

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**STATEMENT FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF OF THE NATIONAL  
ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC DIOCESAN LESBIAN AND GAY MINISTRIES**

The National Association of Catholic Diocesan Lesbian and Gay Ministries (NACDLGM) in its mission encourages pastoral care with lesbian and gay persons and their families. From time to time that mission is made more difficult due to statements in the Church which are uninformed or contain language that causes spiritual harm to lesbian and gay Catholics, their families, and the broader Church community.

Such is the case with the document “Concerning The Criteria Of Vocational Discernment Regarding Persons With Homosexual Tendencies In View Of Their Admission To Seminaries And Holy Orders” issued by the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education.

The Board and Staff of NACDLGM in their role of supporting local diocesan and parish ministries offer the following concerns:

1. The Vatican document refers to “a particular issue, made more urgent by the current situation.” The document does not explain what that current situation is. But its apparent reference to the sexual abuse crisis in the Church is inappropriate and misleading since pedophilia and sexual abuse cannot be equated with sexual orientation. Bishops, theologians, pastoral ministers, and the Vatican’s own consultation with human science experts have acknowledged this reality.
2. The document speaks of “deep-seated homosexual tendencies.” The term “tendencies” causes much confusion. In the context of the statement that the “Catechism distinguishes between homosexual acts and homosexual tendencies” it can be presumed that “tendencies” are equivalent to orientation. This can be contrasted with the reference in the Vatican document to “a transitory problem.” If “deep-seated homosexual tendencies” means homosexual orientation then this document promotes the rejection of candidates based solely on sexual orientation. This conflicts with the Vatican-approved U.S. Bishops’ letter, *Always Our Children*, which says “Homosexual persons living chaste lives should have opportunities to lead and serve the community.”

3. The reason the Vatican gives for not admitting such candidates to the seminary or ordination is that “Such people, in fact, find themselves in a situation that seriously obstructs them from properly relating to men and women.” It goes on to state that the “negative consequences that can result from the Ordination of persons with deep-seated homosexual tendencies should not be obscured.”  
What evidence exists that gay priests cannot properly relate to men and women? What negative consequences result from their ordination? Such unsubstantiated judgments are unacceptable in a Gospel-based Church. Clearly, the often-used philosophical term “objective disorder” does not mean psychological disorder, though that distinction has progressively been obscured in the Church’s ongoing discussion of homosexuality. In his 1997 article in L’Osservatore Romano, Dr. Gianfrancesco Zuanazzi wrote: “we state that a deviation [homosexuality] from the sexual norm [heterosexuality] can coexist with perfect mental functioning. In particular, homosexuality should not be regarded as an illness *per se*.”
4. The question must be raised as to the meaning of “the so-called gay culture.” Those who minister with lesbian and gay people know that the stereotype of a “gay culture” actually distorts the reality of their lives. Gay people are part of a variety of communities, including spiritual, ethnic, and cultural support systems. The language of “so-called gay culture” falsely stigmatizes groups and organizations which support justice, healing, and hope for communities targeted by violence and unjust discrimination.

The Board and Staff of NACDLGM call upon local ministries and ministry leaders to give voice, as we do, to the integrity and ministerial abilities and graces of persons with homosexual orientations. We affirm our gay bishops, priests, seminarians, and lay ministers and pray for the continuance of their support and courage. We hope that our bishops will continue to support them as well.

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NACDLGM is a network of persons and ministries in dioceses and parishes in support of lesbian and gay Catholics and their families. Founded in 1994, NACDLGM national office is located in Berkeley, California. Website: [www.nacdlgm.org](http://www.nacdlgm.org).