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Memoir Author Urges Bishops to Consider GLBT Testimony in Marriage Pastoral Letter

ROCHESTER, NY – On November 16-19, US bishops are gathering in Baltimore to ratify a pastoral letter on marriage. When Catholic memoir author Gregory Gerard heard about this, he felt compelled to offer his gay testimony.

The upcoming pastoral letter reportedly includes the following statements:

"The bishops decry the rise of same-sex marriage as 'one of the most troubling developments in contemporary culture.' Same-sex marriage 'redefines the nature of marriage and the family and, as a result harms both the intrinsic dignity of every human person and the common good of society'."

Gerard is a gay Catholic whose personal memoir, *In Jupiter's Shadow*, chronicles the struggles of a devout teen working to solve the mystery of same-sex attraction. "I couldn't let them draft this letter without urging them to consider our testimonies," Gerard said. "I think about how I struggled silently during adolescence – how the next generation(s) will continue to struggle if misperceptions about same-sex relationships continue. As a kid, I sensed the stigma attached to the feelings I was experiencing. Because I wasn't willing to talk about my same-sex attraction, I relied on secret research to educate myself, reading things like the upcoming pastoral letter."

[Read Gerard's full response to Cardinal Francis George](#)

"It took me a lot of years to reconcile my faith with my orientation. I wrote my memoir to share the reality of the profound angst I experienced at a very young age – angst perpetuated by the teachings of the Catholic Church. I thought if I could capture the truths I uncovered, it might help those who continue to struggle today. And it might speak to those, like the bishops, who continue to classify the rights and relationships of GLBT persons as something 'troubling' or 'harmful to dignity.'

The bishops' conference comes on the heels of the defeat of marriage equity in Maine, where the Catholic Church reportedly coordinated an effort to overturn the law. Gerard points out that the bishops' upcoming statements will have an impact beyond civil legislation for adults. "When the bishops approve of language like they are proposing in this pastoral letter," Gerard said, "it certainly empowers our elected officials to deny civil equality to a portion of our country's population. What I don't think the bishops have completely considered is the full impact of the message they send to society – to the thousands of boys and girls who *today* are secretly wondering if God still loves them because they have romantic feelings about someone of their same gender. When the Church, or elected officials, or others suggest that that gay people are 'less' in some ways; when bigotry or misinformation rob faithful gay kids of the hope of a committed, blessed relationship – to me, *that* is one of the most troubling developments in contemporary culture."

"I think it's relatively easy for many to think that the issue of gay marriage only affects consenting *adults*. I sent a copy of my memoir to Cardinal George to share one faithful *adolescent's* experiences with Catholicism on the subject of same-sex attraction. I hope my story – along with the thousands of testimonies I'm sure the bishops have heard from faithful GLBT people – will prayerfully speak to their hearts. To guide them toward providing truly Christian pastoral care to *all*."

Gregory Gerard is a gay Catholic author who resides in Rochester NY with his partner of twelve years. His memoir, [In Jupiter's Shadow](#), explores the importance of emerging from the 'shadow' of others' expectations and how people can often work to hide important truths from the most important person in their lives: themselves. An overview of his project is available at www.JupitersShadow.com.