

April 29, 1985

ARCHBISHOP'S RESIDENCE

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Your Excellency Bernard Law
Chancery Office of Boston
2121 Commonwealth Avenue
Brighton, Massachusetts 02135

Dear Bishop:

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

I attended a talk given by a priest in the Boston area last November which disturbed me greatly. The priest was Reverend Paul Shanley, 253 Watertown Street, Newton, Massachusetts 22158, and the talk was given at Corpus Christi Church here in Rochester. Father Shanley apparently is involved in street ministry. He made some outlandish statements regarding the people involved in a homosexual lifestyle, not merely in orientation. Here are some of the statements; some are on tape:

It is immoral to try to change homosexuals.

If a former homosexual tells you he is now straight, it is not true.

When adults have sex with children, the children seduced them. Children may later regret having caused someone to go to prison, knowing that they are the guilty ones.

Homosexuality was not known until about a 100 years ago.

Priests do not like to counsel homosexuals for fear people will think they are homosexuals.

The Bible does not say that homosexual lifestyle is wrong.

The Bible was written by ignorant men, then said inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Quoted the Bishops out of context -- they said we "should be more charitable and compassionate toward homosexuals" and stopped there without continuing to quote that "we do not condone their acts."

Instead of trying to help these people, he encourages them and feels that others should do the same. He constantly criticized the Church for not being more sympathetic and accepting them as they are, and chided a priest for telling the people not to vote for the Gay Bill of Rights.

The information he was giving out was so blatantly untrue, I could not sit there and say nothing. I challenged him on a couple of occasions, and decided that it should be brought to the attention of those in authority. He was so misleading his audience who were mostly young people.

I spoke with Father James Callan, the administrator of the parish, and he has no objection to my writing to you.

Sincerely,

Wilma M. Higgs
Wilma M. Higgs

10 A Portsmouth Terrace
Rochester, New York 14607

Copies: Bishop Matthew Clark, Bishop of Rochester
Reverend James Callan

RCAB 00058