



HUMAN
RIGHTS
CAMPAIGN
FOUNDATION

September 15, 2015

His Holiness, Pope Francis
Apostolic Palace
00120 Vatican City

Your Holiness,

Many of us in the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community have been heartened by your compassionate words and willingness to take steps to more fully embrace LGBT people of faith who have long been rejected by the Catholic Church.

We see in your actions the lessons of St. Ignatius of Loyola, who teaches that we are all called on to lovingly serve one another. Love, as he said, is shown more in deeds than words.

In that spirit, and in the fervent hope that your influence will lead the Church to fully embrace its LGBT faithful here in the United States and across the globe, we await your visit to Washington, D.C., not only with great anticipation, but also an appeal.

I humbly invite you to meet privately with area LGBT Catholics during your visit. The Human Rights Campaign, the largest LGBT advocacy organization in the United States, neighbors the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle, where you will lead a prayer service during your visit. I have invited LGBT people of faith to gather at our headquarters at that time to mark your visit with prayer and celebration, and we would welcome you to join us. Of course, we would be grateful for an audience at another time during your trip.

Tens of thousands of our 1.5 million members are members of the Catholic Church. Sadly, some of them have been fired from their jobs at Catholic schools or shunned from their church communities simply because of who they are. When you affirmed that God looks upon LGBT people with love, you gave hope to countless LGBT people and their families who are longing to hear that their Church embraces and accepts them fully.

As the leader of the Catholic Church, your words and actions have often set a powerful example, calling on all of us to treat others with justice, equality, respect and compassion. Those are values we deeply share. We welcome you to the United States and pray that you will continue to move toward greater acceptance and embrace of our community, who for much too long have long struggled to reconcile who they are with the culture and teachings of their faith.

Sincerely yours,

Chad H. Griffin
President, Human Rights Campaign