



## Committee on Doctrine

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In view of the recent booklet, *Marriage Equality: A Positive Catholic Approach*, by Francis DeBernardo (published by New Ways Ministry), we, as the respective chairmen of the USCCB Committee on Doctrine and the Ad Hoc Committee for the Defense of Marriage, wish to reaffirm Francis Cardinal George's statement of February 12, 2010 and assure Catholics that in no manner is the position proposed by New Ways Ministry in conformity with Catholic teaching, and in no manner is this organization authorized to speak on behalf of the Catholic Church or to identify itself as a Catholic organization.

Donald Cardinal Wuerl  
Chairman, Committee on Doctrine

Bishop Salvatore Cordileone  
Chairman, Ad Hoc Committee for the Defense of Marriage

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Cardinal George's statement of February 12, 2010 is as follows (see <http://www.usccb.org/comm/archives/2010/10-028.shtml>):

New Ways Ministry is an organization based in Mount Rainier, Maryland, that describes itself as "a gay-positive ministry of advocacy and justice for lesbian and gay Catholics and reconciliation within the larger Christian and civil communities." From the time of the organization's founding in 1977, serious questions have been raised about the group's adherence to Church teaching on homosexuality. In 1984, the archbishop of Washington denied New Ways Ministry any official authorization or approval of its activities. At that time, he forbade the two co-founders of New Ways Ministry, Sr. Jeannine Gramick, SSND, and Fr. Robert Nugent, to continue their activities in the Archdiocese of Washington. In the same year, Sr. Gramick and Fr. Nugent were ordered by their superiors to separate themselves from New Ways Ministry. Although they resigned

from leadership posts, they continued their involvement in New Ways Ministry activities until 1999, when the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith declared that because of errors and ambiguities in the approach of Sr. Gramick and Fr. Nugent they are permanently prohibited from any pastoral work involving homosexual persons.

In reference to his decision not to grant any approval or authorization to New Ways Ministry in the 1980s, Archbishop James Hickey of Washington cited the organization's lack of adherence to Church teaching on the morality of homosexual acts. This was the central issue in the subsequent investigation and censure of the founders of New Ways Ministry, Sr. Jeannine Gramick and Fr. Robert Nugent. This continues to be the crucial defect in the approach of New Ways Ministry, which has not changed its position after the departure of the cofounders.

New Ways Ministry has recently criticized efforts by the Church to defend the traditional definition of marriage as between one man and one woman and has urged Catholics to support electoral initiatives to establish same-sex "marriage." No one should be misled by the claim that New Ways Ministry provides an authentic interpretation of Catholic teaching and an authentic Catholic pastoral practice. Their claim to be Catholic only confuses the faithful regarding the authentic teaching and ministry of the Church with respect to persons with a homosexual inclination. Accordingly, I wish to make it clear that, like other groups that claim to be Catholic but deny central aspects of Church teaching, New Ways Ministry has no approval or recognition from the Catholic Church and that they cannot speak on behalf of the Catholic faithful in the United States.