

Fr. Martin: get a clue!

[In a homily preached on the unity of the Church](#), Pope Francis warned of those he called “alternativists,” those who, in the Pope’s words, say to themselves,

“I’ll enter the Church, but with this idea, with this ideology.” They propose conditions “and their membership in the Church is thereby partial.” They too “have one foot outside the Church; they’re renting the Church” but don’t really experience it; and they too have been present from the very outset of evangelical preaching, as testified by “the agnostics, whom the Apostle John harshly lambasted: ‘We are... yes, yes... we are Catholics, but with these ideas.’” They seek an alternative, because they don’t share the common experience of the Church.

The Catholic Church is the True Home for Those Who Identify as LGBTQ

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Voiced by Amazon Polly

<https://www.crisismagazine.com/2021/the-catholic-church-is-the-true-home-for-those-who-identify-as-lgbtq>

“I am a queer Catholic. When will the church feel like home?” This question was posed by a young woman named Grace Doerfler in a [recent essay in *America* magazine](#). As someone who once lived life as a gay man and who has now converted to the Catholic Church and found there a welcome home, I am always interested in those who identify as LGBTQ and argue that the Catholic Church is not a home for them. These narratives are always the same: the only conversion that is ever discussed in these sorts of complaints is how the Church needs to change to suit them.

Doerfler’s essay is no different. She begins by letting her readers know that though she is Catholic, she has felt more comfortable of late in an Episcopalian Church because, as she tells us, “I often question if I can truly find home in this

church, which often seems to go to great lengths to make people who love the way I do feel unwelcome in the Body of Christ.” In her essay, she speaks in flowery “spiritualese” of her Catholic faith and her “queer” identity:

As someone who identifies as both Catholic and queer, I deeply believe there is a connection between our words and our lives. Through my Catholicism, I have faith that language is a holy space in which we encounter the divine. It was through the Word becoming flesh that God chose to encounter her people; it was with a word that Jesus offered healing and grace; in naming, we commit to relationship with God.

Similarly, for many L.G.B.T.Q. people, the process of coming out can hold a certain sacramentality. Each disclosure of our identities (for those of us who are able to come out) is a leap of faith. Breaking the silence can allow the inbreaking of the Spirit...

Leaving aside her provocative (and heretical) use of the word “her” to describe God—or why a Jesuit-run magazine would allow such heterodox nonsense to appear in their magazine—she is right that in Catholicism there is a connection “between our words and our lives.” Consider the importance of the words said at Baptism where changing one word, from “*I* baptize you,” to “*we* baptize you,” makes the [sacrament invalid](#).

I also agree with her that in the realm of human sexuality and our identity, there is a “holy space” in which language plays a vital role, though I disagree that we, as creatures, have any power to “disclose our identities,” as if we can (to use her chosen term) “narrate” them. In the Catholic understanding of human sexuality, our sexual identities are self-evident, based

on the bodies that God gave us. But I doubt that Grace will accept my argument, so I will appeal to a higher authority, in words said in that most holy of spaces, in Mass on August 13, 2021, the same day on which her essay was published. From ambos around the world, it is no accident that these words from Matthew 19 were proclaimed, as a loving rebuttal by Our Lord to His beloved daughter Grace's confusion about her sexual identity:

He said in reply, "Have you not read that from the beginning

the Creator made them male and female and said,

For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother

and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh?

So they are no longer two, but one flesh.

Therefore, what God has joined together, man must not separate."

Language, indeed, is a "holy space in which we encounter the divine," and it is in the words of Genesis that men and women like Grace and I, who live with sexual attractions to the same sex, can discover the divine architecture of our sexuality. No one is an "LGBTQ Catholic," as [Archbishop Chaput](#) has stated so clearly for our benefit, as a good shepherd should in these confusing times:

[W]hat the Church holds to be true about human sexuality is not a stumbling block. It is the only real path to joy and wholeness. There is no such thing as an "LGBTQ Catholic" or a "transgender Catholic" or a "heterosexual

Catholic,” as if our sexual appetites defined who we are; as if these designations described discrete communities of differing but equal integrity within the real ecclesial community, the body of Jesus Christ. This has never been true in the life of the Church, and is not true now. It follows that “LGBTQ” and similar language should not be used in Church documents, because using it suggests that these are real, autonomous groups, and the Church simply doesn’t categorize people that way.

God is the author and giver of our sexual identities, and we are called to accept our God-given sexual identity, as either male or female, in humility and gratitude.

The Catechism tells us this is the duty of every Catholic:

Everyone, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity. Physical, moral, and spiritual difference and complementarity are oriented toward the goods of marriage and the flourishing of family life. The harmony of the couple and of society depends in part on the way in which the complementarity, needs, and mutual support between the sexes are lived out. (No. 2333)

Grace writes, “In narrating my own identity and letting it coexist with my faith, I have finally found not a cross but new life.” And yet, fundamental to the Catholic faith is believing and affirming that there are only two sexes, as the sole sexual identities created by God. To attempt to “narrate” one’s own identity as LGBTQ is therefore a rejection of the Catholic faith and rebellion against God. Simply put, “narrating” one’s own sexual identity as “LGBTQ” can’t coexist with the Catholic faith.

