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REFLECTIONS OF AN EPISCOPAL PRIEST SERVING A LARGELY LGBT, INNER CITY PARISH
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 MY PARISH OR OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH, MUCH LESS THOSE OF GOD!

friday, october 28, 2005

We've Come a Long Way, Baby

Tomorrow Bishop Gene Robinson will preach at a Eucharist at Grace Cathedral, honoring 25 years of ministry with the LGBT community in the Diocese of California. Our Ordinary, Bishop William Swing will preside. It will be a grand celebration of [Oasis/California](#), our diocesan LGBT ministry.

There is much for which to be thankful. A lot has happened in 25 years. There very fact that we will be worshipping with Bishop Gene Robinson indicates that "we've come a long way, baby." We bore the brunt of the HIV epidemic and taught the rest of the Church how to respond to the crisis with grace and love. Bishop Swing has ordained more gay and lesbian clergy than probably any bishop in the history of Christendom, and the ministries of LGBT people have flourished here. This will be one of his most enduring legacies as he prepares to retire after 27 years of episcopacy. And we've blessed a lot of same-sex unions, providing the Church with rich experience in liturgical practice and theology at the grassroots level (though Bishop Swing's record here has been poor IMHO, seeking to hide our light under a bushel for fear of backlash from the wider Church). We've been radical in our advocacy of life-long, monogamous relationships. The nerve!

And yet, we still have a long way to go. Same-sex blessings, like civil unions, are NOT the equivalent of sacramental marriage (in terms of canon law and liturgical form). The ecclesiastical equivalent of *Brown vs. Board of Education* lies in our future, declaring that separate is not equal. The backlash against Bishop Robinson's consecration has been intense, shaking the foundations of the Anglican Communion. It remains to be seen whether or not the General Convention of the Episcopal Church will sacrifice gay and lesbian Christians on the altar of Anglican unity (although I'm hopeful that it will not). And in the civil sphere, we are facing ballot initiatives in California next year that would amend the

about me



Fr. John

I'm a priest of the Episcopal Church serving a small, growing, progressive parish in San Francisco. Prior to ordination,

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state constitution to ban same-sex marriage AND rescind the current domestic partner laws.

[Oasis/California](#) is partnering with the California Faith for Equality campaign to identify voters opposed to this blatant act of discrimination. People of faith need to be loud and clear about their opposition to this attack on our families. It is time for the "religious left" to be as well organized in its advocacy efforts as the "religious right." What a wonderful evangelism opportunity! Let us be bold in declaring that God loves absolutely everybody.

posted by fr. john at 8:50 pm 

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