

On a windy October 7<sup>th</sup> in 1571, a Catholic fleet of 280 warships assembled by the Pope was sailing across the tumultuous blue sea to defend Rome from the incoming Ottoman Empire with their massive flotilla of 330 ships seeking to overtake the heart of Italy. As the thousands of rowers on each side were straining their oars back and forth in harmony, the respective captains readied their armies for war. Then, battle commenced and cannon balls flung through the air, guns fired their ammunition and the battle raged on for five hours. Pope Pius V had urged all of Europe to pray the Rosary during this sea battle, and through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Catholics were victorious against the Ottoman Fleet and suffered the loss of only 50 ships compared to the opposition which had lost over 250 of their warships and almost 30 000 men. And hence, we commemorate the role of Mary in this great military victory that saved the West, **yet we are in greater need of her intercession today as we battle**, not for the heart of Italy, **but for the hearts of our children**.

In Alberta, the current provincial government will propose new legislation this fall of 2017 that would prevent parents from knowing if their child is in a Gay Straight Alliance by preventing teachers from informing the parents.<sup>1</sup> In 2006, this has already been implemented as a suggestion in a guidebook for teachers about GSAs by the ATA. It states:

“a teacher should never reveal a student’s sexual orientation or gender identity to a parent or colleague without the express consent of that student”<sup>2</sup>

Nonetheless, new legislation could enshrine something like this as law and not just as a guide. Donna Trimble, who has been an advocate for parental choice in education and regularly hears stories of parents who have been excluded from their child’s support system, gives an example:

In one case, loving parents were shocked to discover that their autistic preteen daughter’s school had been treating her as a boy, even using a boy’s name and male pronouns to refer to her. This went on for almost a year until the daughter expressed suicidal thoughts to school staff, at which point the school finally decided to inform the parents.<sup>3</sup>

Of course, not all schools and teachers are like this, but if this new legislation is brought forward and passed, it will be illegal for all teachers to tell parents that their child is in a GSA.

Parents and grandparents, aunts and uncles, we need to advocate/speak for our children, grandchildren, our nephews and nieces. I am not advocating violence but I am encouraging parents to take back your right and your role as the primary educators of your children because schools are meant to work in partnership with parents and not against them.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/programs/edmontonam/new-legislation-around-gsas-1.4311627>  
<https://omny.fm/shows/danielle-smith/gsa-legislation>

<sup>2</sup> GSAs and QSAs in Alberta Schools: A Guide for Teachers, page 15

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.calgarysun.com/2017/08/18/trimble-this-tangled-web-the-ata-has-weaved>

Parents have a right to know if their child is in a GSA because the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us in paragraph 2221:

"The right and the duty of parents to educate their children are **primordial and inalienable**"

Parents, at the baptism of your child, **you took on the responsibility before God** of raising your child in the constant practice of faith. Your role as the primary educators makes you the **primary evangelizers** of your children because you are like the 70 disciples in the gospel today sent to your children so that they may know the things hidden from the wise and intelligent: **the unfathomable love of God for them**. Parents have a duty to reveal to their children the mystery of who they are according to how God sees them and not as the world sees them. The world will say that your child is gay or lesbian or transgender. But as Catholics, we say to our children who experience SSA or gender dysphoria: "You are so much **more** than your sexual orientation or attraction, you are **more** than your brokenness and confusion. **You are a beloved child of God. You were bought with a price that none of the riches in this world can even compare. You were redeemed by the blood of God's only begotten Son and his love can and will heal your wounded heart to become the person he has called you to be.**"

Parents, there are three things you can do to join in this battle for your children: vote, love your children, and pray the rosary.

1) Vote

You can vote on **October 16, 2017** for the school trustees who can set policies and legislation that directly impact your school district. Vote for trustees who are faithful to the teachings of the Church and who will defend parental rights. Be informed about what is going on. Vote for leaders of parties who will defend parental rights.

2) Love your children, more intentionally

I know that you all love your children, and I want to encourage you to love them even more by **intentionally spending time with them**. I heard a statistic that parents on average speak to their children in **non-directive communication for about 3 minutes/day**. We need to spend time with our children in an unconditional way so that we can be a channel of God's love and if issues do arise, they have an opportunity to share it with us.

3) Pray the rosary

On this feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, pray the rosary for the protection of our families. Don Jon of Austria, the captain of the Christian fleet in that naval battle on Oct 7, 1571, not only **prepared his men physically for battle but also spiritually** by having everyone go on a three day fast, going to confessions but most of all by equipping each of his 68 000 men with the most powerful weapon that would become the primary reason for their success: **the rosary**.