



**Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange Reject the Mistreatment of LGBT Youth,
Join with U.S. Catholic Bishops' statement "God is On Your Side"**

We, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange, are called to advocate for the fundamental right of all persons to live in a world at peace, in security and free of violence.¹ We are called to address cultures of prejudice, racism, divisive language and behaviors against any who suffer discrimination—and to advocate for those who are discriminated against.

We join twelve U.S. Catholic Bishops' statement in support of LGBT youth, "God is On Your Side."

"As Catholic Bishops in the United States, we join with the Tyler Clementi Foundation in standing up for at-risk LGBT youth in our country.

As we see in the Gospels, Jesus Christ taught love, mercy and welcome for all people, especially for those who felt persecuted or marginalized in any way; and the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that LGBT people are to be treated with "respect, compassion and sensitivity."

All people of goodwill should help, support, and defend LGBT youth; who attempt suicide at much higher rates than their straight counterparts; who are often homeless because of families who reject them; who are rejected, bullied and harassed; and who are the target of violent acts at alarming rates.

The Catholic Church values the God-given dignity of all human life and we take this opportunity to say to our LGBT friends, especially young people, that we stand with you and oppose any form of violence, bullying or harassment directed at you.

Most of all, know that God created you, God loves you and God is on your side."

We recognize the LGBT youth as our brothers and sisters who must be respected, and we call for recognition of their inherent right to dignity, as they are made in the image of God. We encourage others to join us in rejecting offensive remarks, social discrimination, bigotry, and any other form of denigration and/ or abuse against LGBT youth. As children of God, they need our support and respect. We invite others to join our commitment to live and work so all may be united with God and with one another.

¹ Guiding Principles from the Sisters of St Joseph in our Efforts for Justice
<http://csjorange.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Guiding-Principles-for-Justice-November-1997.pdf>

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The Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange were founded in 1912 and share a common mission with Sisters of St. Joseph around the world who trace their heritage back to the founding of the order in 1650, in LePuy, France. Sisters of St. Joseph unite people with God and with each other. To bring about this unity, sisters go into neighborhoods, identify needs and work with others to meet those needs. Undertaking spiritual and corporal works of mercy, the religious order encourages and assists those who wish to follow Christ more closely, and works to alleviate conditions which cause ignorance, poverty, suffering and oppression. To learn more, visit <http://csjorange.org/>.

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