

Seattle's Archbishop Supports Gay Rights

Archbishop Raymond G. Hunthausen restated the position of the U.S. Bishops and the Washington State Catholic Conference on the issue of homosexuality in the July 1, 1977 edition of *Catholic Northwest Progress*:

Dear Friends in Christ:

The Mayor of Seattle, along with many other mayors throughout the United States, has set aside a special week to call our attention to the injustices suffered by many homosexuals in our community.

I would like to take this occasion to remind everyone of the statement made last fall by the Bishops of the United States at their semi-annual meeting. They said, 'Homosexuals, like everyone else, should not suffer from prejudice against their basic human rights. They have a right to respect, friendship and justice. They should have an active role in the Christian community.'

And I would also like to call your attention to the statement issued to the Social and Health Services Committee of the Washington State House of Representatives by the Washington Catholic Conference in March of this year.

'The Washington State Catholic Conference recognizes the terrible impact that discriminatory patterns in society have upon both the individual and the total community. We firmly uphold the necessity of constantly motivating all people to cease and desist from discriminatory activity. We further recognize that many individuals in our society are not sufficiently motivated by moral or civic principles and must be constrained from their discriminatory patterns through restrictive legislation to protect the public order.'

'We also realize that many people have physiological or psychological sexual orientations which are not consonant with the majority and which are beyond their own free choice. We sincerely

believe that to discriminate against this group of men and women is not only contrary to sound religious principles but in conflict with protection of basic rights in our American civic life. They should not be discriminated against merely because of the discovery of this basic sexual orientation in their lives. We are not addressing ourselves to any forms of conduct which follow from one's sexual orientation but only to the fact of a particular orientation; that fact should not result in discrimination in employment, housing, licensing or other matters of public participation.'

This statement clearly expresses the fundamental attitude that marked the ministry of Jesus' charity. It is the responsibility of every Christian person to work toward the establishment of a society that is based on love and which expresses this love in its laws and customs. We should all pray earnestly that Christian love -- and its minimal requirement, justice -- will characterize the relationships of all men, women and children with one another.

May God be with you. His joy. His peace. His love.

[signed] (Most Rev.) Raymond G. Hunthausen Archbishop of Seattle