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EQUALLY BLESSED LAMENTS BISHOPS' DEFENSE OF DISCRIMINATION  
*Bishops' opposition to fair housing practices contradicts Gospel, group says*

WASHINGTON, D. C. March 30, 2011—Equally Blessed, a coalition of four Roman Catholic organizations that support full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and their families both in the church and in civil society, released a statement today, lamenting the U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' opposition to new fair housing rules that would bar groups that receive federal funds from discriminating against gays, lesbians or transgender persons in housing programs.

“As faithful Catholics, we are shocked by our bishops' opposition to proposed government regulations that seek only to ensure that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are treated fairly in federally-subsidized housing programs.

“The bishops' legal position is perplexing. They assert not simply a right to discriminate against LGBT people, but a right to compel LGBT people, their friends and families to subsidize discrimination with their tax dollars. This is not what the authors of the First Amendment had in mind when they guaranteed U. S. citizens a right to religious freedom.

“More troubling than the bishops' dubious legal argument, however, is their willingness to overlook the core teachings of our faith. Jesus did not tell us to heal the sick, feed the hungry and clothe the naked as long as God created them straight, or they agree with our theology. The notion that the bishops of our church would fight to *deny* people the basic human right of shelter is profoundly disturbing; in this instance, it appears that the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development manifests a deeper appreciation of the Gospel than do the bishops of our church.

“We urge HUD officials to realize that on the issue of same-gender relationships, the bishops speak for an ever-dwindling minority of the church. On issues including employment discrimination, adoption rights and the legal recognition of same-gender relationships, significant majorities of U. S. Catholics support treating gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people with fairness and justice. Bishops who seek to raise Catholic voices against the simple matter of housing for LGBT people will find they command a rather paltry choir.”

*Equally Blessed is a coalition of faithful Catholics who support full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people both in the church and in civil society. Equally Blessed includes four organizations that have spent a combined 112 years working on behalf of LGBT people and their families: Call To Action, DignityUSA, Fortunate Families, and New Ways Ministry.*

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