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In this Friday, Oct. 11, 2019 file photo, Polish writer and Nobel Prize winner Olga Tokarczuk reacts to the media during a press conference in Duesseldorf, Germany. Nobel Prize-winning writer Olga Tokarczuk has declined an honorary citizenship from the region of Poland where she lives because she would have had to share the honor with a Roman Catholic bishop who has made hostile comments about the LGBT community. Tokarczuk said in a tweet Friday, Sept. 25 that while she appreciated being considered, she “sadly” couldn’t accept Lower Silesia’s honorary citizenship. (AP Photo/Martin Meissner, file)

by The Associated Press

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Warsaw, Poland — September 25, 2020

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Nobel Prize-winning writer Olga Tokarczuk has declined an honorary citizenship from the region of Poland where she lives because she would have had to share the honor with a Roman Catholic bishop who has made hostile comments about the LGBT community.

Tokarczuk said in a tweet Friday that while she appreciated being considered, she “sadly” couldn't accept Lower Silesia’s honorary citizenship. She said that receiving it at the same time as Bishop Ignacy Dec would highlight the “painful rift” in Poland over LGBT rights.

“I do not want to become an object of such actions and an element in this game,” said Tokarczuk, the winner of the 2018 Nobel Prize in literature and a vocal supporter of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

Dec has repeatedly described the LGBT rights movement as a threat to the Catholic Church and to Poland, which is predominantly Catholic.

Local councilors linked to Poland's centrist opposition Civic Coalition party nominated Tokarczuk as a honorary citizen, while members of the right-wing Law and Justice party that governs the country recommended Dec.

Tokarczuk, who lives in the southwestern city of Wroclaw, explained her reasons behind declining the honor.

“Instead of being a joyous celebration of a sense of community, it is a vivid illustration of the painful rift in our society,” she said.

Poland has produced heated debates over LGBT rights in recent months, including after right-wing President Andrzej Duda described the movement as worse than communism as part of his reelection campaign earlier this year.

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