

## Pre-emptive strike in Rainbow Sash clash

Dennis Coday | May. 28, 2009 NCR Today

This alert just came in from *The Catholic Spirit*, newspaper of the St. Paul-Minneapolis archdiocese: "Individuals wearing rainbow-colored sashes at the Cathedral of St. Paul on Pentecost Sunday May 31 will not be allowed to receive Communion."

Denying communion to Rainbow Sash wearers has become an annual event in St. Paul-Minneapolis.

The sashes are a symbol used by the gay rights group, Rainbow Sash Alliance USA, which is "publicly calling the Roman Catholic Church to a conversion of heart around the issues of human sexuality," according to [the alliance's Web site](#) [1].

Here's the statement from the archdiocese:

The archdiocese has received word that a group dissenting from the church's teaching on sexuality will be wearing signs of protest (rainbow sashes) at the Cathedral of St. Paul on Pentecost Sunday during the noon Mass. Those wearing such sashes will not be allowed to receive Holy Communion, since they have publicly broken communion with the teachings of the church.

The Holy Eucharist should never be politicized by protesters in this way. Theirs is a sign of disrespect and irreverence to the body and blood of Jesus.

[The Catholic Spirit news story](#) [2] notes: "The policy not to distribute Communion to sash-wearers at the Cathedral dates back to 2005. In a letter that year to the organizer of Rainbow Sash Alliance USA, now-retired Archbishop Harry Flynn said that 'it has become apparent to me that the wearing of the sash is more and more perceived as a protest against church teaching' and that the Vatican considers wearing the rainbow sash during reception of the Eucharist unacceptable."

Since 2005 the noon Mass at the cathedral on Pentecost Sunday has had its drama. One year, a woman, apparently not with the gay activists but wearing rainbow earrings, was not allowed to receive Communion.

In years past a group of volunteers calling themselves "Ushers for the Eucharist" have interposed themselves between communion ministers and would Rainbow sash wearing communicants, kneeling en masse in the church's main aisle and forcing everyone in the communion line, to walk around or over them to receive Communion.

If you need some background on this, go the [NCR search page](#) [3] and search for "Rainbow Sash" in the pre-2008 archives.

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**Links:**

[1] <http://www.rainbowsashallianceusa.org/>

[2] [http://thecatholicspirit.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1866&Itemid=27](http://thecatholicspirit.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1866&Itemid=27)

[3] <http://ncronline.org/search>