



## Catholic School Takes Stance Against Firing Gay Teacher during Pride Month

By Educator Barnes – June 23, 2019

June is [LGBTQ Pride Month](#). Many in this community or who are allies of this community are celebrating Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory School. This Catholic school was asked by the Archdiocese of Indianapolis to fire a gay teacher. Instead of complying with the request, the school refused.

Gay teacher firing at Catholic schools has been a tense issue in Indianapolis. Roncalli High School guidance counselor Shelly Fitzgerald was suspended after it was revealed she was in a same-sex marriage. According to the Indy Star:

*The school said her same-sex marriage is a violation of her contract with the school. Fitzgerald said she was given the option to dissolve her marriage, resign or quietly serve out the rest of her contract with the knowledge that it wouldn't be renewed.*

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis and Roncalli High School released a statement in response:

*Catholic schools are ministries of the Catholic Church, and teachers, school guidance counselors and administrators are vital ministers in sharing the mission of the Church....These teachings include but are not limited to: honoring the dignity of each human life from conception to natural death, care for God's creation, and the belief that all persons are called to respect human sexuality and its expression in the Sacrament of Marriage between a man and a woman as a sign of God's love and fidelity to His Church.*

*These expectations are clearly defined in school employee contracts and ministerial job descriptions so every employee can make an informed decision regarding their employment prior to the start of each program year and before signing the annual contract. When the expectations of a contract are not being met, the employee and the school will attempt to reach a resolution so that the contractual requirements are fulfilled.*

Based on the situation with Roncalli, it is no surprise the Archdiocese of Indianapolis expected Brebeuf to take the same actions as Roncalli. Brebeuf leadership refused and this refusal had consequences which the school shared in a statement to the community:

*Brebeuf Jesuit was founded in 1962 as an independent Catholic Jesuit school. While we've enjoyed a collaborative partnership with the Archdiocese for nearly 57 years, we have always maintained control of our school's operations and governance, including our personnel decisions. It is our understanding that the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, at the direction of Archbishop Charles Thompson, will no longer formally recognize Brebeuf Jesuit as a Catholic school in the Archdiocese. We understand that a formal decree announcing the Archdiocese's decision will be published in *The Criterion* on or around Friday, June 21.*

There are many teachings in the Bible that people violate daily. At what point will religious officials stop policing the moral activities of people? It is hard enough being a teacher. Teachers do not need the extra burden of trying to be moral enough to keep their jobs. What sin will be next to dismiss teachers? Homosexuality is not an airborne contagious disease, but this is how some respond to individuals who are in a same-sex relationship. Somehow they believe if students have a teacher in this type of relationship, all of their students will do the same.

Teachers are sexual beings. Students, the older ones, realize this. Once a female teacher's last name changes and she goes from Miss or Ms. to Mrs. students know their teacher is a sexual being, but that teacher is not going to be in class discussing this. Neither is a teacher in a same-sex relationship. All that should matter is how the teacher is delivering academic content. Can we have that conversation? Maybe religious people should remember all of Jesus's teaching and stop casting stones.