

Gays resent status as Catholics' 'scapegoat'

Say sex scandals aren't their fault

By Ellen Sorokin
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

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the homosexual movement to raise the issue of whether there is a correlation between homosexuality and child abuse.

"What this has done is repeat the mythology that had already been put to rest when our movement began in the 1970s," Ms. Duddy said.

Research has shown there is no correlation between homosexuality and child abuse, Ms. Duddy said.

Other groups, such as the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, said that although they don't think it will set the movement back, the accusations could affect the movement in other countries.

Last month, the U.N. Economic and Social Council rejected the International Gay and Lesbian Alliance's request for consultative status, which would allow it to weigh in on policy issues that would affect homosexuals around the world.

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force officials blame the rejection on the Catholic Church's accusations. "We think it made it easier for the council to reject this application," said Jubi Headley, the task force's communications director. "And we think that it will be easier for those people who do not support us to reject similar proposals in the future."

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force officials said, however, that they don't think most Americans will agree with church leaders and that the accusations have led homosexuals to reorganize their movement.

"Americans are smarter than the Catholic Church is making them out to be," Mr. Headley said. "It just shows you how sadly behind the church is on the issue of homosexuality. This is all very sad."

The groups' comments come after several Catholic Church leaders publicly linked the scandal revolving around the sexual abuse of minors to the admission of homosexuals to

the priesthood.

Philadelphia Cardinal Anthony Bevilacqua called homosexuality an "aberration, a moral evil" last week and said the archdiocese tries to screen out homosexual priests, suggesting that they were more likely to abuse children. New York City Monsignor Eugene Clark, during a homily, said homosexuality "is a disorder and, as a disorder, should prevent a person from being ordained a priest."

Also, Bishop Wilton Gregory, head of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said at a press briefing last month that one of the difficulties "we face in seminary life or recruitment is made possible when there does exist a homosexual atmosphere or dynamic that makes heterosexual men think twice" about entering because of fear of harassment. "It's an ongoing struggle to make sure the Catholic priesthood is not dominated by homosexual men," he said.

"Homosexuality is not the disorder," said Joe Tarver, with the Empire State Pride Agenda in New York. "Sexual abuse and harassment of teen-agers and young children by priests they trusted is the disorder, and it afflicts both straight and gay members of the clergy."

Sister Mary Ann Walsh, a spokeswoman for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, has said in interviews with the Associated Press that the recent statements do not reflect the church's stance, which is that homosexual or heterosexual men can be priests if they are celibate.

Sister Walsh said the church does not reject homosexual Catholics. What it teaches is that being homosexual isn't a sin, but that being a sexually active homosexual is.

"I think the church tries to be open to all Catholics who are accepting of the church's teachings," Sister Walsh said. "It's a difficult point for homosexual Catholics that the church condemns homosexual activity."

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