

LGBTQ SPIRITUALITY MINISTRY

*OUR CHURCH IS A
HOUSE OF PRAYER
FOR ALL PEOPLE!*



MISSION STATEMENT

The St. Thomas More LGBTQ Spirituality Community Welcomes You!

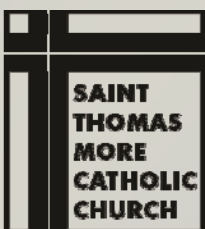
We are an inclusive, caring, and supportive Catholic community providing Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning persons and their families the opportunity to explore and express their Catholic Christian spirituality in a safe, non-judgmental, and nurturing community of shared faith and concern. We seek to have conversations with one another and with our Church that are charitable and just, informed by love, compassion, respect, and understanding.

Our integration with our wider Diocesan faith assembly is achieved in prayer, sacraments, community, and service. We strive to meet and accompany persons, wherever they are in life or on their spiritual journey, inclusive of each individual as one of “us” and never as someone “other.”

*Know that the Lord is God who made us, to whom we belong.
We are God’s people, the sheep of God’s flock. —Psalm 100*

Jesus commanded us, “Feed my Lambs....Feed my Sheep.” —John: 21

It is our goal that all LGBTQ persons may grow in love and hope, grace and fulfillment through participation in this ministry. Our activities include open discussion groups, family support meetings, social and prayerful gatherings, and occasional designated invited speakers.



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On Accepting a Call to Ministry

I have been involved with the LGBTQ community for more than 30 years, including a number of years at the Gay Community Services Center in Los Angeles (now Los Angeles LGBT Center).

After a decades long struggle, wishing to reconcile my gay identity with the practice of my “cradle Catholic” faith, I was blessed with an awakening to a new way of living my faith as a fully practicing Roman Catholic with an enormous gratitude for the very special gifts that my Creator has shared with me. Our Lord, who loves everyone, **“No Matter What,”** has irrevocably supplanted the punitive deity that I and so many of my LGBTQ brothers and sisters have been told sits only in condemnation of who we are and whom we love. Today, Hope and Love have triumphed over contempt!

Our Catholic church, albeit slowly, has shifted the Tone of Encounter with which it embraces LGBTQ persons, and a much more welcoming church than existed in years past is emerging—evidencing a theology of inclusiveness and conscience, that manifests in respect, compassion, and sensitivity. I see the sharing of this message with the many who have been marginalized by or rejected from their homes and churches as a beacon of hope; truly, a mission and a ministry aligned with the teachings of Jesus Christ. We are, indeed, “equally blessed” and “radically loved” by God. Much work remains to be done, and the Spirit is in motion!

I am also proud to be an active member of the Ignatian Volunteer Corps in San Diego and an active member of St. Thomas More Parish.

—Emil Wick



Respect and Acceptance

We are the proud parents of four young adults. Our eldest son “came out” to us about six years ago.

We, and our other children, have embraced and accepted him for who he is.

We have been married for 31 years and have lived in North County since we were married.

We call North County our home and are a part of the greater community as well as have been Parishioners of St. Thomas More Church for ten years.

We are involved in this ministry because of our desire to ensure that all people are to be respectful of one another and to accept each other with the many similarities and differences that make up the human race.

—Matt and Lena Rumps



The Blessing of Feeling Welcome

I am a cradle Catholic who has been happily married for 26 years. I have two beautiful, young adult children, one of whom is transgender. I am honored to be part of LGBTQ ministry. I believe each one of us is God's precious creation. I am thankful for St. Thomas More and the blessing for my family to feel comfortable and welcome in this beautiful community.

—Gerlyn (Geri) Herold RN, MSN



Message from the Pastor

I need to express my sincere thanks to Emil, Lena, Matt, and Geri in their willingness to be pioneers for this ministry not only in our Parish but in our Diocese.

They are helping to give greater credibility to our Parish motto: "Our Church is a House of Prayer for A ll People!"

Deep gratitude goes to Pope Francis who has challenged us all to be a people engaged in a "Theology of Encounter and Inclusion" and to Bishop McElroy for his support in our efforts to accept this challenge from Pope Francis.

Emil, Lena, Matt, and Geri are here for those who may desire and be in need of their ministry and assistance. Please see them, and me, as resources that may be of help to you.

Send them an e-mail or give them a call, and they will be in touch with you!

Let the ministry begin...

