



To Bishop Herman Cosijns, Secretary General of the Episcopal Conference,
To Father Tommy Scholtes, Spokesman of the Episcopal Conference,

Brussels, March 18, 2021

**Letter to the Belgian Bishops from the Community of Christ the Liberator,
a Christian group of gays and lesbians.**

Messeigneurs,

Several of you have, on various occasions, personally testified your fatherly support for our Community of Christ the Liberator. You visited us in particular in Brussels and Liège on the occasion of meetings of our association, you celebrated Mass for us and blessed us. These moments were for us very precious and bearers of hope for the construction of a Church which would be more fraternal and inclusive tomorrow. This is why we allow ourselves to share with you the feelings that overwhelmed us when was announced the position taken by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on March 15.

In many of us this news produced consternation, disbelief, anger, sadness, discouragement, aggressiveness... What! We asked to be able to celebrate openly in the Church our commitments of common life as a couple. Possibly by a prayer in the church or a small blessing (even only in the sacristy) and what we receive from Rome are curses generously distributed throughout our LGBT community!

"We cannot bless you" slices the document, "we do not have the permission of God, for you are not ordained in his plan". Hear: God did not create homosexuals. God only created heterosexuals. You are heterosexuals who CHOSE to have sex with people of the same sex as you. It is wrong, you are black with sins, the Church cannot bless your ignominy. This implies the injunction: Go to conversion therapy, it will give you back your true nature which is heterosexual!

We can always say to ourselves that these people of Rome only have the power that we want to give them. However, when the Roman religious authority expresses itself on these subjects, the media amplify the echo and this marks the evil spirits.

At the time in which we are living, this position is an encouragement to homophobia, a stimulation to reject homosexual people from Christian families and parishes, to continue the persecutions of which they are victims in Africa and elsewhere. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith becomes an agent of our discrimination. The consequences make you shudder. Do these people of Rome have no sense of responsibility, of the societal consequences of their assertions? Do they reproduce the scenario of the condom ban when AIDS was killing en masse?

For our part, we have a charter which says in its article 2: *The Community recalls that homosexuality is neither a free choice, nor a disease, but a human reality present in any society. Sexuality is an essential dimension of the human being who must be able to live in pleasure, happiness and respect. As long as the partners are adults and consenting, the Community does not pass judgment on the lifestyles or sexual practices of its members, including those who have decided to live in chastity or continence.* We believe that living in this way does not prohibit, on the contrary, to live as children of God.

Should we not remember that the Church has often blessed dogs, motorcycles, medals and sometimes armies without qualms, even though she refuses today to bless the love between two people? Should we not also remember all those gays and lesbians in couple or married who carry the Church on a daily basis in our parishes as churchwardens, organists, sacristans, choristers, members of pastoral teams, treasurers, catechists, episcopal delegate, journalists, etc? Would their skills be exploited while despising their love and their life?

Messeigneurs and dear Father Bishops, We appreciated your reaction the day after the distribution of the Roman text. The press release you have issued expresses your sympathy for us and we are grateful to you. We also

salute your courageous statements to the media. You thus allow us to keep hope and confidence in our Church in Belgium. But allow us to express greater expectations, because we would need more than sympathy: on the one hand we would like to be able to leave our position of "stowaway" in the Church. We feel truly welcomed for who we are in parish communities. This requires that our Christian communities get to really know us, which also implies that we can be visible there without fear. It requires a pastoral care of inclusiveness. on the other hand, we would need a real reform of the doctrinal texts which caricature us. We believe that you are in a suitable position to influence the positions of the Curia and to obtain from it documents which are not so outrageous. Because they disfigure the Church we love. In addition, as we have already recalled, these texts are often claimed by the political authorities who persecute, imprison or discriminate against our fellow human beings in certain countries.

Suffering from disapproval and sometimes rejection, we would need our Church to recognize us and speak well of us, to see us not as painful problems to be managed discreetly but as partners who can be counted on.

In the meantime, on our side, homosexual Christians, even if some consider our human love to be illicit, we will remain clinging to the word of Saint Paul who assures us that nothing will be able to separate us from the love of Christ. We are building with you the Church of tomorrow, one that is based on a Gospel which is good news for the oppressed. The hypocrites will disappear, let the dead bury the dead and continue our journey in the footsteps of Jesus our liberator.

We take the liberty of attaching to this letter the letter sent to you by our Jesuit friend, Father José Davin .

Receive, dear Father Bishops, the assurance of our filial confidence.

Michel Elias
Administrator, CCL spokesperson

Letter from Father Davin SJ to the Bishops of Belgium

An important human issue that has been abused!

Church leaders seem to ignore an elementary reality: gays and lesbians also fall in love, like straight people. So what happens to this love, how can we rejoice in it and accompany them in pastoral care? And when they are Catholic believers, with what ways of prayer can they live their bond to Christ, in the Church?

The CDC, Community of Christ Liberator, which brings together many LGBT Christians in Belgium, read with amazement, great sadness and even anger, the recent communiqué of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith that rejects any religious blessing for same-sex couples. No doubt, some ill-informed Christians needed to better understand that this kind of prayer is never equated with the sacrament of marriage! We should have left it at that!

Regarding the blessings of their unions according to the current ecclesial evolution promoted by Pope Francis, this declaration comes as an increase before Easter the passion of the Lord.

Wasn't this Jesus, instead of alienating people, welcoming to any other person? Was he not also very close to those who sometimes set aside his friends, while forming a natural cell of encounter and love? Would some in Rome have already forgotten the key statements of Vatican II, which stressed the importance of the ultimate judgment of each conscience?

It is in this spirit that gays and lesbians, very close to the Lord, entrust to him with joy and confidence their desire to make live the love that unites them and opens them to others.

In this statement, several passages still reveal a real lack of knowledge of gays and lesbians by equating them with sinners, with old prejudices that call for a change in mentalities.

Despite these desolate thoughts, gays and lesbians will continue, "in conscience" and rightly to live a conjugal and sometimes parental partnership in the certainty of belonging to the Kingdom of God. Pastors and ministers of worship will also continue "in conscience," accompanying them and asking the Lord, in prayer, light and strength to engage in true mutual love.

For to bless is to express the essentials of the true life desired by God.

Father José Davin SJ