

DignityUSA Protests Role of Tony Anatrella in Extraordinary Synod on Family, Calls for His Removal

Contact: Marianne Duddy-Burke, 617-669-7810

Jim Smith, 612-306-9012

Boston, MA. September 10, 2014. DignityUSA, the nation's leading organization of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Catholics and allies, is outraged that Msgr. Tony Anatrella has been appointed as one of the "Collaborators of the Special Secretary" at the upcoming Extraordinary Synod on the Family, a worldwide meeting of Catholic Church officials that will set the agenda for the full Synod on the Family that will take place in 2015.

"Monsignor Anatrella has a long and well-known history of making very disparaging statements about gay people," said Marianne Duddy-Burke, DignityUSA's Executive Director. "How can anyone who cares about LGBT people believe this Synod offers any hope for compassion and real reflection on the needs of LGBT people and their families when someone like this man is given such a prominent role?"

Duddy-Burke noted that Msgr. Anatrella, a psychoanalyst based in France and a Consultor for the Pontifical Council for the Family, has referred to homosexuality as "an incompleteness of human sexuality," and said that gay people "could even be seen as a destabilizing reality for people and for society." He has been associated with groups that promote reparative therapy.

"So many people look with hope toward Pope Francis, and toward this Synod," said Duddy-Burke. "Why undermine its potential by including someone whose presence is so damaging?"

Duddy-Burke also noted that there is no one identified as openly LGBT, or as having an LGBT family member, among those invited as official participants or observers. "This seems like a missed opportunity, and again raises questions about how sensitively LGBT issues will be addressed."

DignityUSA is calling on the Vatican to disinvite Msgr. Anatrella from participation in the Extraordinary Synod, and to replace him with someone more open on issues of importance to LGBT people and their families. They are also calling for openly LGBT people and for families that include LGBT members to be among the official observers,

DignityUSA is the nation's leading organization of LGBT Catholics and their families, friends and supporters. Founded in 1969 it is a founding member of the Equally Blessed coalition.