

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 29, 2024

Most Rev. Michael W. Fisher
Bishop of the Diocese of Buffalo
795 Main Street
Buffalo, NY 14203

Bishop Fisher:

I write to urge you to reconsider the Diocese of Buffalo's decision to cancel the community concert at St. Joseph Cathedral due to the participation of the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus.

As someone brought up in the Catholic faith, and as part of a family of practicing Catholics, I am keenly aware of the Roman Catholic Church's position on various issues in society, including whom one chooses to love. While I am in acute disagreement with the church's position on this particular topic, it is not just my opposition that compels me to challenge this decision. Rather, it is my sincere belief that Jesus' teaching of love, compassion, respect, and tolerance for one another, despite our differences or disagreements, is being undermined. As such, I believe the Diocese's decision is antithetical to the Church's own teachings, and should be reversed.

Furthermore, in our own Buffalo community, in the shadow of a massacre that occurred just two years ago, in part, due to societal intolerance for our inherent or perceived differences, I feel it is even more important that we cultivate a sense of love, tolerance, and belonging for all, despite our own personal disagreements or even disapproval of how one lives his or her own life.

As Jesus himself told the disciples, "Walk with me." Imagine what the Gospel would read if he only said, "Come to me if I agree with you, if not, find someone else to follow or somewhere else to go."

In 2024, simply allowing the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus to demonstrate their God-given talents and beauty shouldn't be an issue worthy of even provoking conversation, but given that it has, I implore you to consider the message of intolerance and hate you are sending to the people of our region, both of our faith and not of our faith, who look to us as a moral compass. It is confusing at least, and directly conflicting at worst. This decision will only alienate the people of our community within the church and further push away those the church desires to attract to the faith.

The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus should be celebrated, not canceled. I have seen them in all of their magnificence and glory and there is no doubt their God-given talents make them one of the most sensational choral groups I have ever witnessed. The passion and pride they sing with elevates their music to another level. Their voices coupled with the beauty within St. Joseph Cathedral would capture the spirit of God in a way that would move us all.

If the Church truly wants to be the center of the community and promote the faith as inclusive and welcoming to all, then the decision of the Diocese of Buffalo to cancel the upcoming concert ought to be immediately reconsidered and welcomed back to its original destination.

I stand ready to assist in any way I can to resolve this matter. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy M. Kennedy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'T' and a long, horizontal stroke at the end.

Timothy M. Kennedy
Member of Congress, NY-26