

## **My Neighbor Said: “Does the Catholic Church Accept the LGBTQ+ Community?”**

This is an issue of importance to many people, and it holds a great deal of pain for many families. Therefore, it is important to approach it with both clarity and compassion.

First, the Church is concerned with individuals, not communities. God cares for each and every person He has created, saying “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine” (Isaiah 43:1). Therefore, the Church teaches that every individual who identifies as homosexual or LGBTQ+ “must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, para. 2358). When hatred or malice are offered to such individuals, whether in the Church or in society, “such treatment deserves condemnation from the Church’s pastors wherever it occurs” (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *On the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons*, 1986, no. 10).

The Church is the place where forgiveness and healing are found. The role of the Church, and every member in it, is to assist others in their journey toward God. That starts by recognizing that all are the beloved children of God. And it continues when we, the Church, walk with anyone seeking God’s grace and struggling to do His will.

Anyone who is willing to seek God and journey toward Him is welcome in the Church. As Jesus said, “Every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven, except that against the Spirit” (Matthew 12:31). What is “blasphemy against the Spirit”? It is a denial of the offer of God’s grace and forgiveness—that is, Himself—to ourselves, or others. People can (and do) refuse His mercy and grace through their deliberate choices. Such hardness of heart can lead to final impenitence and eternal loss (*Catechism*, para. 1864).

For those who identify as LGBTQ+, the Church offers support through groups such as [Courage](#) and the [Eden Invitation](#). For families, there are groups such as [Encourage](#). No one needs to struggle alone.

If you would like to discuss this issue face to face, please contact Fr. Sal Añonuevo at (434) 846-5245.

**For further reading:** *Catechism of the Catholic Church* ([The Vocation to Chastity](#); [The Gravity of Sin](#)); *On the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons* (CDF); *Ministry to Persons With a Homosexual Inclination* (USCCB).

Do you have questions about God, faith, life, the Church, or other related topics? Drop them into the Question Box next to the Parish Bulletin Board. We will answer them ASAP and post them in FlockNotes and on the Bulletin Board each week.