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Top Catholic Church Officials Provide New Support for Father James Martin’s Latest Book *BUILDING A BRIDGE* **Cardinals, Archbishops, and Bishops Continue to Endorse Jesuit Priest’s Book, Which Provides Ways to Improve the Relationship Between LGBT Catholics and the Church**

James Martin, SJ’s latest book *BUILDING A BRIDGE: How the Catholic Church and the LGBT Community Can Enter into a Relationship of Respect, Compassion, and Sensitivity* received strong initial endorsements from members of the Catholic hierarchy, including a top Vatican official, who praised Martin’s efforts to connect the Catholic Church and LGBT* community. Since the book’s release, there has been backlash from some unofficial far-right Catholic groups, leading to the cancellation of three scheduled lectures. In light of this, many Catholic leaders have stepped forward to offer forceful new support for Father Martin and his message of “respect, compassion, and sensitivity.”

Cardinal Blase Cupich, archbishop of Chicago, has provided the latest support. Recently, he invited Father Martin to speak about Jesus at Holy Name Cathedral in Chicago during Lent. “I wanted to make sure that I affirmed what [Father Martin] was doing,” Cardinal Cupich [said](#). “I wanted to let him know that I supported him.... This is a priest who has given his life for the service of the Church.... I would just say to people: make up your own decision, your own mind about him by reading exactly what he wrote.”

Additional church leaders have also lent their support for Fr. Martin’s project of outreach to LGBT Catholics, including:

- **JOHN STOWE**, Bishop of Lexington, Kentucky:
“*Building a Bridge*, by Father James Martin, describes the ‘culture of encounter’ that Pope Francis frequently espouses.... With a heart sympathetic to the suffering that LGBT people of faith have experienced and a love for the Church, Father Martin describes how this encounter can be fruitful and liberating journey for those on both sides.”
- **JOHN C. WESTER**, Archbishop of Santa Fe:
“This courageous work is necessary reading for all who wish to build up the Christian community and to give witness to the Gospel message of inclusion.”

- **JOSEPH A. FIORENZA**, Archbishop Emeritus of Galveston-Houston:
 “In *Building a Bridge*, Father Martin urges a much-needed calm conversation among all Catholics and the LGBT community based on the full meaning of the gospel teaching of love and respect for every human person. This book helps the whole Church engage the mandate of Jesus to minister to all.... I recommend it for parish, schools, and family discussions.”
- **PATRICK DUNN**, Bishop of Auckland, NZ
 “A recent book from Jesuit Fr James Martin seems like an answer to prayer.... Fr Martin concludes his beautiful book with a selection of Scripture passages accompanied by questions for reflection both for gay readers and for their friends. It is well worth reading.”

BUILDING A BRIDGE has been endorsed by many others church leaders, including:

- **Cardinal Kevin Farrell**, Prefect of the Vatican's Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life
- **Cardinal Joseph Tobin**, Archbishop of Newark
- **Robert McElroy**, Bishop of San Diego
- **Sister Jeannine Gramick, SL**, co-founder of New Ways Ministry

Father Martin, whom Pope Francis appointed a consultor to the Secretariat of Communication this year, and his book have also received praise from prominent Christian and LGBT organizations and publications. As a result of all the coverage, more Catholics have been learning about *BUILDING A BRIDGE* and joining the growing conversation about how to create a friendlier relationship between the Catholic Church and the LGBT community.

In a recent article in [America](#), Bishop McElroy wrote, “Father James Martin is a distinguished Jesuit author who has spent his life building bridges within the Catholic Church and between the church and the wider world. He has been particularly effective in bringing the Gospel message to the millennial generation. When we survey the vast gulf that exists between young adults and the church in the United States, it is clear that there could be no more compelling missionary outreach for the future of Catholicism than the terrain that Father Martin has passionately and eloquently pursued over the past two decades. There are few evangelizers who have engaged that terrain with more heart and skill and devotion.”

