

GAYS PROTEST AT MASS

On May 15, Pentecost Sunday, a group of radical gay activists entered a few Catholic churches across the nation during Mass staging a protest. The group, Rainbow Sash, has a history of exploiting the Mass for political purposes.

The week before their demonstration, they instructed their members to put the rainbow sash over their left shoulder and pin it to their right hip while the priest was processing to the altar. They were then told to go to Holy Communion and, if refused, to return to their seats in the pew and stand while everyone else is kneeling. The sash, they readily admit, is worn as a symbol of protest against the teachings of the Catholic Church on sexuality.

A few days before the event, we issued the following news release:

"Last year, Cardinal McCarrick of Washington, D.C. and Cardinal George of Chicago banned Rainbow Sash members from receiving the Eucharist. Cardinal Mahony of Los Angeles, Archbishop Flynn of St. Paul and Minneapolis and Bishop Clark of Rochester, New York did not ban them. This year Archbishop Flynn has told Rainbow Sash that they will be banned. He explicitly said that 'the Vatican has communicated to me that it does indeed consider the wearing of the Rainbow Sash during reception of Communion to be unacceptable, a directive I believe all Bishops will adhere to.'

"This year, Rainbow Sash has upped the ante. In its May 2 press release, it said that the purpose of their presence is to 'counter the lies that Pope Benedict XVI is promoting about our community'; it also said that to many gays and lesbians the new pope is an 'aggressive homophobe.'

"By calling the pope a liar and a homophobe, Rainbow Sash has finally taken off its mask. We look for them to get what they

want—to be denied Communion. We also hope the cops are standing by. To exploit the Mass for political purposes is obscene, but it is what we have come to expect from the likes of Rainbow Sash.”

Archbishop Flynn made good on his promise—members of Rainbow Sash were denied Communion. But in Rochester, New York, they were not. In Los Angeles, the planned protest was cancelled: Rainbow Sash was so happy to be “welcomed” into the Cathedral of Our Lady of Angels that they called off their demonstration.

Here is what Tod Tanberg, the archdiocese media relations director, said about this issue the day before the protest: “Just a note to say that, as in the past, members of the Rainbow Sash Movement who come to the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels this Sunday will be most welcome to attend any of our Masses. Over the years, Cardinal Roger Mahony has consistently spoken to the faithful in Los Angeles about being respectful and inclusive of our Catholic brothers and sisters who are gay and lesbian. All of us struggle to be better Christians, but I think a good number of our parishes in the archdiocese are places where people feel welcome and included, regardless of their sexual orientation.”