What should trouble readers of Grace’s essay more than concern for her own confused self-narrated identity is her prescription for what she believes young people who, like her,

have been tempted to adopt one of the [various identities of the LGBTQ rainbow](#) need. According to Grace,

Young L.G.B.T.Q. Catholics need stories in which we can see that a future that includes our queerness is possible. Perhaps just as importantly, straight Catholics need these stories, too. We need more scripts in which L.G.B.T.Q. Catholics can see ourselves, more ways of saying aloud all the ways in which people can be images of God.

As long as L.G.B.T.Q. young people grow up without seeing ourselves represented or respected in the church, I do not know how church leaders can expect us to find spiritual belonging here. I want to belong to a church that is willing to see my L.G.B.T.Q. siblings and me as just like straight and cisgender Catholics in our striving to follow Jesus. What would the church gain if it treated L.G.B.T.Q. people as fully part of its varied tapestry—as people, not as an ideology or disorder—so we could all get back to the Gospel?

God forbid this horrible advice is ever followed in the Church founded by Christ. What these young people need is the Church to engage in its prophetic role by being [a “sign of contradiction” to the insanity of gender ideology](#). Young people need to be taught clearly—and yes, with “sensitivity, compassion, and respect”—that God is the only one who has the power or authority to “say aloud all the ways in which people can be images of God” and that He did so once, and for all time, in Genesis, and then confirmed those words in the Gospels.

We need more Bishops to follow the courageous examples of [Bishops Carlson of St. Louis](#), and [Burbidge of Arlington](#), who each have released teachings on the evil nature

of gender ideology in the past two years. Thankfully, confused Catholics can be directed to the excellent document, approved by Pope Francis and published by the Congregation for Catholic Education, called [*Male and Female He Created Them*](#), which effectively combats the confusion of gender ideology.

Young people who identify as LGBTQ need to hear the testimonies of men and women who have rejected the lies of gender ideology, have repented of their sinful past, and have submitted themselves to God’s design for human sexuality. They need to hear the stories of the members of the [Courage apostolate](#), or the witness of a woman like [Dana Epperly](#); or of [Andrew Comiskey](#) and the excellent work of his ministry, [Desert Stream](#); of men like [David Prosen](#) and [Joseph Sciambra](#); or the three people in [Desire of the Everlasting Hills](#), and the stories of those in [The Third Way](#); as well as the witness of young people like [Avera Maria Santo](#) and [Emmanuel Gonzalez](#); and of Protestants such as [Christopher Yuan](#) and [Rosaria Butterfield](#); of men and women like [Walt Heyer](#) or [Laura Perry](#) and those at [SexChangeRegret.com](#) who have rejected the lies of transgenderism and have now “detransitioned” back to their biological—and thus, their *actual* sex; and so many others like them. All of these voices tell a different story of “the Church as home” than those who complain like Grace does. These are the models young people need, not people who desire for the Church to feel more like an Episcopalian church.

The complaining crowd of “queer Catholics” who demand the Church change in order to make them feel “more welcome” should be countered by the words of Pope Francis about what it means to be at home in the Catholic Church. [In a homily preached on the unity of the Church,](#)

Pope Francis warned of those he called “alternativists,” those who, in the Pope’s words, say to themselves,

“I’ll enter the Church, but with this idea, with this ideology.” They propose conditions “and their membership in the Church is thereby partial.” They too “have one foot outside the Church; they’re renting the Church” but don’t really experience it; and they too have been present from the very outset of evangelical preaching, as testified by “the agnostics, whom the Apostle John harshly lambasted: ‘We are... yes, yes... we are Catholics, but with these ideas.’” They seek an alternative, because they don’t share the common experience of the Church.

Those who think like Grace “don’t share the common experience of the Church” in their beliefs about human sexuality. They are discontented “renters” who demand that the lies of gender ideology be accepted by the Church. Many of these complainers seem to think that Pope Francis is “with them,” even though [Pope Francis has spoken against gender ideology](#) more than any of his predecessors. Based on what Pope Francis has said and taught [time](#) and [time again about the evils](#) of gender ideology, there can be no question that “gender ideology” is one of those ideologies which Pope Francis believes is a telltale sign of “alternativist” Church renters who undermine Catholic unity.

There is a way for the Church to feel like home for Grace and other “queer Catholics.” The answer is simple: it begins with *them*. The Church will feel like home as soon as they decide to follow the path of chastity, which has been a sure guide and path for all the saints who have gone before us.

If that is unappealing to them, the Episcopalian church—at least for now—is still meeting on Sunday mornings. As for those of us who have repented of our past lives living as “LGBTQ persons,” we must pray earnestly for the conversion of people like Grace and, in the meantime, do everything in our power to prevent them from having any influence in the Church whatsoever.



By [David Laidlaw](#)

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