

Polish archbishop vows to resist ideology that defies Church teaching

People belonging to sexual minorities must be respected as brothers and sisters in Christ, but that does not mean the Church will accept contemporary gender ideologies, says the president of the Polish bishops' conference.

In a statement issued August 8, Archbishop Stanislaw Gadecki of Poznan also called on the country's lawmakers to resist calls for legislation that would deny the inborn differences between men and women or legalize same-sex marriage.

"People belonging to so-called sexual minority circles are our brothers and sisters for whom Christ gave his life," Archbishop Gadecki of Poznan wrote. "But respect for specific people cannot lead to accepting an ideology which aims at a revolution in social norms and interpersonal relations. This revolution in custom and morals, as Pope Francis stresses, often brandishes a flag of freedom, while in reality inflicting spiritual and material devastation."

The statement comes amid ongoing disputes between church leaders and LGBTQ groups, who are planning a series of "equality parades" across the country in upcoming weeks.

Archbishop Gadecki said the "worsening polemic" was linked to the "offensive by LGBT-plus circles," as well as to related plans by some local authorities to introduce "a new approach to sex education" beginning in September.

LGBTQ groups frequently have complained of discrimination in Poland, where the predominant Catholic Church has vigorously rejected same-sex marriage and backed the exclusion of LGBTQ staff from Catholic schools.

In July, gay rights campaigners accused Archbishop Tadeusz Wojda of Bialystok of inciting violence against an LGBTQ march in the eastern city during which police used stun grenades and pepper spray to hold back aggressive counter-protesters.

Meanwhile, in an Aug. 1 homily, Archbishop Marek Jedraszewski of Krakow told Catholics that those demanding tolerance had in reality supported "violence, humiliation and sneering against the most sacred symbols." He said the "red pestilence" of communism had been replaced by "a rainbow one," which also sought "to conquer spirits, hearts and minds."

Poland's Catholic Radio Maryja said Aug. 6 it had been ordered by Google to remove Archbishop Jedraszewski's homily from its YouTube channel on grounds it "promoted hatred." A day later, about 200 protesters, including LGBTQ

Catholics, demanded the dismissal of Archbishop Jedraszewski and other church leaders during a demonstration outside the Vatican's Warsaw nunciature.

In his statement, Archbishop Gadecki said he was appealing to local officials not take decisions "concealing an ideology which denies natural sexual differences," and to parliamentarians not to support LGBTQ efforts to push through laws allowing same-sex marriages and child adoption by same-sex couples.

He added that criticism of Archbishop Jedraszewski, "as well as the reactions of employers towards people expressing their disapproval of LGBT-plus ideology, testify to the ideological totalitarianism rooted in certain milieus, consisting in removing people who think differently outside the sphere of freedom."

"Therefore, I appeal to all people of good will to apply the principle of non-discrimination in public discussion not only to the supporters of the mentioned ideology, but also to allow its opponents on equal rights to debate."