

WORLDnews

added. "The Catholic lawmaker has a moral duty to express his opposition clearly and publicly and to vote against [recognition of homosexual unions]. To vote in favor of a law so harmful to the common good is gravely immoral."

"Allowing children to be adopted by persons living in [same-sex] unions would actually mean doing violence to these children," Ratzinger said. "This is gravely immoral."

Catholic doctrine teaches that gay sex is "intrinsically evil," "objectively disordered," "deviant" and "contrary to the laws of nature."

SPANISH PARLIAMENT OKS SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

Spain's Congress of Deputies voted to legalize same-sex marriage and adoption April 21. The vote was 183-136 with six abstentions.

The bill now moves to the Senate, where it should pass as well, although the Senate's approval is not necessary for the bill to become law.

The measure modifies the Civil Code in 16 places, mostly replacing the words "husband" and "wife" with "spouse" and the words "father" and "mother" with "parent." It also states: "Matrimony will have the same requirements and effects when both parties are of the same sex or of different sexes."

Spain will be the third country to legalize full same-sex marriage, following the Netherlands and Belgium. Eight Canadian provinces and territories and one U.S. state also allow same-sex couples full access to marriage.

About 66 percent of Spaniards approve of gay marriage, polls have found.

The first same-sex weddings should occur by September.

AUSTRIAN MP SUES GAY ORGANIZATION

Austrian People's Party Member of Parliament Walter Tancsits has sued the gay group Homosexual Initiative Vienna (HOSI Wien) in both civil and criminal court for accusing him of "taking ideological views of the Nazis."

"It's a disgrace for the country that even today mental descendants of the brown Nazi myrmidons, such as Tancsits, are sitting in the Parliament," the group said.

HOSI's president, Christian Högl, and its secretary general, Kurt Krickler, also are named in the suits, which seek a retraction and damages for libel and defamation.

HOSI made the remarks in a press release after Tancsits opposed including the Nazis' gay victims in the Victims Compensation Act, and helped engineer their exclusion when a parliamentary committee considered the measure.

In an April 16 press release, HOSI said it "suspects that the real reason behind these legal actions is to intimidate and to financially damage a critical [nongovernmental organization] as HOSI Wien has been a decided opponent and a most vocal critic of the right-wing government in power since 2000."

FRENCH MARRIAGE REJECTED

An appeals court April 20 in Bordeaux, France, upheld the annulment of a same-sex marriage performed last year by Bègles Mayor Noël Mamère.

Mamère and the gay couple—Stéphane Chapin and Bertrand Charpentier—had argued that the French civil code does not prohibit same-sex marriage. The spurned grooms plan an appeal to the European Court of Human Rights.

France has a civil unions law for gay couples but does not allow them access to full marriage, even though polls suggest the French people would support doing so.

BAVARIA TO FIGHT AGAINST GAY ADOPTION

The German state of Bavaria will challenge a new federal law that allows registered same-sex couples to adopt each other's children.

"The deciding factor in an adoption cannot

be the wish of same-sex couples to have children but must be what is in the best interest of the children," said Premier Edmund Stoiber.

Bavaria will target the law in the Federal Constitutional Court.

ASIA/PACIFIC

HONG KONG POLICE RAID GAY FASHION SHOW

Hong Kong's Police Tactical Unit raided a gay fashion show April 17 in a bar at King's Hotel.

Officials later claimed they were executing a search warrant against the premises and were not targeting the attendees or the fashion show, which featured men in swimsuits and underwear.

The show was stopped only 10 minutes after it began, and the 300 guests were searched and had their identifications checked for about an hour. One man was arrested for drug possession.

NEPALESE POLICE BEAT UP TRANSGENDER CITIZENS

Police officers from the Durbar Marg station in Kathmandu, Nepal, beat up a group of 18 transgender women who were walking April 13 on Kantipath Road, Human Rights Watch said.

Nine of the "metis" (Nepalese men who dress and identify as women) were severely beaten with batons, gun butts and sticks, the organization said.

"This attack is only the latest of a string of police assaults in Nepal against transgender people," said Scott Long, director of Human Rights Watch's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights Program. "In a country where political and civil rights have been suspended, the violence sends a message that no one who looks or acts differently can feel safe."

The metis attempted to report the incident to the Durbar Marg station but were refused entry. They proceeded to the Bir Hospital, where their injuries were treated and recorded, Human Rights Watch said.

SAME-SEX MARRIAGE BILL INTRODUCED IN TASMANIA

The Green party introduced a bill to legalize same-sex marriage April 12 in the Parliament of the Australian state of Tasmania.

Although the national Parliament passed a law last year defining marriage as between a man and a woman for federal purposes, states might remain free to choose their own definition.

"By clarifying that federal law only recognizes marriage between a man and a woman, last year's federal marriage amendment freed the states to legislate for same-sex marriage under the constitutional marriage powers they share with the commonwealth," said Tasmanian Gay and Lesbian Rights Group spokesperson Rodney Croome. "In its crusade to shut one door to same-sex marriage, the federal government inadvertently opened another."

BEIJING HOLDS GAY FILM FESTIVAL

China's second gay film festival was staged April 22 to 29 in Beijing by the Film Association of Beijing University.

Seven movies and five documentaries from China, Taiwan and Hong Kong were screened, along with two French films.

About 10,000 people were expected to attend. Tickets cost \$1.20.

For more information visit bgiff.byhoo.com.cn.



About 10,000 people attended Beijing's gay film festival.

Compiled by REX WOCKNER, who has reported for the gay press since 1985. He has a bachelor's degree in journalism from Drake University and started his career as a radio reporter.

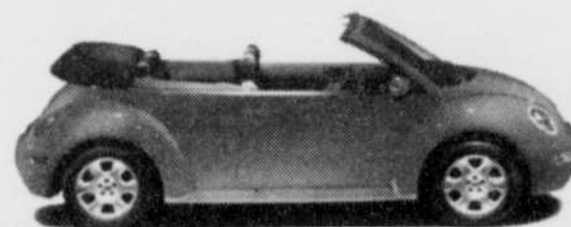
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