

In a Nov. 28 column, Nick Coleman accuses me of not being compassionate toward friends and relatives of persons with same-sex attractions. I vigorously deny the charge. For 13 years I prepared priesthood candidates for celebrating the Sacrament of Penance by counseling them to welcome persons with warmth, compassion and understanding. Anyone who has celebrated that same sacrament with me knows I follow my own advice.

What Coleman wants is for the church I represent to be accepting and compassionate toward homosexual acts and lifestyles. And that can never be.

Coleman further claims the Catechism of the Catholic Church does not say that homosexual acts are a "grave evil." What it does say is the following: "Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity (Genesis 19: 1-29, Romans 1: 24-27, 1 Corinthians 6: 10, 1 Timothy 1:10), tradition has always declared that 'homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered.' ... Under no circumstances can they be approved."

As a priest and bishop, I have the responsibility before God and in the name of Jesus Christ to call all men and women to conversion, the first step of which is recognizing sinful activity for what it is. Sometimes that is not a comfortable thing to do, but it is always the compassionate thing to do.

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