

# **Bishop warns city on 'cooperation with evil' Gay marriage in Worcester, Massachusetts: Gay marriage in Worcester, Massachusetts**

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The new Catholic bishop of Worcester, Massachusetts, has declared that city officials or town clerks who are Catholic and approve gay civil marriages are “involving themselves in cooperation with evil.” Bishop Robert McManus said legalized gay marriages in Massachusetts are “clear and serious violations” of natural law and Catholic teaching.

“It must be pointed out that Catholics, especially public officials, who willingly and with approval facilitate the legal sanctioning of same-sex unions are involving themselves in cooperation with evil,” McManus said. “Such cooperation is not free from serious moral and spiritual harm.”

One week after his May 14 installation as bishop, McManus publicly rebuked the city clerk of Worcester, David Rushford, who had argued that gay marriage “is in line with Catholic teaching” on individual rights and dignity. In a May 21 “pastoral note of clarification” published in the diocesan newspaper, McManus said Rushford’s interpretations were “morally incorrect and pastorally misleading.”

Commenting on last year’s state Supreme Judicial Court ruling that legalized gay marriage, the bishop said it “can never make morally right what is by nature morally wrong.” He went on to say that “the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church . . . has consistently and authentically presented marriage as a monogamous, lifelong relationship between a man and a woman.”

Rushford, told of McManus's letter, remained unmoved. "I just hope that people from all walks of life in our society would agree that the civil rights of individuals are not debatable," he told the *Boston Herald*. -*Ecumenical News International*