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Speak Out

Nothing to be proud of

TO THE EDITOR:

It's that time of the year again—that Sunday afternoon when many churches and people of faith come together and march in Gay Pride.

In the past, I welcomed this show of inclusive attitudes as a positive Christian witness. This year, I'm not sure. In fact, I am struggling with a big ethical dilemma: Should I continue participating this year or instead be protesting?

Is there really anything still to be proud of? Is it still countercultural and prophetic for us to march in the "Pride"? A true sign of maturity is in humility before God and compassion for all the fellow human beings, not in a self-congratulatory display of "pride" and selling our struggle for justice and freedom off to the corporate interests so they can co-opt the "Gay Pride" as a marketing gimmick.

While our attentions were captured by the gay marriage licenses and the Measure 36, they also helped re-elect George W. Bush and gave more congressional seats to the far-right politicians who are no friends of human rights or civil liberties. Yet, we have been happily oblivious to those life-or-death, freedom-or-prison issues like hunger, poverty, immigrants' rights, unemployment and even genocide and torture. Even as our planet disintegrates into an orgy of greed, violence, raw power games and deaths, no voices were raised from the rainbow pulpits against any of this.

While the same-sex marriage advocates portrayed a sanitized picture of gay marriage, they also buried the authentic queerness into invisibility. No one saw any picture of polyamorous households or genderqueer couples.

Our attitudes toward the disadvantaged and disenfranchised have been usually tokenizing, hostile or even pretending nothing below us exists. For a number of times I have personally witnessed "progressive" gay Christians mistreating and acting contemptuously toward a few homeless people who stopped by at their church seeking help; shouldn't we, instead of inviting them to the worship service, actively integrate them into the life and leadership of the church? So much for being "inclusive"!

I believe the time has come for the queer Christians to stand up and grow up. It's a sign of spiritual maturity to be able to see what others feel and how others may be adversely or positively affected by our own actions.

What about the ex-spouses we left in the name of "finding freedom"? What about all the children who miss one of their parents as we happily "came out" as if our own desires are more important than the well-being of those who depend on us and are too young to care for themselves? What about addressing the grief all our parents must go through?

The time is ripe for reconciliation with those whom we hurt or wronged as a result of "coming

out." Unless we can do that, there really isn't anything to be proud of. And unless we can grow up and see other people's pains and oppressions and be able to stand with them in faith and solidarity, we have nothing to be proud of.

THE REV. SR. SARAH-ANDREA MORRIGAN
St. Brigid Celtic Anabaptist Community of Portland

Courage under fire

TO THE EDITOR:

Thank you for your courage and willingness to open yourself to the inevitable knee-jerk criticism for your balanced report on Love Makes a Family ["Is Love Makes a Family Still Effective?" May 6]. As a parent, a former Love Makes a Family participant and a former board member, I applaud your decision for an open discussion on an organization that serves such a vital role in our community.

To all of the readers who responded to protest, I challenge you to step forward with more than a small monetary donation to Love Makes a Family or acerbic comment to the editors of *Just Out*. Volunteer your time and energy as board members to allow the executive and staff leadership of Love Makes a Family to separate itself from the board of directors. A non-profit with key staff members (for example, the executive director and her spouse) serving on the board of directors is a recipe for disaster, particularly the types of problems reported with Love Makes a Family. Love Makes a Family needs an effective and independent board, and the willingness to accept change and new leadership within the organization.

With all of the discord during the past few months as gay, lesbian, transgender, queer and bisexual parents have faced an assault on their families because of the passage of Measure 36, who speaks for the children affected by this decision? With all of the funds allocated and all of the efforts of the families and volunteers with Love Makes a Family, I ask where are the resources for children in Portland, in Washington County and in Vancouver, Wash., to deal with this issue? If the leaders of Love Makes a Family are dedicating themselves to a quixotic and fratricidal assault on other leaders within the community, who is providing support to families?

Thank you again for having the courage to make the difficult decision to "air some dirty laundry" in public. Without the open discussion and changes needed, hundreds of families in the greater Portland area will continue to struggle without the support that could and should be offered by an effective family-centered organization like Love Makes a Family.

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transitions

Jean O'Leary, 1948-2005

Lesbian activist, former nun and Democratic Party leader Jean O'Leary died June 4 at the San Clemente, Calif., home of Lisa Phelps, her partner of 12 years, and surrounded by her family and close friends. O'Leary, who had been battling lung cancer for two years, was 57.

O'Leary was an advocate for the rights of gays and lesbians, women and people with HIV/AIDS as well as a prominent Democratic Party activist. Over the course of a 35-year career, she ran several national gay rights groups, co-founded pioneering organizations, including Lesbian Feminist Liberation and

National Coming Out Day, and worked to elect Democratic candidates.

Born March 4, 1948, in Kingston, N.Y., Jean Marie O'Leary grew up mostly in Ohio. She used the occasion of her high school graduation speech in 1966 to announce her entry into the Sisters of the Holy Humility convent. In a 1984 anthology, *Lesbian Nuns: Breaking Silence*, O'Leary said she joined the convent because "there was no anti-war movement, no women's movement, no gay movement in Ohio in 1966" and because she "wanted to do something special, to have an impact on the world."