

## **Magazine's gay marriage omission shameful**

By Mary Best

Originally published in *The Bona Venture* on April 26, 2013.

Since a few weeks before my Confirmation, I've had some serious issues with some of the Roman Catholic Church's teachings.

My fellow confirmands and I were seated like sardines in my elementary school gymnasium, subject to the ramblings of a washed-up Catholic radio DJ who tried to convince us we were allowed to like our homosexual brothers and sisters, but we had to understand they had a sickness and we should not support their unions.

As outraged as I was that evening four years ago, it was nothing compared to the incredible disappointment in Bona's that fired me up a few months ago upon receiving an email from an alum, who wished to remain anonymous. He explained the unfortunate experience of a transgender friend whose wedding announcement will never appear in *BonAlumnus*, Bonaventure's alumni magazine.

It's outright discrimination and especially upsetting considering the Marriage Equality Act was passed by the New York State Legislature in June 2011.

The Catholic Church still doesn't accept gay marriage, which, according to the anonymous alum, is the reason his friend's wedding announcements were rejected. That's no reason for Bonaventure to ignore a celebration that involves some of its beloved Bonnies.

Beth Eberth, the editor for *BonAlumnus*, confirmed in the [Page one news story](#) that the Catholic Church's stance on gay marriage is the reasoning behind choosing not to publish that wedding announcement and others like it.

While I understand that we are a Catholic University, it's not right to disfavor same sex wedding announcements if it means disrespecting our alumni. Why shouldn't Bonnies be allowed to share news of their joyous celebrations in the magazine for their alma mater?

Not to mention, nowhere in the alumni magazine does it state same sex wedding announcements will not be published. The latest issues simply encourages Bonnies to submit their wedding photos by a certain date – with no other restrictions.

The Catholic Church also doesn't recognize second marriages of Catholics unless his or her first spouse is deceased or the marriage was annulled.

According to Eberth in the same story, the magazine's staff does not do an additional check as to whether marriage announcements are for second marriages by divorce or not.

Consistency would help *BonAlumnus* win me over, and their lack of it infuriates me even more. If Catholic teachings are the reason for this discrimination, why bother being selective about which ones dictate Bonnies' wedding announcements? If gay weddings can't be announced in *BonAlumnus*, then why not also delete second marriages of divorced couples or even hit the home run and refuse to publish wedding announcements of the disgraced Catholics who had sex before walking down the aisle?

"Here at St. Bonaventure University, we strive to walk in the footprints of St. Francis by cultivating a campus-wide environment for celebrating multi-culturalism and diversity, and to instill in all our community members an appreciation for the similarities and differences that we encounter as citizens of the world," beams the Diversity page on sbu.edu. "It's part of our Franciscan values, part of what it means to be a Franciscan university."

For a university that preaches celebrating our differences and profiles clubs like Spectrum, Bonaventure's officially sanctioned LGBT group, on the same webpage, it certainly doesn't seem to practice what it preaches.

Eberth also said in the same story there had been no policy in place when the announcement was submitted, and the decision was discussed by the editorial board for the magazine, University Ministries, Emily Sinsabaugh from University Relations and others.

While this will remain the policy for future disputes, it looks like the only hope for marriage equality-supporters lies in a policy change that probably won't happen until there's a significant decrease in donations from alumni. Mary Driscoll, vice president for university advancement, said in the story that even if there was a decrease in donations, it's too early to tell if that would instigate an alteration to the policy.

The respect for alumni and their celebrations gets replaced with request letters for donations the moment we leave campus with our degrees. At least that's what the university decided to do to our anonymous source's friend after rejecting his marriage announcement, according to his Jan. 7 email.

While it wasn't a direct response to omitting the wedding announcement, asking for money is the worst follow-up to such a situation, especially considering the hot water the administration's in with some students after the announcement of a mandatory commencement fee last week. I sure as hell wouldn't have donated after such a request, and am already planning to withhold my financial support of the university until I can read about all my fellow Bonnies' wedding announcements in the alumni magazine.

Here's my solution, to whomsoever will have the heroism to make the right decision: join the 21st century and let Bonnies celebrate being Bonnies, no matter who they're getting married to.