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Dignity/Dallas leaders support U.N. effort to decriminalize homosexuality, despite Vatican opposition

DALLAS, TEXAS (December 4, 2008) — In response to the Vatican's opposition to a proposed U.N. declaration calling for an end to discrimination against homosexuals, Dignity/Dallas leaders have announced their support of the French-sponsored proposal, which has the backing of all 27 European Union countries.

"This proposal is long overdue," says the Rev. Jon Garinn, Dignity/Dallas co-pastor. "It calls for an end to the practice of criminalizing and punishing people for their sexual orientation, which is something the Vatican has long favored."

The Catholic Church supports fundamental human rights and opposes every form of "unjust discrimination" which includes "not just the death penalty, but all violent or discriminatory criminal laws against homosexuals," according to the Rev. Federico Lombardi, S.J., Vatican spokesman. The problem with the proposal, he added, was that it not only calls for the decriminalization of homosexuality, but also could discriminate against communities that uphold traditional marriage.

"Citing same-sex marriage as a reason for opposing the declaration is just an excuse to distract people from the real intent of the proposal, which is to end discrimination against gays," says the Rev. Cliff Garinn, Dignity/Dallas co-pastor. "We're really disappointed that the Vatican would make such a big deal over a rather innocuous declaration."

The Garinns encourage Catholics and friends to protest the Vatican's position at a demonstration at 5:30 p.m. on Dec. 10 at Cathedral Guadalupe, 2215 Ross Ave. in Dallas.

Garinns encourage protest

“This isn’t about same-sex marriage, it’s about ending discrimination that, in many countries, often includes imprisonment and death,” Jon Garinn says. “We call upon all fair-minded Catholics to demonstrate their solidarity with the GLBT community and their commitment to defend human rights.”

Dignity/Dallas is part of DignityUSA, a national organization that works for respect and justice for all gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender person in the Catholic Church through education, advocacy and support.

Dignity/Dallas celebrates Catholic Mass every Sunday at 6 p.m. in the Congregational Life Center chapel at Cathedral of Hope, 5910 Cedar Springs Road. Services are open to all.

About Dignity/Dallas

For more than 35 years, Dignity/Dallas has provided a spiritual home for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Catholics, and their families and friends in North Texas. For more information, visit www.dignitydallas.org.

About DignityUSA

DignityUSA is the nation’s foremost organization of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Catholics, their families, friends and supporters. Founded in 1969, it is an independent nonprofit organization with members and chapters across the country. DignityUSA works for the full inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people in the life of the Church and society. For more information, visit www.dignityusa.org.

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