



James Martin, SJ

@JamesMartinSJ

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Thread: Judge Smolenski, 62, was baptized at St. Stephen. She and her nine siblings attended the church's school from first through eighth grade. Her parents were married in the church in the 1940s. That is, the judge has been a parishioner for 62 years.



As with all these sad cases, the question is: Why are only married LGBT people being singled out? Is Communion denied to all parishioners who are not following church teachings? That is, married couples using birth control or IVF? Or young people engaging in pre-marital sex?

Moreover, why are parishes focusing only on issues of sexual morality? Are there no other issues in the moral life? Are those who refuse to pay a living wage to employees denied Communion? How about those who do not give to the poor? Those who do not care for the environment?

The argument is made that same-sex marriage is a "public" sin." But there are many other examples of public acts well known among parish communities. Is Communion denied to someone who is cruel or abusive to a spouse, who doesn't forgive coworkers, who holds a grudge for years?

Moreover, why is it only a "public" act that bars someone from receiving Communion? If pastors chose to, they could easily ask married couples if they are using birth control, or ask young people if they are engaging in pre-marital sex. Of course, they choose not to.

The answer is often: "Of course. Because it would be unethical to investigate and pry." Yet in many of LGBT cases, the news of the person's marriage comes from scouring Facebook pages, from someone else reporting them, or from a priest grilling friends and family members.

Investigation and prying seem to be acceptable when it comes to the lives of LGBT Catholics.

Overall, the only area that seems to matter in these cases is sexual morality, and the only sexual morality that seems to matter is that of the LGBT person. It is a clear targeting of a

specific group of people on a specific question of morality.

In his new podcast "Plague," released today, on #WorldAIDSDay," Michael O'Loughlin reminds us of how the Catholic Church ministered to LGBT people, but also how it targeted them for public opprobrium during the height of the crisis. Have we learned nothing?

The Catholic Church is called to proclaim church teaching. But church teaching is, at heart, Jesus's message of love, mercy and forgiveness. The church also has rules. But these rules must be applied across the board, not selectively, and not simply to one group of people.

Otherwise it is no longer "church teaching." It is merely discrimination.

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