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International Day Against Homophobia

May 17, 2015

Statement of Archbishop and Primate, David John

"We have all been created in the image of God"

Guadalajara, Mexico – The Ecumenical Catholic Church unites its voice in solidarity with those around the world who fight homophobia. We pray for the victims of homophobia and our pastoral projects reach out to them with our arms and Communities of Faith open to embrace them and welcome them. All people are created in the image of God and deserve love and respect.

Many of our Communities of Faith are based in countries where homophobia is still a challenge not only to the human rights of GLBTTT persons, but also a threat to their lives. California, in the United States, will be offering citizens a chance to vote against homosexuals. Civil and police violence is on the rise against transgenders across the United States. In Colombia more than 70% of the people are against adoptions by gays. In Italy gay marriage is still not recognized and rapid testing for HIV is still not promoted by the Italian Department of Health. While Ecuador has opened the door for civil unions for people of the same sex, the Roman Catholic Church has prevented the adoption of a full recognition of marriage. In Kenya, ministries such as the Church of the Jesus Winner Ministry cater to political opinions calling for the incarceration and elimination of gays. These examples run against the Love of Jesus for all people and do not reflect the Scriptures as we understand an implement God' love.

Homophobia is real. It is dangerous. It destroys human dignity. In some cases it kills. In some cases, religion is used to justify hate and the violation of human rights. The Ecumenical Catholic Church condemns the use of religion as a justification for homophobia. The Ecumenical Catholic Church calls on all the leaders of Christian/Catholic churches around the world to reflect on this important date and reject the condemnation of gay people or any people because of their sexual orientation. Hate is a crime. Love is the message of Jesus the Christ. Love is the motivating ethic in Scripture, our Traditions and must be in our modern world, given the studies that inform us and the world in which we live.

The Covenant of the Old Testament is clear. God made a pact through Moses with the Hebrew people. I will free you from slavery. I only ask of you a couple of things. God asked that the Hebrew people never forget their slavery and that they not forget God's liberating act in the Exodus of freeing them. God also set in motion the one law that is carried and remembered throughout the Old Testament and was a part of Jesus' formation: ***Remember the widow, the stranger and the orphan.***

What God asked of the Hebrew people is the basis for ending all phobias – or fear of the other. Xenophobia (the fear of the stranger/foreigner/immigrant), Homophobia (the fear of man), etc. have no basis in Scripture. God embraces "the other." Never does the Law of God call for the use of fear to create barriers and much less justification for exclusion and prejudice.

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The Ecumenical Catholic Church calls on all denominations to reflect seriously on hate against human beings (homophobia). We invite an open and honest dialogue about sexual orientation. To this end, I ask that the International Day Against Homophobia be observed by our churches world-wide.

++ Pray for all victims of homophobia. Pray for those still filled with fear of human beings (homophobia). Please offer a special petition at the Mass on May 17.

++ Share this document with local leaders and the press to inform them that the Ecumenical Catholic Church does not support theology of hate.

++ Work in your country or area to pass and/or enforce laws against hate crimes.

++ Accompany those who have been victims of physical or psychological violence because of their sexual orientation.

++ Be a clerical presence in local events and marches to make a public statement that the Ecumenical Catholic Church does not support homophobia

++ Publish this document on your FaceBook page and circulate among your colleagues.

Together we must remember the Old Testament Covenant. We must remember the Love of Jesus for all people. Nowhere in Scripture does Jesus condemn gays or homosexuals. Let us work and walk and pray together to end homophobia

May God the Omnipotent bless you in the Name of the +Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

++David John

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Wed May 13 2015 12:07:39

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