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WORLD AIDS DAY 2014

A Day for Reflection

And

Definition of New Actions

My Dear Friends,

We reach another World AIDS Day. It seems there have been so many. It seems so many are now gone. It seems there is no end. And yet today we reflect… not only on those who are hear no more. But more importantly we reflect on "Definitions for New Actions" in a world impacted by HIV/AIDS.

Here are some of my reflections.

1. As churches we need to redouble our efforts to make sure that people around the globe have access to HIV/AIDS medications. Early diagnosis combined with the most recent HIV/AIDS medications saves lives and helps prevent the transmission of HIV. Our church in Kenya still buries members of have died of HIV/AIDS because of no access to medications. Our church in Italy still cannot encourage rapid testing for HIV because it is not permitted – in large part because of the pressure of the Roman Catholic Church. These situations need to change. I call on our ecumenical partners to join with us in a campaign to help people with HIV/AIDS in Kenya and to encourage policy changes in Italy.

2. Stonewall happened 45 years ago. A group of gays, lesbians, bi-sexuals and transvestites/transgenders and transsexuals began to struggle for GLBT rights. It seems the "GL's" have advanced with their integration into societies with victories for gay marriage, admittance to the armed forces in some countries and "sensitivity training" for local police departments. But the "movement" for integration into society seems to have forgotten the "BT's" – the bisexuals and trans. In many areas where gay marriage has been approved, violence against trans has increased at an alarming rate, and not denounced by the strength of what was Stonewall. GL's have gained some rights, with the BT's being left behind. I call on all communities of faith to work in a broad-based and unified way to make sure that the GLBT cries of Stonewall are not forgotten or hidden. We need to lift up the rights of BT's and work for their healthcare rights, human rights and dignity.

Today can be a day of energy. The one candle lit for Advent reminding us of hope and expectation, can also be the candle we light for World AIDS Day – day for unified action for the GLBT struggles.

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