



August 30, 2022

Most Revd Earl K. Fernandes
Bishop, Diocese of Columbus
197 E. Gay Street
Columbus, OH 43215

Bishop Fernandes:

It was with dismay that LOVEboldly and the undersigned organizations and individuals received the news that after 66 years of faithful service to the Catholic community at Ohio State and in Central Ohio, the Paulist Fathers would no longer serve as leaders of the St. Thomas More Newman Center at The Ohio State University. We appreciated the invitation from your office to the Paulist Fathers to remain on staff as chaplains.

The Paulist Fathers have courageously created a home for LGBTQIA+ Roman Catholics at the Newman Center while faithfully ministering to generations of Catholics as pastors, leaders, and witnesses of the love of Jesus Christ. Though we may not always agree on Church teaching regarding LGBTQIA+ people, the Roman Catholic Church has a long history of defending the dignity of all people, including members of the Queer community. Indeed, in the 2019 PRRI American Values Atlas, 76% of Catholic respondents supported or strongly supported nondiscrimination laws for the LGBTQIA+ community.

Recently, we learned that the Newman Center sign, which read "All are Welcome," had literally been painted over, removing the invitation that Jesus himself issued to those that followed him. Further, it has come to our attention that the Newman Center will soon host meetings of Courage International, an organization that advances a dangerous ideology, including the requirements that Catholics refrain from attending same-gender weddings, that LGBTQIA+ people embrace chastity, and that LGBTQIA+ people deny their fundamental identities. While Courage International officially does not require or refer members to reparative or conversion therapy, there are nevertheless deep ties between Courage and the discredited work of reparative therapy proponents including Joseph Nicolosi.

As fellow Christians and people of faith who identify as LGBTQIA+ and care deeply for LGBTQIA+ people, we urge you to take steps to renew the affirming ministry of the St. Thomas More Newman Center at Ohio State to all people, particularly to LGBTQIA+ people. Further, we urge you to stop the hosting of Courage International groups at all sites in the Diocese of Columbus.

Creating and developing spaces for LGBTQIA+ people to flourish in Christianity.

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Sincerely,

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LOVEboldly

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Volunteer, Parishioner, Active
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St. Thomas More Newman
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Kathy Barkhurst
Former member of the
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Kelly Sollinger
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