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# J15

## John 15 Ministry

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**This I command you: Love one another.**

John 15:17

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### OUR MISSION

The John 15 Ministry wants to encourage all LGBT Catholics in the Auburn-Opelika communities to feel free and comfortable to join us in worshipping our God together for His greater honor and glory. We hope to do this by:

- Fostering a spirit of community among LGBT Catholics and heterosexual Catholics
- Providing factual, spiritual, and emotional support for LGBT Catholics and their families
- Developing parishes that are welcoming to LGBT Catholics and their families

While the John 15 Ministry takes its inspiration from the Gospel of John it will be based, as is appropriate, on facts gleaned from the social and biological sciences, teachings and pastoral practices of the Catholic Church, and the real life experiences of LGBT members and the associated families to which we minister.

In light of the call of Jesus Christ to reach out lovingly to all persons who suffer any form of abuse or loss of human dignity, the John 15 Ministry will condemn any violent or malicious treatment of LGBT individuals and families whether it be via speech, action, or law. Similarly, the John 15 Ministry will support movements for LGBT persons and families that are consonant with Church teaching, especially those which safeguard human dignity and promote human rights.

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## GENESIS

The John 15 Ministry grew from the study of Catholic social justice teachings by friends and families of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Catholics from both St. Michael the Archangel parish in Auburn, Alabama, and St. Mary's parish in Opelika, Alabama. They began to discuss ways to expose fellow Catholics in those parishes to concerns of the LGBT community, and the call of the Catholic Church to treat LGBT parishioners with dignity and to provide them a welcoming environment in which to worship our God. Those friends and families were encouraged by pastors of both parishes to develop a ministry to embody this endeavor. As such, the John 15 Ministry was conceived and is rooted in the key premise of Chapter 15 of St. John's Gospel, that the newest Commandment as presented there by Our Lord, Jesus the Christ, is that we love and care for one another no matter what our race, ethnic origins, religious beliefs, social status, or sexual orientation.

## REFLECTIONS

*A person once asked me, in a provocative manner, if I approved of homosexuality. I replied with another question: 'Tell me: when God looks at a gay person, does he endorse the existence of this person with love, or reject and condemn this person?' We must always consider the person. Here we enter into the mystery of the human being. In life, God accompanies persons, and we must accompany them, starting from their situation. It is necessary to accompany them with mercy.*

Pope Francis  
Interview released Sept. 19, 2013

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*All in all, it is essential to recall one basic truth. God loves every person as a unique individual. Sexual identity helps to define the unique persons we are, and one component of our sexual identity is sexual orientation. Thus, our total personhood is more encompassing than sexual orientation. "Human beings see the appearances, but the Lord looks into the heart." [1 Sam 16:7]*

US Conference of Catholic Bishops  
'Always Our Children' 1997/1998

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*You [parent of a homosexual person] may still insist: “You are always my child; nothing can ever change that. You are also a child of God, gifted and called for a purpose in God’s design.”*

US Conference of Catholic Bishops  
‘Always Our Children’ 1997/1998

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## **Contact Us**

### **John 15 Ministry**

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*I have a dogmatic certainty: God is in every person’s life.*

Pope Francis  
Interview released Sept. 19, 2013