



Speaking Out: We can't deny our faith's truth

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A few weeks ago, the *Globe and Mail* ran an article about the Toronto Catholic District School Board's ongoing debate on whether or not to include the terms "gender identity, gender expression, marital status and family status" in its Code of Conduct. Prior to that, I had attended a meeting purely out of curiosity at the Catholic Education Centre in Toronto at which this matter was discussed, so I wasn't surprised to see a secular newspaper pick up on the issue.

I was reminded of a quote by the author of *The Early Christians*, Eberhard Arnold: "Truth without love kills, but love without truth lies."

If we are going to have a discussion about love or rather how some individuals choose to love, we must involve truth, no matter how difficult it is. And for those whom we love, who are personally impacted, we still offer them the truth, but deliver it with compassion to ease some of the discomfort which they may feel.

Having attended Toronto Catholic schools from kindergarten through high school, it wasn't uncommon to see students supporting the LGBTQ+ community. This was often done under the mistaken suggestion that the Church was a "misogynistic," "homophobic," "transphobic" institution.

Something to keep in mind is that when walking down the street, one doesn't know who is who. One doesn't know who believes they are lesbian, gay, etc. And you won't know unless they reveal that part of their lives to you. Even then, the only appropriate response is love, dignity and respect. Catholics and other Christians would know this better than anyone. We must never hate anyone, for to hate someone is the same as wishing they didn't exist. Instead we are called to love.

I have friends who believe they are part of the LGBTQ+ mix. I think that they are good people, who as individuals are funny, smart and kind. I would never seek to change who they are, for doing so would change everything that makes that person unique. Who they are, however, is not what they do. So, in this one area of their lives, I do believe they are strongly misguided. I also

acknowledge that as human beings our feelings are not always accurate. And to be fair, as sinners, we each have at least one area of our lives in which we are flawed.

We must be clear that rejecting certain terminology is not the same as rejecting persons. Terminology describes behaviour. To reduce our description of a person to certain terms would be a great injustice to them. We must also be clear when it comes to acceptance. What is it that we are accepting in society, persons or behaviour? We are inclusive of people, but not all terms or choices. Humans are more than the sum of our actions, so we are allowed, and even encouraged, to evaluate and correct actions. For instance, when we look at bad choices made by an individual, we would say that what he or she did was wrong, and would work to explain why that is.

“Words are not enough to change the heart of a man.” This quote comes from *Restless Heart*, a movie depicting the life of St. Augustine.

Ask any married person and they will tell you that the key to love is communication. What is lacking in our society is that while some do dialogue about this issue, the majority are not communicating this message effectively. We must add our actions to our effort, otherwise our message without truth or love will either kill or lie. We must also work to expose the dangers in the shadows of our lives.

That has been the message of Pope Francis, who has spoken out against gender ideology. Even though some school boards and the Ontario Human Rights Code incorporate gender ideology and gender expression, it is no reason for us to deny the truth of our faith.