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at each other but in looking
together in the same direction."

—Antoine De Saint-Exupery

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WORLD news

INTERNATIONAL

The Vatican declared war on same-sex marriage and civil union and domestic partnership laws July 30.

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, in a document titled *Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons*, stated: "There are absolutely no grounds for considering homosexual unions to be in any way similar or even remotely analogous to God's plan for marriage and family. Marriage is holy, while homosexual acts go against the natural moral law. Homosexual acts close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved."

The document continued: "Those who would move from tolerance to the legitimiza-

The European Court of Human Rights ruled unanimously July 24 that an Austrian gay man who was evicted from his home after his partner died was the victim of unlawful discrimination. The home had been in the partner's name.

The ruling will extend protections to gay men, lesbians and bisexuals in 45 countries. Benefits and rights granted by governments to opposite-sex cohabitants now will have to be granted to same-sex couples who live together.

The court declared that differences in treatment based on sexual orientation "require particularly serious reasons by way of justification." Austria's contention that it was protecting "the family in the traditional sense" was not a "convincing" or "weighty" enough reason for discrimination, the court said.



Marcelo Suntheim (left) and Cesar Cigliutti became the first gay couple in Latin America to have their relationship officially recognized by a local government

ARGENTINA

Latin America's first civil union ceremony took place July 18 in Buenos Aires. Activists Cesar Cigliutti and Marcelo Suntheim got hitched at the Civil State Registry office under the city's new Public Registry of Civil Unions law.

Registered couples receive spousal rights in areas such as insurance, health care, hospital visitation and bank loans. Outside the office, gays celebrated with firecrackers, confetti and cider.

"I am overcome with emotion," Cigliutti said. "This law frees gay men and women to be citizens."

Activists with the Comunidad Homosexual Argentina organization are continuing their push for a national civil union law.

GUYANA

The National Assembly of the small South American nation of Guyana mothballed a bill to ban anti-gay discrimination July 24. The measure was sent to a constitutional review committee for discussion and public testimony.

During debate on the matter, 200 Christians sang hymns outside the Assembly building. Religious denominations opposed the measure with the exception of the Roman Catholic Church, which supported it. A similar bill passed the Assembly two years ago but was vetoed by President Bharrat Jagdeo.

Guyana is 60 percent Christian and 30 percent Hindu.

UNITED KINGDOM

Gay British Member of Parliament Clive Betts was banned from the House of Commons for seven days last month because in February he gave a Commons job to a former prostitute he was dating. The Commons Standards and Privileges Committee determined Betts broke the MPs' Code of Conduct by undermining public trust and confidence in the integrity of Parliament.



Clive Betts

Gay cops in uniform led London's Gay Pride parade July 26. About 80 officers marched.

A post-march festival in Hyde Park attracted 60,000 partygoers and performers Bananarama, Dead or Alive and Soft Cell. In a video address to festival attendees, Britain's top cop, Metro-

tion of specific rights for cohabiting homosexual persons need to be reminded that the approval or legalization of evil is something far different from the toleration of evil.... When legislation in favor of the recognition of homosexual unions is proposed for the first time in a legislative assembly, the Catholic lawmaker has a moral duty to express his opposition clearly and publicly and to vote against it. To vote in favor of a law so harmful to the common good is gravely immoral."

Letting gay couples adopt children, the document said, is nothing short of child abuse.

"Allowing children to be adopted by persons living in [same-sex] unions would actually mean doing violence to these children, in the sense that their condition of dependency would be used to place them in an environment that is not conducive to their full human development," it said. "This is gravely immoral and in open contradiction to the principle, recognized also in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, that the best interests of the child, as the weaker and more vulnerable party, are to be the paramount consideration in every case."

Gay sex is now legal everywhere in Europe. Fifty years ago, two-thirds of the 48 nations criminalized either gay male sex or both gay and lesbian sex.

Armenia was the last European nation to decriminalize homosexuality. Its new penal code, which took effect Aug. 1, lifted the ban.

Armenia was among the nations that were required to decriminalize gay sex as a precondition of being allowed to join the Council of Europe. While Armenia falls outside the geographical definition of Europe, it is generally accepted as falling within the political concept of Europe.