

A Short Story – Tunic and Cloak

Written on request for deacon newsletter Deacon Dispatch.

By Anonymous

Eight years ago I requested a transfer. I was attracted to the City of Lake Worth where by the variety of life and living styles one could say it's a cosmopolitan city. I wanted to proclaim Christ Crucified in the real.

One of the first visits I made was to Compass and took a meeting with their director. She was wonderful in her introduction and generously giving a tour of the facility. They most certainly give a valuable service to the LGBTQ community. See link: <https://compassglcc.com/>

It was a strained meeting. It is widely understood (or misunderstood or misapplied) practice of the Catholic Church regarding homosexuals. Further, she made clear, that the center already has alliances with various religious organizations and she/they were uninterested to pursue any compromise or agreements with the local Church. She challenged me by asking up right: **Do you know what the Stonewall riots were about (1969, NYC)?** Whew, luckily I did. But it's a good question. Do we even know the struggles of being gay? Of being young and gay? Of being old and gay?

The starting point actually was positive. We shared one moving story together while tragic brought about a basic agreement.

There was young man who wanted to be an actor. He was in contact with a person in the local area about acting and learning the trade. He flew down to the greater LWB area to rent an apartment and begin classes and mingling with the community at large. After arriving he was invited to a party which led to a night of visiting diner and diner places. It did not go well.

The next morning we found him in a gutter. I will not list out the crimes committed against this man. After some recuperation, we flew him back home to his family. You need no further details.

So we came to an agreement:

1. Compass will refer Catholics to us if and when the person would seem to benefit from the referral.
2. If there are more cases of young person wanting to be returned to their family home (repatriate) to contact the Church immediately and we will pay for the plane ticket. Usually this would be the result of a rethinking the decision of coming with or without family assistance and the overall acceptance he/she had within the family unit.

I didn't say it was a break through, but a start. Related, Compass is generous with the use of their facility (14,000 SQ FT) for other overlapping public forums including CBCR Agency initiatives. So in my rare attendance to the meetings (I work off the minutes and action items mostly), I am not unwelcomed.

So what is the crisis?

Recent data brings us to a new understanding, **of 40,000 LGBTQ people polled between ages 13-24:**

- 68% reported symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder
- 55% reported symptoms of major depressive disorder
- 48% reported engaging in self-harm
- 40% say they have "seriously considered" attempting suicide in the past year.



How can we judge invalid the help these institutions give those in crisis in these communities?
(Especially, you know, we are a bit shallow on our efforts.... Sssh)

Tunic and Cloak

If anyone wants to go to law with you over your tunic, hand him your cloak as well (Matt 5:40).

There is an ordinary reading (plain sense of this scripture)

See: <http://deacongerrypalermo.blog/2021/06/14/unfeigned-love-truthful-speech/>

Let us go deeper.

- The tunic is your essential **baptismal garment**. It is the divine truth. Aaron wore a tunic of fine linen.
- The cloak/mantle is your **spiritual ministry** while you are out in the world. Elijah wore a mantle.
- Jesus wore both.
- Jesus lost both.

We can argue the Law all we want. We can carry on, even obsess to the point of objectifying people.

But, we need to “loose” our faith and hand over our tunic and cloak.

The retrenchment of the Church has proven to be quite harmful and blind to the needs of others.

Go further. Go deeper.

The tunic and cloak never lose their meaning or their truth. **They instead belong among those who demand it of us and in that sharing we are all converted.** All of us.

What are you wearing?

Peace be with you.

Deacon Not So Anonymous

Disclaimer – Names, times and places are fictional or obscured to protect the privacy of others without distorting the essential truth of the encounter.