



**Comunidad
Lesbian and Gay Ministry
Saint Matthew Catholic Church**

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Dear Comunidad Supporter:

Love conquers all! Or does it? It certainly seems that way. An animating spirit and hope is sweeping through our Church right now, reforming it. If you listen carefully, you can hear it. If you look around, you can see it. Since his election, Pope Francis, through his words, but especially his actions, has reenergized and strengthened this reforming spirit by calling on everyone everywhere, especially those in the Church, to reject divisiveness and intolerance and return to the Church's core work: proclaiming God's love for everyone.

And how shall we spread the good news to our sisters and brothers who have given up on finding a welcoming presence within the Church? Just as we did 28 years ago when this ministry first began, Comunidad remains committed to being a steady presence in a world that is too often distracted from the hard work of the Gospel. We work at the parish and regional levels helping the poor, assisting people with and raising money for AIDS, sponsoring several booths at the annual parish festival, and hosting special events throughout the year. This is in addition to the meetings we host on "first Tuesdays" for our members. Many of our members participate at Mass as liturgical ministers or volunteer their time helping out with other parish-based needs. In addition, you can find us at Long Beach Pride, religious education congresses, high school and university fairs, and other events reminding all in the Church of the presence of gays and lesbians and their concerns, and reminding gays and lesbians that there is a place in the Church for them. Like you, we know all too well of the dismissive if not hostile attitudes that lesbians and gays in the Church sometimes face, so we work hard to counteract those forces in ways that try to reflect Christ's teachings about tolerance and love.

Through participation at community and parish events and via our web site and Facebook page, we strive to be a welcoming presence for gay and lesbian Catholics and, as important, remaining in dialog with Church leaders about issues that concern our members. Thank you for your support in these and all our efforts. Without your prayers, participation, and financial contributions we could not be able to do as much as we do, and our voice would not be as loud as it is. This is an important time in the life of the Church—a time of reform and change—and we believe lesbians and gays need to be seen and heard from. Can you help us do that through your participation at our events? By spreading the Good News that change for the better is afoot? By sharing your ideas about how to bring about positive change in the Church? By helping us keep our bills paid?

If you're not already a regular reader of our Facebook page or web site, we invite you to take a look at these resources. This year our plans include bringing you more content about LGBT matters happening beyond our parish and archdiocesan boundaries. If you haven't been at one of our member meetings in a while, we invite you to attend one that meets your interests. If you're not yet a subscriber to our e-newsletter, we invite you to visit our website and sign up today. Please review the document included with this letter and help Comunidad sustain its mission.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Pires

Keith Brittin

Comunidad Co-Chairs, 2013-2014

Please see the enclosed information sheet about the various ways you can stay informed and help out with Comunidad's efforts this year.