

17 February 2021
Ash Wednesday

We, members of the Presbyterate
of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Lexington, Kentucky,
following the example of our Ordinary, Bishop John Stowe, OFM Conv.,
in union with the Diocese of Lexington LGBT Ministry,
make public our support for LGBT youth in our diocese
who are significantly more at risk than their heterosexual peers.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches
that LGBT people should be treated with “respect, compassion and sensitivity”
and that “every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided.”
(CCC#2358)

All people of goodwill, especially people of faith,
should help, support, and defend LGBT youth
who attempt suicide at much higher rates than their straight counterparts,
who become homeless because of rejection,
who are bullied and harassed here in the Diocese of Lexington,
and who become targets of violent acts.

The Catholic Church reinforces that the God-given dignity of all human life
must be defended, supported, and celebrated.

We make this statement to proclaim to our LGBT community,
especially our youth,
that we your pastors and priests stand with you,
oppose any form of violence directed toward you,
and denounce bullying, harmful rhetoric, and harassment directed at you.

We pledge to honor, defend, support, and celebrate your dignity
in our words and actions because you are beloved members of the Church
and reflections of God who created you,
loves you more than we can ever begin to imagine,
and is on your side.

Signed,

Fr. Daniel J. Noll, Pastor, Mary Queen of the Holy Rosary, Lexington
Fr. Richard Watson, Pastor, Saint Paul, Lexington
Fr. Thomas P. Farrell, Pastor, St. Mark, Richmond
Fr. Peter K. Joseph, HGN, Pastor, St. Peter, Lexington
Fr. John E. List, JCL, Pastor, St. William, Lancaster
Fr. Jay Von Handorf, Pastor, St. Mildred, Somerset
Fr. Steve L. Roberts, MD, Pastor, Catholic Newman Center/Holy Spirit, Lexington
Fr. Paul G. Prabell, Rector, Cathedral of Christ the King
Fr. Arturo Molina, Pastor, Jesus Our Savior, Morehead
Fr. Vitner Martinez, Pastor, St. William, London
Fr. Linh Nguyen, Pastor, Sts. Francis and John, Georgetown
Fr. Patrick F. Stewart, Pastor, Pax Christi, Lexington
Fr. Carlos Martinez, Hispanic Ministry, Lexington
Fr. Norman Fischer, Parish Priest, St. Peter Claver, Lexington
Fr. G. Marc Bentley, Parochial Vicar, Holy Family, Ashland
Fr. Danny Taylor, Parochial Vicar, St. Mildred, Somerset
Fr. James W. Sichko, Evangelist
Fr. Walter J. Bado, SJ, Retired
Fr. John C. Curtis, Retired
Fr. Lawrence W. Hehman, Retired
Fr. Dennis D. Knight, Retired

Stan "JR" Zerkowski
Diocese of Lexington LGBT Ministry, Director
jrfflex@gmail.com

