



Press Release: Saturday 21st September 2013

Press Release: Saturday 21st September 2013

GLEN cautiously welcome Pope Francis's Comments on Gay People

In an extensive interview, published on Thursday 20th in *America* magazine, Pope Francis addressed Catholic Church approaches to gay people and to marriage for lesbian and gay couples. He stated that the Church has become 'obsessed' with issues such as 'gay marriage' and called for a 'new balance' within the Catholic Church.

"The Pope's latest comments suggest a change in the tone of the Catholic Church's approach to gay people. This is to be welcomed if it provides an opportunity for the Catholic Church to change the way it treats lesbian and gay people" said Kieran Rose, GLEN Chair.

"The Pope's comments sends some encouragement to schools and hospitals to be more proactive and affirming towards LGBT people. The call for a 'new balance' holds out the possibility of a new engagement by the Catholic Church on civil matters, such as on civil marriage for lesbian and gay couples" said Rose.

"Irish people, the majority of whom are Catholic, support efforts to ensure the full participation of lesbian and gay people in all aspects of Irish society. We see this in the warm welcome for civil partnerships all across the country and in the overwhelming vote of the Constitutional Convention on access to civil marriage for lesbian and gay couples. This wide support across Ireland is reflected in the opinion polls on civil marriage which show more than 70% support" said Rose.

"The Catholic Church in Ireland have vigorously opposed change for LGBT people; this could be the beginning a transformative change in the approach of the Catholic Church to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. The Irish Catholic Church's response to forthcoming referendum proposals on civil marriage will demonstrate the practical effects the Pope's comments are having" concluded Rose.

Ends

For further information:

Brian Sheehan (086) 2330417

Tiernan Brady (087) 8505972

GLEN – Gay and Lesbian Equality Network
2 Exchange Street Upper, Dublin 8
t; + 353 1 6728650 m: + 353 86 2330417
www.glen.ie info@glen.ie