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Cardinal Ratzinger not a supporter of LGBT community

from page 1

1951 and began a career as a theologian and professor. He was named Cardinal of Munich in 1977, and was called to the Vatican in 1981 by Pope John Paul II.

He has been one of the leading anti-gay voices within the Catholic Church. In a 1986 pastoral letter to bishops, he called gay and lesbian sexuality "an intrinsic moral evil" and "an objective disorder."

More recently, in a book published last fall, he joined those voices seeking to restrict marriage to solely that of a man and a woman. He wrote, "To create a legal form of a kind of homosexual marriage, in reality, does not help these people."

Ratzinger sought to downplay the importance of allegations of sexual abuse within the Church and to protect priests rather than aid their victims. In a 2002 interview with the press he said, "I am personally convinced that the constant presence in the press of the sins of Catholic priests, especially in the United States, is a planned campaign."

Some members of the clergy have pushed for a loosening of the Church's strictures against the use of condoms, particularly to prevent HIV infections in Africa. But Ratzinger has been dogmatic in his opposition to condoms.

In a sermon delivered before his fellow Cardinals on April 18, immediately before they met to elect a new pope, Ratzinger decried "a dictatorship of relativism."

Reaction from the gay community was swift and uniformly negative.

"The elevation of Cardinal Ratzinger is being seen by many GLBT Catholics as a profound betrayal by the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church and betrayal of one of the most fundamental teachings of Jesus Christ as the loving Good Shepherd who reached out to the ones separated from the flock," said Sam Sinnett, president of DignityUSA. "We believe the 21st century Roman Catholic hierarchical shepherds are themselves lost and it is up to the flock to call them back."

Dignity called upon its members to pray for the Church from now until Pentecost (May 15).

Sister Jeannine Gramick called it "a great disappointment. ...The method of Cardinal Ratzinger has been that we don't

the world's most homophobic religious leaders has been elevated to the papacy, and regret that his policies will continue to devalue the rich spiritual gifts of LGBT people and women of faith," said Rev. Troy D. Perry, moderator of the Metropolitan Community Churches.



National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Executive Director Matt Foreman says that the election of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger as Pope has unleashed a 'venomous hatred' toward the LGBT community.

"My faith teaches that all people can change, so my prayers today are that the eyes of Cardinal Ratzinger — now Pope Benedict XVI — will be opened to the unique giftedness and blessing that LGBT people can be to the Church."

Matt Foreman, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, pulled no punches speaking "as a long-time Catholic from a staunchly Catholic family."

"Today, the princes of the Roman Catholic Church elected as pope a man whose record has been one of unrelenting, venomous hatred for gay people." He called Ratzinger "the driving force behind a long string of pronouncements using the term 'evil' to describe gay people, homosexuality, and marriage equality."

"Someday the Church will apologize to gay people as it has to others it has

oppressed in the past. ...It seems inevitable that this Pope will cause even more pain and give his successors even more for which to seek atonement."

In a highly unusual move, Rabbi Michael Lerner issued a lengthy and stinging rebuke of the Cardinal, including criticizing him for leading efforts to elevate Pope Pius XII to sainthood, even though Pope Pius XII colluded with Nazi Germany. He said Ratzinger

"has distinguished himself as a man who can be counted on to side with the most anti-humane and repressive forces, in opposition to those who seek to give primacy to a world of peace and justice."

"My prayers today are that the eyes of Cardinal Ratzinger ... will be open to the unique giftedness and blessings that LGBT people can be to the Church."

—Sister Jeannine Gramick

talk things out, we suppress." She was a cofounder of New Ways Ministry to gay and lesbian Catholics and was silenced by Ratzinger and the Church in 2000.

"We share a deep sadness that one of

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