

**Joint Statement of Commitment and Apology to the White Rock Pride Society
and Members of the LGBTQ2+ Community, Issued on Behalf of the Roman
Catholic Archdiocese of Vancouver and Star of the Sea Parish**

This statement is issued jointly by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Vancouver (the “Archdiocese”) and Star of the Sea Parish (the “Parish”). The Parish is a local parish of the Archdiocese located in the South Surrey-White Rock neighbourhood.

The Catholic Church’s mission is to introduce people to God and help them to grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ. This call is to be lived out in faith, hope and love. Scripture tells us that the greatest of these is love, and Saint Thomas Aquinas defined love as “willing the good of another.” People in the LGBTQ2+ community have been deeply hurt all too often by coldness, rejection, judgement, exclusion, and lack of loving support from members of the Catholic Church. For whenever this hurt has occurred, we sincerely apologize.

Homophobic and transphobic approaches to dialogue are hurtful and are often rooted in fear. Fear is opposed to love. We are sorry for those times when individuals in Catholic institutions acted out of fear, not out of love. We are sorry,

too, whenever such actions of individuals led to people feeling rejected or isolated. Members of the LGBTQ2+ community have expressed feelings of anxiety, depression, hurt, rejection and even suicide because of this sense of rejection and isolation. This should never happen.

When Catholic teachings on moral issues arise that others may not accept, we commit to answering questions with patience, honesty and gentleness, free of arrogance or prejudice. When our communities interact, there is never any excuse for disrespectful encounters, poor listening, or lack of sensitivity to one another. We acknowledge that, in the past, not all interactions between members and representatives of the Catholic Church and the LGBTQ2+ community have been guided by the principles of respect, sensitivity and love. We apologize for this and are sincerely committed to improving our interactions going forward.

We desire to welcome everyone into dialogue as a child of God, for every person is equal in dignity and worth. We want to ensure that every time we engage with a member of the LGBTQ2+ community we will approach them, as Pope Francis says, “with closeness, compassion and tenderness.” Our humanity unites us; and every person, regardless of their sexual orientation, deserves respect.

With these objectives at the forefront, the Archdiocese of Vancouver and Star of the Sea Parish make this joint Statement of Commitment and Apology to the White Rock Pride Society, acknowledging that we have not always lived up to our own ideals in our interactions with the LGBTQ2+ community. We acknowledge that these actions have resulted in increased divisiveness between our faith community and the LGBTQ2+ community, as well as with the individuals, including friends and family members, who support them. We further recognize that members of the LGBTQ2+ community have too often experienced rejection and judgment, and that we must therefore take positive and affirmative steps to avoid perpetuating these harms through our attitudes and interactions.

The Archdiocese and Star of the Sea Parish are committed to better welcoming the White Rock Pride Society, and the broader LGBTQ2+ community, in our hearts and actions. As a starting point, the Archdiocese and the Parish will be engaging in further efforts to improve and foster their relationships with members of the LGBTQ2+ community, both in the South Surrey-White Rock community and more broadly, developing guidelines for parishes, as well as consulting with the White Rock Pride Society and others to identify additional initiatives and opportunities for support, inclusion and dialogue, consistent with Catholic teachings.

The White Rock Pride Society, the Archdiocese and the Star of the Sea Parish have also expressed a joint commitment towards repairing and building this relationship into one of ongoing constructive dialogue, informed by mutual respect, honesty, sincerity, forthrightness, and the desire to work towards the shared goal of a local community that is welcoming to all persons in our diverse community.

Together with the White Rock Pride Society, we hope that fruitful dialogue will continue, focusing on our shared humanity and shared desire for fostering truth, beauty, and goodness in our world. We look forward to working together to loving one another sincerely as family.