



Gays and Grays: The Story of the Gay Community at Most Holy Redeemer Catholic Parish

Donal S.J. Godfrey

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Gays and Grays tells the story of a unique Catholic parish. Most Holy Redeemer Parish in San Francisco is in the center of the world's first gay neighborhood, The Castro. This parish was the center of the hostility to the arriving gay population in the 1970s; but paradoxically was itself transformed into a welcoming parish. The old time parishioners, 'the gray,' bonded with the new comers, 'the gay,' particularly in a joint compassionate response to the crisis of AIDS. A charismatic pastor, FR Tony McGuire also played a key role in the transformation of this interesting parish. Most Holy Redeemer was changed from a dying parish to a vital place where gay and straight people together created something new. Father Donal Godfrey shows how this parish became prophetic and compassionate, through conflict and compromise at times; despite opposition from many sources, including the institutionalized homophobia of the church and society. Rather than becoming embittered, the parish opened up to be a place of healing and indeed sanctuary for many. This book tells this fascinating story and why it is significant beyond the scope of San Francisco. Most Holy Redeemer is a place which has remained within the institution while at the same time challenging it with grace and humor. This accessible and moving book is appropriate for all levels of students of congregational studies, Sociology of Religion, Gay or Queer Studies and Religion courses.

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