

Ron Ray

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Catholic dialogue with gays advocated

By Peter Smith
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 The Courier-Journal

Organizers of a national conference on homosexuality and Catholicism ended a three-day conference in Louisville yesterday with a 12-point call for the church to "find new ways to communicate the truth of Christ to lesbian/gay people."

The conference, which drew more than 500 delegates to the Galt House, was sponsored by New Ways Ministry, which advocates greater acceptance of homosexuals in the Catholic Church. The church teaches that homosexual acts are sinful but that gays and lesbians should be accepted.

New Ways called for all levels of the church to pay greater attention to the issue. For example, it urged bishops to initiate a dialogue with gays and lesbians; dioceses and pastors to develop ministries to them; and theologians and other thinkers to devote serious study to issues of same-sex relationships.

The organization issued similar calls to people ranging from religious educators to campus ministers to counselors. It concluded with a call to "all Catholics and people of good will (to) respect and celebrate the diversity of people with which God has blessed us."

The Vatican tried to prohibit New Ways from including a Mass in the conference, saying that New Ways does not promote Catholic teaching and that the conference would promote confusion and scandal.

But New Ways organizers went ahead with the Mass Saturday night after consulting with experts on church law, who concluded that the Vatican office involved did not have the authority to prohibit it.

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