

Denver Student Responds To Archbishop: "I Am Catholic, And I Am Gay... I Do Not Need To Be 'Healed'"

[Johnny Hultzapple](#)





posted on

January 30, 2019

It is with a very enraged and dismal heart that I write this post today.

This past Saturday, the Archdiocese of Denver sponsored an anti-LGBTQ [event at the John Paul II Center](#) led by an anti-LGBTQ activist and proponent of conversion therapy named Andrew Comiskey.

There was a highly false and insulting [banner hung on the fence of the John Paul II Center](#). It is important to note that a representative from the Archdiocese said that the Archdiocese themselves did not hang the banner although they sponsored this event. The banner is a quote from the leader of the event, Andrew Comiskey, and reads, "There is no such thing as a 'gay' person.... That is a popular myth." "Satan delights in homosexual perversion."

As a young, gay male, I was infuriated when I read this sign and an article [[in the Colorado Times Recorder about the event](#)]. Not only is the sign overtly offensive, it is so, so, so very wrong.

I AM a gay person. I AM a homosexual; and there is absolutely nothing

perverted about me. In Genesis 1:26, God says, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Based on Christian belief, humans are made in the likeness of God. I believe this includes STRAIGHT, GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, or QUEER individuals. LGBTQ people are made in the image and likeness of God.

For 11 years of my life, I attended Catholic school right down the road from the JP II center. In fact, I used to run around the JP II center for cross country practice. My fond memories of catholic school are unfortunately tainted with dark and hurtful moments of bigotry—bigotry that will stay with me the rest of my life.

This bigotry is often promoted in the Catholic religion, although it is not promoted by all. The ironic part of this bigotry is that Catholicism is a religion centered on love: God's love for his son, Jesus' love for his people, and people's love for Jesus shown by loving others.

Events like [the conference with Comiskey], which spread hatred and lies about the LGBTQ community, are not events that I believe are truly rooted in Catholic teaching. In John 15:12, Jesus exclaims, "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."

I am only 17-years old, but I can see that events like Andrew Comiskey's do not spread the type of love that Jesus loves his people with. Jesus' love was never judgmental, it was never exclusive, and it definitely was never hateful. The God I know loves everyone, and everyone means anyone who lives and breathes, regardless of sexuality, gender, or any other identity.

At the event, Andrew Comiskey stated, "The enemy is intent on sowing seeds of deception in really bright and really colorful and really fragile people, and that's what the whole LGBT juggernaut is."

While I whole-heartedly agree that the LGBTQ community and I are really bright and really colorful, I know that we are not fragile. We are a STRONG

community. I am a strong person. The LGBTQ community fights to overcome bigotry every. single. day. With each day that passes, we are becoming a hell of a lot stronger. We will overcome, just as we have in the past.

Individuals who attended the event told the crowd that Comiskey's events and organization led them to 'convert' from homosexuality to heterosexuality. As the article describes, "conversion therapy programs like Comiskey's have been widely discredited, and are opposed by the American Medical Association, the American Psychological Association.... and many other medical organizations." In fact, conversion therapy programs for minor were just outlawed in the city of Denver. In addition, with a [passing of a bill in the state legislature, conversion therapy will hopefully be outlawed in all of Colorado this year.](#)

Unfortunately, the [Archdiocese of Denver is continuing to promote](#) these events.

I am Catholic, and I am gay. I am not 'deceived'; Satan does not 'delight in my sexuality'; I do not need to be 'converted' to heterosexuality; I do not need to be 'healed'. I am far from perfect, but this is not because of my sexual orientation.

God made me gay, and I know that God wants me to use my voice to spread love and acceptance to not only the LGBTQ community, but to ALL people, regardless of identity. I will work my hardest to ensure that this hatred is not continued in my community. I will work hard to ensure that other kids in Catholic school will not have to suffer the bigotry I had to.

My big, Catholic family loves and accepts me for who I am; they know that God made me gay and loves me just the same. I am lucky and grateful to have this system of support around me, but others are not so lucky.

So, if you have continued reading thus far, I ask you to please share my post (gay or straight, religious or not), to share the articles with your community,

to let people know that this is happening. Have a discussion at your dinner table, have a discussion in your class, have a discussion with your friends.

And, most of all, I ask you to please give love to all of your LGBTQ friends and family members, especially ones that are in communities full of hatred.

In the end, it is love that will unite us all, despite our differences.

Johnny Hultzapple is a student at South High School in Denver.