

Gay, Catholic, and American: My Legal Battle for Marriage Equality and Inclusion

Greg Bourke

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Greg Bourke's remarkable memoir *Gay, Catholic, and American* is about how he and his husband became plaintiffs in one of the most pivotal Supreme Court cases in LGBTQ+ history.

Bourke and his husband, Michael, met in college and bonded over their shared connection to Catholicism. But later, while raising their two children, Bourke was rejected from a leadership position in his son's Boy Scout troop because he was gay. He decided to take on the Boy Scouts of America and their sponsoring churches and fight for his right to join. At the same time, he undertook another colossal fight: to have both he and Michael recognized as their children's legal parents, which was impossible without securing marriage equality in their state.

The couple joined a state lawsuit that was later grouped into the Supreme Court case *Obergefell v. Hodges*, which made marriage equality the law of the land. Bourke's account of that movement toward the Supreme Court is fascinating, up to the moment when, as he stared into the eyes of Justice Sotomayor, the decision was read.

Bourke's story is directed by perseverance, grit, and faith. Throughout, he refuses to accept that his sexual orientation and his religion cannot coexist. His text is inspirational, humble, and engaging. Through eloquent storytelling, as well as emails and other primary sources, he recreates the challenges he faced during his quest for equality. And while it celebrates the victories, the book also highlights the challenges that remain for the LGBTQ+ community, and for LGBTQ+ Catholics in particular.

Gay, Catholic, and American recalls the injustices that left Greg Bourke with no choice other than to act, and to help change history in doing so.

MOLLY SPRAYREGEN (July / August 2021)

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