Father Martin [said](#) in a recent *Washington Post* op-ed: “I am at peace with the book and with the mission to love and advocate for LGBT Catholics. After all, Francis asked the Jesuits to go to the ‘peripheries’ where people feel the Church isn’t serving them, or where they feel unloved. And I am trying to do what Jesus did, in reaching out to people on the margins and telling them that God created them, God loves them and God welcomes them. And that is the truth.”

Catholic Leaders Supporting BUILDING A BRIDGE

Cardinal Kevin Farrell, Prefect of the Vatican's Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life:

"A welcome and much-needed book that will help bishops, priests, pastoral associates, and all church leaders, more compassionately minister to the LGBT community. It will also help LGBT Catholics feel more at home in what is, after all, their church."

Cardinal Joseph Tobin, Archbishop of Newark:

"In too many parts of our church, LGBT people have been made to feel unwelcome, excluded, and even shamed. Father Martin's brave, prophetic and inspiring new book marks an essential step in inviting church leaders to minister with more compassion and in reminding LGBT Catholics that they are as much a part of our church as any other Catholic."

Robert McElroy, Bishop of San Diego:

"The Gospel demands that LGBT Catholics be genuinely loved and treasured in the life of the Church. They are not. Martin provides us the language, perspective, and sense of urgency to undertake the arduous but monumentally Christlike task of replacing a culture of alienation with a culture of merciful inclusion."

Sister Jeannine Gramick, SL, Co-founder of New Ways Ministry:

"Sexuality, gender, and religion—a volatile mix! With this book, Father Martin shows how the Rosary and the rainbow flag can peacefully meet each other. After this must-read book, you'll understand why New Ways Ministry honored Father Martin with its Bridge-Building Award."

Very Rev. Timothy Kesicki, SJ, President of the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the US, and **Very Rev. John Cecero, SJ**, Provincial of the USA Northeast Province of the Society of Jesus:

"Father James Martin, SJ, is a faithful priest, best-selling writer, and a respected member of the editorial staff at the Jesuit-run America Media. His most recent book, *Building a Bridge*" is an important publication for our Church and the people of God to whom we minister. Fr. Martin is a meaningful voice in our Church both in the United States and throughout the world. His recent appointment as a consultant to the Vatican's Secretariat for Communications affirms the power of his work, which is a tremendous tool for both preaching the Gospel and for evangelization.

Very Rev. Eric P. Andrews, C.S.P., President, The Paulist Fathers:

"We support Fr. [James] Martin's vision to engage Church pastoral practice on the care of our LGBT brothers and sisters as exemplified in his book."

About the Author

Rev. James Martin, SJ, is a Jesuit priest, editor at large of America magazine, and bestselling author of *Seven Last Words*, *Jesus: A Pilgrimage*, *The Abbey*, *The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything*, and *Between Heaven and Mirth*. In April 2017, Pope Francis appointed Father Martin as a consultant to the Vatican's Secretariat of Communication. Father Martin has written for many publications, including *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*, and he is a regular commentator in the national and international media. He has appeared on all the major radio and television networks, as well as in venues including NPR's *Fresh Air*, FOX's *Fox & Friends*, PBS's *NewsHour*, and Comedy Central's *The Colbert Report*. Before entering the Jesuits in 1988, Father Martin graduated from the Wharton School of Business and worked for General Electric for six years. More at <http://jamesmartinsj.com>.

*From *BUILDING A BRIDGE*: "My use of *LGBT* as an adjective is not meant to exclude anyone; this is the most common nomenclature at the time that I'm writing. One could also use *LGBTQ* (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning or queer) or *LGBTQA* (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning or queer, and allies) or *LGBT+....* My goal is to include all people who may feel that their spiritual journey and their welcome in the church have been made more difficult by their sexual orientation."

[*BUILDING A BRIDGE: How the Catholic Church and the LGBT Community Can Enter into a Relationship of Respect, Compassion, and Sensitivity*](#) (HarperOne; June 13, 2017) by James Martin, SJ.

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