

DETROIT ARCHDIOCESE BANS DISSIDENT

Detroit Archbishop Allen Vigneron recently decided to ban dissident speaker Francis DeBernardo from speaking at an archdiocesan church.

The way some Catholic activists and media outlets are spinning this story is simply dishonest. They would have us believe that DeBernardo is not welcome to address parishioners because of his gay-rights views. Not quite. News Ways Ministry, under his leadership, is organized to oppose the teachings of the Catholic Church. Worse, it falsely sells itself as a Catholic entity. Here is a quick history of its run-ins with the Vatican:

- 1984 – James Cardinal Hickey, Archbishop of Washington, “informed them that they could no longer undertake their activities within the Archdiocese.”
- 1984 – Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and for Societies of Apostolic Life ordered its two leaders to “separate themselves totally and completely from New Ways Ministry.”
- 1999 – Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger issued an order at the approval of Pope John Paul II that “permanently prohibited” the two leaders “from any pastoral work involving homosexuals.”
- 2002 – Archbishop Tarcisio Bertone, Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, wrote that “New Ways Ministry does not promote the authentic teaching of the Catholic Church.”
- 2010 – Francis Cardinal George, then president of the bishops’ conference, said that “in no manner is this

organization authorized to speak on behalf of the Catholic Church or to identify itself as a Catholic organization.”

- 2011 – Donald Cardinal Wuerl and Bishop Salvatore J. Cordileone issued a statement reaffirming Cardinal George’s 2010 statement.

If someone who rejects the editorial page positions of a newspaper requested office space at the paper’s headquarters—for the express purpose of informing employees how wrong the editorial board is (all the while selling himself as a legitimate spokesman for the media outlet)—we know what would happen. Kudos to Archbishop Vigneron for speaking the truth.