



September 6, 2017

### **American National Catholic Church Replies to the Nashville Statement**

On 29 August, an evangelical organization called the Council of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood released a “Christian manifesto,” the so-called Nashville Statement, which harshly condemned what its authors called “homosexual immorality or transgenderism.” The authors insisted that the sacrament of marriage is exclusively reserved for heterosexual couples, and that faithful Christians everywhere are obliged to concur.

Dozens of well-known evangelical spokespersons, including James Dobson, Tony Perkins, Albert Mohler, Jr., and R.C. Sproul, endorsed the Statement.

Along with thousands of people from a variety of faith traditions, the American National Catholic Church (ANCC) deeply regrets the publication of this unchristian document. We view it as an ill-informed interpretation of scripture and tradition that fails both to demonstrate an awareness of God acting through history and to appreciate the message of Christ’s all-inclusive love.

The Most Reverend George R. Lucey, FCM, presiding bishop of the ANCC, stated that the document’s “authors write in a historical and theological vacuum, unaware that the living God, present in God’s Church, has always invited us into a relationship that honors who God has created us to be.”

Bishop Lucey pointed out that, according to Yale historian James Boswell’s 1995 *Same-Sex Unions in Premodern Europe*, gay marriages were celebrated in Christian communities as early as the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Consequently, the authors of the Nashville Statement, displaying as they do little appreciation of the complex tapestry of Christian tradition, lack the authority to claim that they and they alone know the mind of God.

The ANCC respects that tapestry, holding and teaching the entire deposit of faith rather than a narrowly sectarian version of it, and trusts that the Holy Spirit continues to inspire the Church to embrace ever more fervently the richness of Christ’s compassion and mercy.

Jesus unequivocally tells us, “For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it” (John 12:47). As Christians, we are called to put on the mind of Christ, comporting ourselves to him rather than presuming to judge our sisters and brothers for being who God made them. It is in that spirit that the ANCC stands with people of good will everywhere in repudiating the Nashville Statement.