

## **Portland Press Herald**

September 30, 2009

I am deeply offended by Bishop Richard Malone's intrusion into every Catholic Mass offered on a recent Sunday throughout the state of Maine by requiring that a videotape of a "homily" be shown on that date (or a later one).

This was not be a homily; it was another part of the bishop's campaign to persuade Catholics to vote to overturn the recently passed law that would end discrimination against same-sex couples.

To my knowledge, Bishop Malone has never visited my parish, let alone offered a homily.

I belong to one of Maine's most diverse (in every way you'd like to define that term) Catholic parishes; a parish where there is a wide range of cultures, languages, and viewpoints, but where we all come together in love and mutual respect to worship every Sunday.

This is a parish where members are actively engaged in various aspects of community life outside of the church as well. It is a parish that embraces and celebrates the richness in diversity.

This intrusion leaves me and other Catholics who have very real disagreements with the bishop's position (many Catholics believe that all discrimination is injustice), and with his making the same-sex marriage issue a priority (of all the places the bishop could be investing his time, energy, and resources), with few options if we are to act as our consciences would dictate.

As a Catholic whose conscience directs me to resist the bishop's campaign, my choices were to either not attend Mass on the Sunday that the video was shown, or to demonstrate my dissent in some way that would necessarily disrupt a time of prayer and communion (by walking out during the Mass, for example).

At a time when we need leadership that would unite, I continue to wonder why the bishop has chosen to divide us.

Why this issue (versus, say, a campaign to end poverty, to end violence in our homes and on our streets, to end exploitation of our environment, etc.), and why this campaign (versus some kind of dialogue that would hopefully lead to greater understanding and appreciation of our differences)?

**Tony Scucci**

*Portland*