—Fr. Mike Ratajczak, Pastor
michaelr@stmoside.org
760-758-4100 x100

LGBTQ Ministry Contacts

Support Group for LGBTQ Persons

Emil Wick
emilw@stmoside.org
760-758-4100 x173

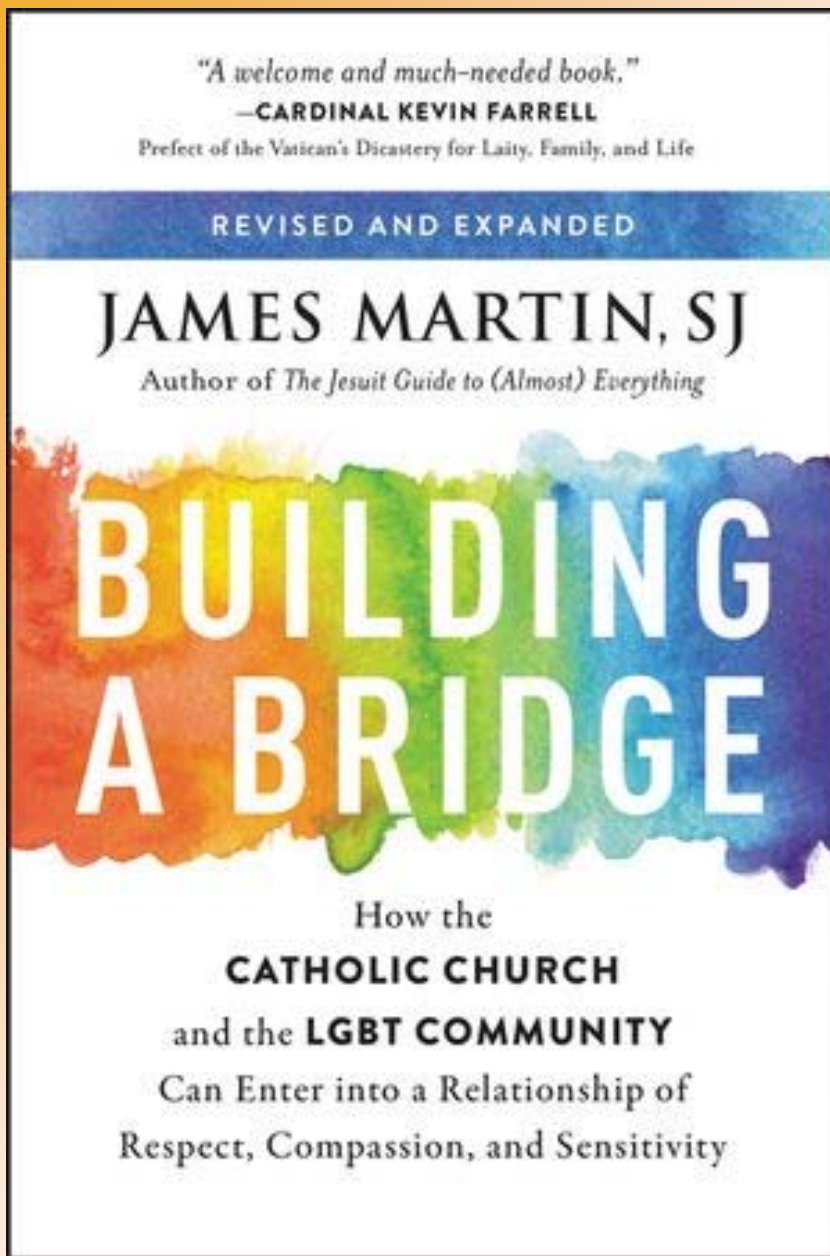
Support Group for Parents & Families of LGBTQ Persons

Lena & Matt Rumps
lenar@stmoside.org; mattr@stmoside.org
760-758-4100 x174

Support Group for Transgender/Transition Issues

Geri Herold
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760-758-4100 x175





"A welcome and much-needed book."

—CARDINAL KEVIN FARRELL

Prefect of the Vatican's Dicastery for Laity, Family, and Life

REVISED AND EXPANDED

JAMES MARTIN, SJ

Author of *The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything*

BUILDING A BRIDGE

How the
CATHOLIC CHURCH
and the **LGBT COMMUNITY**
Can Enter into a Relationship of
Respect, Compassion, and Sensitivity

In this revised and expanded edition of his groundbreaking book, Jesuit priest and *New York Times* bestselling author James Martin makes the surprisingly controversial argument that Catholic leaders should stop seeing the LGBT community as "the other" and instead reach out to them with greater compassion and openness.

This new edition includes a new introduction along with forty percent new material, including stories from LGBT Catholics, and responses to the common questions about ministry to LGBT people. Father Martin turns to three virtues from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*—"respect, compassion, and sensitivity"—as a model for how both the Catholic leadership and LGBT Catholics can move together on a "two-way bridge" toward reconciliation and love.

This revolutionary book also includes spiritual and biblical resources for the LGBT community and their families, friends, and allies. Father Martin offers biblical passages, accompanied by meditations and questions for reflection, to help LGBT people find their place in the church and enter into a deeper relationship with God. *Building a Bridge* is a compassionate book desperately needed in today's climate of divisiveness.

"A welcome and much-needed book that will help bishops, priests, pastoral associates, and all church leaders, more compassionately minister to the LGBT community. It will also help LGBT Catholics feel more at home in what is, after all, their church." —*Cardinal Kevin Farrell, Prefect of the Vatican's Dicastery for Laity, Family, and Life*

"Martin has written a wonderful book that challenges the institutional church to be in dialogue with the LGBT community. This has challenged a lot of people, because you don't want to build a bridge if you already think you're right. But this is where we have to go next." —*Wilton Gregory, Archbishop of Atlanta*

"Martin knows that by drawing close and entering into relationships, we learn mercy, equality of heart, and love of enemies. If we can be Christian in those things, then the scandal at the heart of the relationship between LGBT believers and our churches is on the way to being undone." —*James Alison, author of Faith Beyond Resentment*

"The Gospel demands that LGBT Catholics be genuinely loved and treasured in the life of the Church. They are not. Martin provides us the language, perspective, and sense of urgency to undertake the arduous but monumentally Christlike task of replacing a culture of alienation with a culture of merciful inclusion." —*Robert McElroy, Bishop of San Diego*

"Sexuality, gender, and religion—a volatile mix! With this book, Father Martin shows how the Rosary and the rainbow flag can peacefully meet each other. After this must-read book, you'll understand why New Ways Ministry honored Father Martin with its Bridge-Building Award."

—*Sr. Jeannine Gramick, SL, co-founder of New Ways Ministry*

"In too many parts of our church, LGBT people have been made to feel unwelcome, excluded, and even shamed. Martin's inspiring new book invites church leaders to minister with more compassion and reminds LGBT Catholics that they are as much a part of our church as any other Catholic." —*Cardinal Joseph Tobin, Archbishop of Newark*