

ARCHDIOCESE FOR THE MILITARY SERVICES, USA

(Ordinariatus Castrensis)

DE WAYNE AVENUE
SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND 20910
PHONE (301) 495-4100
FAX (301) 589-3711

Office of the Archbishop

April 16, 1993

Dear Father,

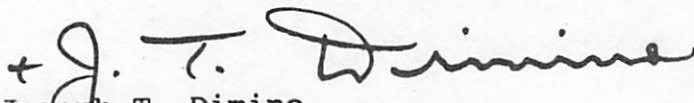
It is our understanding that there is a great deal of discussion taking place at military installations concerning the lifting of the ban against homosexual persons serving in the armed forces. We know that our publicized letter on this subject to President Clinton elicited many comments, from all over the United States.

In order to clarify our position for our Catholic military chaplains we have formulated the enclosed statement. We are grateful to the members of an ad hoc committee of our Presbyteral Council for their assistance in preparing and refining the statement. It is our hope that you will find our comments helpful.

We are very proud of the manner in which our Catholic chaplains are upholding and proclaiming the truths of our Faith - in all parts of the world. As priests of Jesus Christ and loyal followers of the Apostles, our chaplains are proving themselves to be true shepherds of the Church.

It is a joy and a consolation to be associated with you in this magnificent apostolate to the members of the armed forces of the United States. May God continue to provide you with courage and strength. Oremus pro invicem!

Fraternally in Our Lord,

+ 
+Joseph T. Dimino
Archbishop for the Military Services

JTD/wls
Enclosure

ARCHDIOCESE FOR THE MILITARY SERVICES, USA

(Ordinariatus Castrensis)

962 WAYNE AVENUE

SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND 20910

Telephone (301) 495-4100

FAX (301) 589-3774

CONCERNING THE ADMITTANCE OF HOMOSEXUAL PERSONS TO MILITARY SERVICE

INTRODUCTION

"The God who is at once truth and love calls the Church to minister to every man, woman and child with the pastoral solicitude of our Compassionate Lord."

On the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons
Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), 1986

1. In my letter of 27 January 1993 to President Clinton the position of the Military Archdiocese on the admittance of homosexuals into the military was made clear. We oppose such action. This statement is intended to provide our Catholic chaplains with a clarification of our position.
2. Within the Catholic Church the Archdiocese for the Military Services USA bears a unique responsibility for the spiritual well being of all Catholics serving in our armed forces. It is also concerned with the spiritual welfare of those who wish to apply for military service.
3. The current controversy over admitting homosexually oriented persons to military service presents the Military Archdiocese with a unique occasion to reaffirm consistent Catholic moral teaching on human sexuality and the rights belonging to all human persons.

4. The Catholic Church teaches that the virtue of chastity is to be practiced both by those who are married and by those who are single. Neither heterosexual activity outside of marriage nor homosexual activity under any circumstances is ever morally permissible. Both are against the law of God and His Church. This teaching must be reemphasized to our people.
5. Persons, military or civilian, who come to us for assistance, advice, counseling on any matters whatever, including heterosexual or homosexual problems, must always be treated with kindness, charity and with the highest degree of confidentiality.

COMMON GOOD and INDIVIDUAL GOOD

6. Various reasons have been brought forward in opposition to the admittance of homosexually oriented persons to military service. This opposition is based largely on preservation and promotion of the common good, for example, the maintenance of military discipline and esprit de corps, and the impact that homosexually oriented persons in the military would have on service recruiting efforts.
7. Many who oppose lifting the ban on admitting homosexually oriented persons to military service have indicated concern over other dimensions of the common good. They argue that, if homosexually oriented persons should be accepted in the military, other issues may be expected to arise: affirmative action for homosexuals; homosexual quotas at the military academies; housing arrangements for homosexuals; acceptance of

homosexuality as an appropriate alternate lifestyle within the armed forces.

8. While this Archdiocese is also concerned with the common good and agrees that serious and harmful consequences, such as those noted above, could well result from the admittance of homosexually oriented persons into the military services, the Archdiocese bases its argument on and is motivated primarily by the Catholic Church's consistent teaching on the individual good, the moral and spiritual welfare of the individual person, namely, the right and concomitant obligation of every person to strive to live virtuously in pursuit of eternal happiness.
9. We are well aware that certain heterosexual conduct in the military reflects our present national attitudes towards morality and can seriously challenge an individual's heterosexual chastity. This is a reality that we hope will continue to be addressed by our military leaders to the extent possible for them to do so. However, we do not see the wisdom of compounding the problem at this time by lifting restrictions on the homosexually oriented serving in the military, and thereby subjecting these persons to undue temptations against chastity by requiring them to live daily, often over long periods of time, in intimate proximity to others of the same sex, in close quarters aboard ships at sea or in military barracks.

10. In stating this, we, as members of the Catholic Church, continue to affirm the innate value of all persons and to advocate respect for the intrinsic human rights of all persons, regardless of sexual orientation.

It is deplorable that homosexual persons have been and are the object of violent malice in speech or in action. Such treatment deserves condemnation from the Church's pastors wherever it occurs. It reveals a kind of disregard for others which endangers the most fundamental principles of a healthy society. The intrinsic dignity of each person must always be respected in word, in action and in law. (CDF 1992,#7)

Homosexual persons, as human persons, have the same rights as all persons, including the right of not being treated in a manner which offends their dignity. (CDF1992,#12)

11. However, in its belief that human sexuality must always be intrinsically linked to the primacy of family life, the Catholic Church clearly teaches that the homosexual orientation is in itself an objective disorder. The orientation in any given individual is in itself not sinful, but may not be used to justify homosexual activity which is sinful.
12. As is well known, for various physical, mental, emotional and psychological reasons certain persons are refused admittance into specific occupations, e.g., piloting airplanes, performing surgical procedures, operating dangerous machinery.
13. This is not unjust discrimination, nor is it a violation of anyone's human rights. It is just and proper - because it seeks to protect the common good of society and the security and safety of the individual persons involved. This matter was put into clear perspective by the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in its statement of July 1992:

There are areas in which it is not unjust discrimination to take sexual orientation into account, for example, in the placement of children for adoption or foster care, in employment of teachers or coaches and in military recruitment. (CDF 1992, #11)

14. Therefore, it would not be an abridgement of human rights to deny homosexually oriented persons admittance to the armed forces for their own moral safety and for the sake of military readiness and accomplishment of the mission assigned.