

## **Inclusive Catholics Speak Against Anti-LGBTQIA+ Hate Speech and Violence**

As lay and ordained leaders of the inclusive Catholic movement, we grieve the victims of the heinous mass shooting at Club Q in Colorado Springs on November 19, 2022, on the night before we prepared to observe Transgender Day of Remembrance. As we mark the one-month anniversary of that horrific shooting, we remain outraged by acts of violence in sanctuaries of safety and celebration, and our prayers continue to accompany everyone impacted by that tragic night.

As people of faith, we are profoundly concerned about the intersection of twin epidemics: violence and anti-LGBTQIA+ hate speech. We call upon religious leaders of all faiths to open their eyes to the consequences of their words and actions on our LGBTQIA+ siblings. All who vilify members of the LGBTQIA+ community—through their proposal of anti-LGBTQIA+ policies and guidelines, their spewing of hatred through various media, and in their preaching and teaching—bear responsibility for fueling the escalating violence against the LGBTQIA+ community.

As faithful sharers in the Catholic tradition, we are particularly outraged by the hateful rhetoric of some leaders in the Roman Catholic Church. As the [Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet](#) state: “Language, beliefs and practices that condemn, reject, target or blame LGBTQ+ people must be explicitly rejected, particularly by religious leaders and churches. ... All people deserve a life free from violence, persecution, discrimination, and hateful rhetoric that targets an individual or group because of their sexuality, race, gender identity, ethnicity, and/or religion.”

For example, just 12 days before the shooting at Club Q, [a 17-page document from the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Denver](#) was made public, evidencing the Archdiocese’s entrenchment in an anthropology that is dismissive of contemporary science and of the terminology for gender advanced by the American Psychological Association.

In opposition to contemporary science, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Denver clings to the false notion that all persons are born into one of two biological sexes—an erroneous notion that is contrary to the truth shared by our beloved intersex siblings—as well as to the notion that the sacrament of marriage can only be effected between one man and one woman.

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Denver does not speak for all Catholics—particularly for those of us who seek to live our ancient faith in new ways and who seek to incarnate the “discipleship of equals” esteemed by Jesus of Nazareth and Paul of Tarsus (Gal. 3:28; Rom. 10:12, 16:1). We pray for an end to the homophobia in the Roman church’s teachings, as well as all other Christian communities and denominations that purport to follow the One who stood against violence and commanded us to love all and welcome all. We pray for the sharing of the sacraments of the Church with all couples, regardless of the gender or gender identification of spouses. Vatican II encouraged “scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel” (GS 4). There are facts of history, biology, social science, and technology that, if met with

continued dismissal by the leadership of the Church, will continue to undermine its credibility.

Our siblings of the LGBTQIA+ community are beloved children of God, endowed with honor, glory and dignity. If you seek a safe, inclusive community where you can celebrate the best of your Catholic faith outside the structures and strictures of the Roman church, a sanctuary where you can “come in and be out,” please know that you are welcomed in our inclusive Catholic communities.

Father Michael Nicosia of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion may say it best when [he writes](#): “The best of Christian theology... asserts that all is Mystery unfolding, and that, as co-creators with God, we are part of that process – of which transgender individuals are a visible sacrament. Indeed, their process of becoming their authentic selves is a sacred charge given each of us by God.”

We pray for all persons, particularly those of the Catholic faith “who have eyes but do not see, who have ears but do not hear” (Jer. 5:21) and who continue to fuel such hatred toward and violence against the LGBTQIA+ community through their bigoted words and actions.

We pray for the five beloved children of God who were murdered at Club Q in Colorado Springs on November 19: Daniel Aston, Kelly Loving, Ashley Paugh, Derrick Wayne Rump and Raymond Green Vance. We also continue to pray for all who were injured and whose lives will never be the same as a result of this attack, and for the many families, friends and loved ones who have been affected by yet another senseless act of violence in our nation.

As lay and ordained leaders of inclusive expressions of our Catholic tradition, we stand ready to serve you and your families in any way.

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**“Whole and Holy”**  
 by Father Michael Nicosia

We give you thanks, O God, for since the dawn of creation you have sent your Spirit, showering her gifts upon the full spectrum of humanity, uniting them with understanding, to hear a message of justice and peace. Through her inspiration, the young saw visions, the old dreamed dreams, and your truth was revealed.

You challenged Peter with a vision: a sheet lowered from the heavens, filled with animals that Jewish Law had labeled profane. Your voice told him, "kill and eat," but Peter objected: "No, Lord; far be it from me to eat anything that is unclean!" Your response to him touches deep into our souls: "Who are you to call anything that I have made 'unclean?'"

The vision spoke of the dignity of every human person, and led to a more inclusive church in Peter's day. We cling to this same vision, for it acknowledges us as your beloved creations. It is no illusion, but your Spirit moving in our midst, testifying that the whole of our being, including our sexuality, was created good, in your divine and hallowed image.

You, O God, have created us whole and holy, and continue to mold us into a people empowered to offer you love and thanks and service and praise. Sanctify us completely, and preserve the whole of our being – spirit, soul, and body – blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, forever and ever. Amen.