

Stonewall and GLBT Catholics

Celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the Stonewall Riots is remembering those who have gone before us. Participants of Stonewall put everything on the line to fight injustice. This weekend will be the big Pride weekend where many people will be visiting other cities Gay Pride events. Remember not everyone knows why we celebrate Gay Pride.



The **Stonewall riots** were a series of spontaneous, violent demonstrations against a police raid that took place in the early morning hours of June 28, 1969 at the [Stonewall Inn](#), in the [Greenwich Village](#) neighborhood of [New York City](#). They are frequently cited as the first instance in American history when [gays](#) and [lesbians](#) fought back against a government-sponsored system that persecuted homosexuals, and they have become the defining event that marked the start of the [gay rights movement](#) in the United States and around the world.

As a people of faith we understand Stonewall as a wakeup call. There is a Catholic Hymn whose words says it all, “Who will I send, is it I Lord? GLBTQ people can still be fired, evicted, violated, attacked, and murdered for being anything except a heterosexual. There are 1,100 federal and state rights that are guaranteed only to “legally married” couples in America in 2009. Among these are rights to government and veteran’s pensions, judicial rights, and the right to be considered one’s next-of-kin in an emergency. Hate crimes against GLBTQ individuals are up 6% from 2008 already, with only half of the year behind us. Americans serving in the military are denied these 1,100 rights, and must remain silent for fear of being harmed and discharged under the repressive “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” doctrine. Everyday GLBTQ Americans are attacked, harassed, and forced to live in fear, but Americans are not the only ones.

Even we Catholics are not allowed to identify ourselves as GLBT within the Church without being denied the Holy Eucharist. Stonewall is call to us to never forget. Not to confuse spiritual comfort with spiritual justice. Clearly the call for GLBT Catholics is to continually challenge those forces of homophobia within the Church, and not rely on spiritual selfishness as compass of moral justice.

We are called to prayer, to love, and to action and only when we truly see each other as brothers and sisters will true change come to our world and to our Church.

GLBTQ Pride is a remembrance, celebration, and a hope that we are heading towards a more just world.

Ann Anderson
Rainbow Sash Movement