

CHURCH AND HOMOSEXUALITY

A pro-LGBT Pope is a problem

ECCLESIA

18_06_2023



**Riccardo
Cascioli**



No one is surprised by yet another gesture by Pope Francis legitimising LGBT organisations in the Church, in this case [the letter to the now famous Father James Martin](#) made public on 14 June. The letter, dated 6 May and handwritten, blesses the conference organised by [Outreach](#), the Catholic LGBT site founded by Father Martin: the conference is taking place this weekend at Fordham University, a Jesuit university in New

York. Pope Francis thanked Father Martin “for all the good you are doing” and promised his “prayers and good wishes” to all conference participants.

No one is surprised, first of all because this is the third time the Pope has written a warm letter to Father Martin on the eve of the annual conference organised by Outreach. In 2021, he had also extolled Father Martin's “pastoral zeal” that imitates “God's style”. And last year he had encouraged him to continue his ministry, a true “culture of encounter”, which “shortens distances and enriches us with differences”.

Moreover, Father James Martin is not the only LGBT activist to enjoy the Pontiff's loving attention. Two years ago, he had written two letters to the current executive director of the American organisation New Ways Ministry, Francis DeBernardo, the spearhead of the LGBT lobby within the Church. Founded in 1977 by Father Robert Nugent and Sister Jeannine Gramick, *New Ways Ministry* has been denied recognition as a Catholic organisation several times by the American bishops, and on 31 May 1999, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (presided over by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger) had also intervened with a note noting that the two founders rejected the Church's teaching on homosexuality, namely the recognition that homosexual acts are intrinsically evil and that homosexual inclination represents an objective disorder. Yet, in the two letters, Pope Francis praised the work of New Ways Ministry in one, and in the other he even extolled the figure of Sister Jeannine, described as “a woman of value who makes her decisions in prayer”. And it should be noted that Sister Jeannine is one of the speakers at the current conference.

Moreover, the list of Pope Francis' pro-LGBTQ 'gestures' would be very long. And we are not talking about welcoming people with homosexual tendencies, but the normalisation and promotion of homosexuality.

So how can one be surprised by this new letter to Father Martin?

At the same time, it's impossible not to notice a huge problem, which in turn cannot but question pastors and faithful alike. Namely: we have a Pope who not only exalts people and organisations for the same reason that other popes and bishops have condemned them. But, he also openly contradicts previous Magisterium. And in this regard, let us recall once again the Letter signed by Cardinal Ratzinger on 1 October 1986 on the "[pastoral care of homosexual persons](#)", which, already at that time, denounced a powerful gay lobby within the Church committed to "subverting" Catholic doctrine by acting in tandem with the gay lobby outside the Church.

Therefore, “this Congregation wishes to ask the Bishops to be especially cautious

of any programmes which may seek to pressure the Church to change her teaching, even while claiming not to do so". Furthermore, the letter signed by Cardinal Ratzinger with the approval of Pope John Paul II, asked the bishops to promote "a pastoral care of homosexual persons in full accord with the teaching of the Church", excluding "organisations in which homosexual persons associate with each other without clearly stating that homosexual activity is immoral".

There can be absolutely no doubt that *New Ways Ministry*, Sister Jeannine Gramick, and Father James Martin fit this description, with their multiple statements and numerous initiatives aimed at subverting Church doctrine. Therefore, it is not possible to claim there's any continuity between the current magisterium and that of John Paul II and Benedict XVI: it is more than a rupture, it is the antithesis. While it is true, that until now, no magisterial act of Pope Francis officially sanctions this subversion, there is however that praxis which is so important for this Pontiff: what counts is that you do something, 'then the theologians will adjust', as he is wont to say. And perhaps it is calculated that it will be the October Synod that will give a strong push in this direction.

So the problem remains and it is huge. It's well known that the subject of homosexuality is not the only one where contradictions are being detected, but in this case the subversion of the Magisterium is so evident and indisputable it's impossible to pretend not to notice what's happening. First and foremost, it is up to the cardinals and bishops to resolve this problem: adapting to it or waiting for the storm to pass is not the solution.