

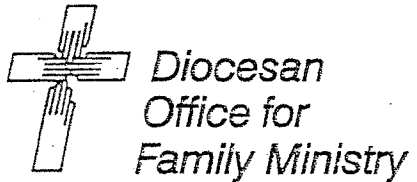
LETTER
TO
CATHOLIC
EDUCATORS

AIDS
EDUCATION

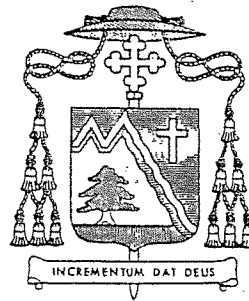
BISHOP
ANTHONY F. TONNOS, D.D.
BISHOP OF HAMILTON

December 4, 1987

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Dear Catholic Educator,

This fall, the Institute for Catholic Education sent to all separate school boards copies of the AIDS education materials for use in our Catholic schools. Much serious thought and consultation has taken place in the preparation of these documents.

Subject to the following conditions, I approve and support the use of the documents in the implementation of an AIDS education program so that proper and effective information can be given to our students in the context of Catholic moral teaching.

Since parents are the first educators of their children, they should be informed about the program prior to implementation in the classroom. Parents should especially be involved in the preview of audio-visual materials according to local school board policies. As necessary as it is to instruct all students on matters related to AIDS, you are asked to respect the right of parents who, on written request, wish to withdraw their children from participation in the program.

I draw your attention to my Pastoral Letter CONCERNS ABOUT AIDS (April 26, 1987) which outlines the framework for an AIDS education program. The Pastoral Letter should be used as the reference document in teacher professional development and in the preparation of instructional materials. It is printed in the ICE Teacher's Manual and is available from the Diocesan Family Life Office.

This document emphasizes the topic of CHASTITY as an integral dimension of our Christian way of life. Sexual intercourse properly takes place within marriage which is based on love and open to new life. For all others, sexual abstinence is the moral norm outside of marriage. This Catholic moral position is also supported by many health professionals as the best and only way to prevent the spread of AIDS.

Questions regarding the use of condoms should be answered specifically and accurately but always in keeping with Church teaching.

We hold and teach that homosexual acts are disordered and sinful. However we must imitate the Love of Christ in accepting all people, and we emphasize that the homosexual person is not excluded from the Pastoral Care of the Church.

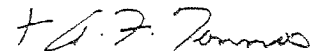
Instructional materials and teaching strategies should be ADAPTED to the specific needs of the students in your school community. Prudence should always be your guide in reference to both explicit sexual language or various forms of sexual activity.

In imitating the healing ministry of Our Lord, our response as a Christian community toward persons who have contracted AIDS must be one of love, care and compassion in our attitudes and actions.

Prayerfully, let us call upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit in facing the difficult questions raised by this disease and in fulfilling our responsibility of providing students with an AIDS prevention program taught from the perspective of our Catholic beliefs.

I am most grateful to you for your dedication and commitment in responding faithfully as Catholic educators as you implement an AIDS education program.

Yours sincerely in Christ,



BISHOP OF HAMILTON
