

# Fr. MARTIN DISTORTS TRUTH ABOUT DISSIDENT NUN

[Bill Donohue](#)

Fr. James Martin, the Jesuit champion of gay and transgender rights, has a column in today's *New York Times* that is intellectually dishonest. I will be very specific.

He cites the case of Sister Jeannine Gramick as testimony to Pope Francis' outreach to "L.G.B.T.Q. people." He notes that "Her saga began in 1999, during the papacy of St. John Paul II. That year, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, later to become Pope Benedict XVI, barred Sister Gramick and the Rev. Robert Nugent, two Americans, from ministering to 'homosexual persons.'" He goes on to say that Pope Francis met with Gramick and praised her for her work.

It is not clear how much Pope Francis knew about Gramick. At the time, I assumed he was given a selective interpretation of her work, which is why I accused his handlers of "[manipulating](#)" him. In any event, Fr. Martin gives the impression that Benedict is the ogre. In fact, what he did was long overdue. Here is what happened. [See my book, [The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse: Clarifying the Facts and the Causes](#), for the citations.]

In 1999, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, written by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, issued a "Notification Regarding Sister Jeannine Gramick, SSND, and Father Robert Nugent, SDS." It was directed at the work of New Ways Ministry (NWM), which was founded by Gramick and Nugent in 1977.

Ratzinger noted that in 1984, "James Cardinal Hickey, the Archbishop of Washington, following the failure of a number of attempts at clarification, informed them [NWM] that they could no longer undertake their activities in that Archdiocese. At

the same time, the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and for Societies of Apostolic Life ordered them to separate themselves totally and completely from *New Ways Ministry*, adding that they were not to exercise any apostolate without faithfully presenting the Church's teaching regarding the intrinsic evil of homosexual acts."

Ratzinger then detailed the many attempts by Church officials to persuade Gramick and Nugent to abide by Church teachings on this subject. He concluded that they "are permanently prohibited from any pastoral work involving homosexual persons and are ineligible, for an undetermined period, for any office in their respective religious institutes."

Three years later, in 2002, Archbishop Tarcisio Bertone, Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, wrote that "New Ways Ministry does not promote the authentic teaching of the Catholic Church."

In that same year, Archbishop Thomas Kelly of Louisville told organizers of the group's conference that they should not celebrate the Eucharist at the NWM event. Following suit in 2007 was St. Paul-Minneapolis Archbishop Harry Flynn: he barred NWM's national conference from celebrating the Eucharist.

In 2010, Cardinal Francis George, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, stated that he can assure Catholics that "in no manner is the position proposed by New Ways Ministry in conformity with Catholic teaching and in no manner is this organization authorized to speak on behalf of the Catholic Church or to identify itself as a Catholic organization."

In 2011, Cardinal Donald Wuerl of the Washington Archdiocese, and chairman of the Committee on Doctrine, joined with Oakland Bishop Salvatore Cordileone, and chairman of the bishops' Ad Hoc Committee on the Defense of Marriage, issuing an

affirmation of Cardinal George's denunciation of NWM.

For Fr. Martin not to make mention of any of this is to completely distort the record. He was also wrong not to mention that Gramick continued to defy Church teachings as late as a few years ago. On January 7, 2022, she said that in 1999 the Vatican wanted her and Nugent "to say that homosexual activity is objectively immoral and that we personally believed that. And I could not do that."

Worse, Gramick showed more sympathy for the greatest child rapist priest in American history, Father Paul Shanley, than she did his many victims. For decades, the Boston priest raped males of all ages, and he liked to blame the victims, famously saying, "the kid is the seducer."

In 2005, Gramick said that she "grieved for this man I had not seen in almost 20 years, but whose principles and whose advocacy for the downtrodden I had applauded for three decades." Journalist Maureen Orth, who was married to "Meet the Press" host Tim Russert, was horrified by what she said, adding that she interviewed nine of Shanley's victims, and that Gramick never spoke to one of them.

Pope Benedict XVI acted honorably when, as a cardinal, he called out Sr. Jeannine Gramick. To imply otherwise is scurrilous.