

Bishop Jugis calls Charlotte Catholic controversy 'difficult,' expresses shock over 'lack of charity'

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CHARLOTTE — In a statement issued today, Bishop Peter J. Jugis called the controversy over a recent presentation on human sexuality at Charlotte Catholic High School "a difficult time" that has caused everyone "a great deal of pain."

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The all-school assembly March 21 featured a presentation by [Sister Jane Dominic Laurel](#), a Dominican from Nashville, Tenn., and a frequent speaker in the Diocese of Charlotte. Sister Jane spoke on "Masculinity and Femininity: Difference and Gift," which explained Catholic teaching about gender using Blessed Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body.

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Sister Jane's March 21 address to students, which was arranged by Father Matthew Kauth, the school's chaplain, was based on a series of instructional videos she created for Aquinas College in Nashville where she is an associate professor. She has a doctorate in sacred theology from the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome.

Sister Jane spent about half of her hour-long talk on homosexuality, including attributing a correlation between the decline of fatherhood in America and the rise in homosexuality. That drew the ire of students and parents over the past three weeks, boiling over in a meeting April 2 at the high school with more than 900 parents present.

In his statement, Bishop Jugis said, "I am shocked to hear the disturbing reports of a lack of charity and respect at the parents' meeting, and outside the meeting in conversations and in social media. There simply is no room in the Catholic Church for such displays of uncharitableness and disrespect. If we have failed in this regard let us make amends to God and neighbor. Even when we disagree, that disagreement should be expressed respectfully in love."

Bishop Jugis also emphasized in his statement, "All of our Catholic schools are committed to hold and teach the Catholic faith in its fullness and with integrity. The Catechism of the Catholic Church contains an explanation of our faith and is accessible to all."

Bishop Jugis' full statement, issued April 9, follows:

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The past few weeks have been very difficult for Charlotte Catholic High School. We have all experienced a great deal of pain. During this difficult time I want to express my support and encouragement for all the parents, students, staff and faculty at the high school. We must move forward toward healing with charity, the hallmark of our Christian life.

Different viewpoints regarding Sr. Jane Dominic Laurel's presentation to students on March 21, 2014, have been discussed in a variety of venues.

At the parent meeting on April 2, 2014, many expressed concern about the lack of advanced communication with parents regarding the subject matter of the assembly. Apologies were made at the meeting for that lack of advanced communication.

The content of the Church's moral teaching was not raised as a matter of contention at the parent meeting. All of our Catholic schools are committed to hold and teach the Catholic faith in its fullness and with integrity. The Catechism of the Catholic Church contains an explanation of our faith and is accessible to all.

During this difficult time I support the continued work of Fr. Matthew Kauth, the chaplain; Mrs. Angela Montague and Mr. Steve Carpenter, the assistant principals; and Mr. Randy Belk, the dean of students; and all they are doing for our Charlotte Catholic High School students. All of us are indebted to them.

I am shocked to hear the disturbing reports of a lack of charity and respect at the parents' meeting, and outside the meeting in conversations and in social media. There simply is no room in the Catholic Church for such displays of uncharitableness and disrespect. If we have failed in this regard let us make amends to God and neighbor. Even when we disagree, that disagreement should be expressed respectfully in love.

We ask the Lord Jesus Christ for His mercy and His healing as we approach the celebrations of Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter Sunday of the Lord's Resurrection. Please be assured of our continued dedication to the mission to teach and live the truth of the Catholic faith at our Charlotte Catholic High School.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Peter J. Jugis

Bishop of Charlotte

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Resources

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 2357-2359

Chastity and homosexuality

2357 Homosexuality refers to relations between men or between women who experience an exclusive or predominant sexual attraction toward persons of the same sex. It has taken a great variety of forms through the centuries and in different cultures. Its psychological genesis remains largely unexplained. Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity,¹⁴¹ tradition has always declared that "homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered."¹⁴² They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved.

2358 The number of men and women who have deep-seated homosexual tendencies is not negligible. This inclination, which is objectively disordered, constitutes for most of them a trial. They must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided. These persons are called to fulfill God's will in their lives and, if they are Christians, to unite to the sacrifice of the Lord's Cross the difficulties they may encounter from their condition.

2359 Homosexual persons are called to chastity. By the virtues of self-mastery that teach them inner freedom, at times by the support of disinterested friendship, by prayer and sacramental grace, they can and should gradually and resolutely approach Christian perfection.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops:<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/homosexuality>

Commonly-asked questions on Catholic teaching about homosexuality:<http://www.catholic.com/browse/all/homosexuality/all/all>

Courage ministry:<http://couragerc.net>

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