-sex couples and their children, of our transgender loved ones are the sacred stories that have always been, but we are finding our voices to name them so.

Using our Voices

“Sometimes when we share stories, we do see an “Ah Ha” moment or a change of heart, sometimes it is not a complete turnaround but just a willingness to reconsider because they see the whole person.” –Rosa

“Particularly in a church setting...if we are not open, welcoming and affirming OUT LOUD, it is assumed that we are part of the Catholic Don't Ask Don't Tell crowd, OR worse, that we would rather not have LGBTQ folks in our midst.” –Deb

“[When we began our ministry] two and one half years ago, we could not have held a Pride weekend at St Matthew. But over these 2 1/2 years, we have taken many small steps to get where we are today. Just this past weekend, it was PRIDE weekend at our parish. Rainbow flags welcomed you, an 11' banner announced the Pride Parade date, we sold Pride T Shirts, and members spoke after Communion asking all St Matthew parishioners to walk with us.” – Ryan

“I believe that people of privilege need to openly recognize that discrimination and inequality dehumanize all of us. A big part of this recognition is being willing and able to talk about it with other people. Otherwise, we can just become complacent in our silence.” –Jen



Courageous Conversations

As Catholics, we continue to take an active role in our communities, creating the kind of parishes and schools that we feel nurtured in and called to. This involves cultivating relationships by reaching out to those around us and illustrating why our faith calls us to tell our stories and those of our loved ones.

Opening up in your community can be intimidating. Catholic institutions are often seen as unwelcoming to people who support the rights and dignity of LGBT people, but we know that many parishes and Catholic schools of all levels are supportive of LGBT Catholics and allies. You are not alone. Trust that.

Tips for successful conversations

Who can you include in conversation?

Everyone! Simply breaking the silence on the topic can make your community more welcoming to people who often feel invisible or silenced in Catholic spaces. Broaching the topic will likely lead you to new and sacred ground with those around you.

Also engage beyond those “in the pew.” consider the leaders within your Catholic community, the pastoral council or active volunteers, your pastor, school leaders, or parish staff members. If it makes you more comfortable, consider going with a friend to talk to these leaders about using welcoming language from the pulpit or in the bulletin. Approach people honestly and with open ears. You may be surprised to find that there are many others with similar stories, and a faith that burns to tell them!

Talk to people you already know. Perhaps there is someone you chat with every week at coffee hour; this week, mention a recent news story or TV episode that dealt with LGBTQ issues or characters and see where the conversation leads you.

Make it personal. Your story is powerful. Why are you interested in these issues? When did you become interested? Do you have a gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender loved one who has influenced you? What element of their story do you find inspiring? How does your faith impel you to affirm them?

Be honest. If you're nervous, say so. If a specific comment sparked anger or sadness, express it constructively. People care about you and will want to know why. Chances are that others around you feel the same way and will be glad you brought it up!

Listen. People love to tell their own stories. Ask about a news story or the homily. Ask if there is an LGBT person among their loved ones. Converse in a way that expresses your passion for the dignity of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people and see where the conversation leads. Listen actively to their thoughts and find common ground.

We want to hear about your work! How did your conversation go? Did you experience an unexpected reaction? Did you uncover a new connection within your community? Share your story or ask others for help by emailing coordinator@equally-blessed.org