

**May 20, 2015**  
**For Immediate Release**

**SF Catholic High School Parents, Teachers & Students**  
**Reject Archbishop Cordileone's Revised Handbook:**  
***"It Harms Our Teachers, Students, Schools and Community"***

**WHEN:** 4:00 pm Wednesday, May 20

**WHERE:** SF Archdiocesan Chancery, 1 Peter Yorke Way, San Francisco

**WHAT:** Press Conference to reject Archbishop Cordileone's revised Faculty Handbook

**WHO:** Concerned Parents: Teach Acceptance and teachers, students, and allies

On Wednesday, May 20, 2015, concerned parents at San Francisco Archdiocesan schools will be joined by teachers, students and allies to declare their firm opposition to the latest version of Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone's Faculty Handbook. Parents, Teachers, Students and allies will gather in front of the Archdiocesan Chancery Office at 1 Peter Yorke Way.

The Archbishop is attempting to reclassify all employees of four schools within the Archdiocese as part of the "ministry" and "mission" of the church in order to eliminate anti-discrimination and other workplace protections for those staff members. He has also proposed that teachers and staff at the schools accept handbook language that, among other things, condemns homosexuality, same-sex marriage, contraception, and use of assisted reproductive technology. These proposals, originally made public in February, were met with an overwhelming outcry from teachers, parents, students and allies of the four schools.

In recent days, the Archbishop sent a letter and revised draft Faculty Handbook to at least fifteen Catholic educators. Parents, teachers and students say that while softer in tone, this revised handbook represents no meaningful change from his original agenda.

"Sadly, the Archbishop has changed his tone, but not the substance of his proposal," said Jim Jordan, a teacher at Sacred Heart Cathedral High School. "The Archbishop even states in the letter that he wants to 'find another approach to reach the same goal.' He's not backing down at all." Jordan added, "As for the revised handbook language, the committee who drafted it was never authorized to act on behalf of the schools. Their administrators all discouraged them from participating in order to protect them from being in the vulnerable position of creating employment policy for their co-workers."

"Archbishop Cordileone's latest faculty handbook language, while more conciliatory in tone than the previous version, and eliminating words like 'gravely evil,' has the same result: teachers are cast as ministers with no legal protections, with personal lives open to scrutiny from their employer," said Kathy Curran, a parent of two children in Catholic high schools. "The language is still harmful to our children and is an attempt to camouflage his original agenda and fundamentally alter the character and culture of Catholic education in our high schools."

Sacred Heart Cathedral Senior Gino Gresh voiced concern that the Archbishop is attempting to redefine Catholic education, placing at risk the century-old reputation of one of the finest educational institutions in San Francisco. "I love my school. I know I have received a world class, values-based education," said Gresh. "And fellow students who are LGBT or questioning their sexuality, whose parents are divorced or LGBT, or who were conceived through IVF – all of us, no matter where we come from or who we are, have felt safe to question and safe to learn. Under the Archbishop's proposals, that would no longer be the case. For me, a great education teaches me to think and to ask questions. It's not being told what to think or how to be."

Parents and teachers noted that the Archbishop has many platforms from which to educate faculty, students, parents and other members of the school community regarding his interpretations of Church theology, other than an employee handbook. Serra High School parent Lynn Schuette said, "While the Archbishop's 'short compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church' may be appropriate for a religious treatise, it is not acceptable for a faculty handbook. His selective list of Catholic catechism

fails to reflect a fuller understanding of the Catholic tradition, let alone the centrality of the primacy of conscience and the 'sense of the faithful.'"

"Under the revised handbook language, teachers would not be able to dissent or discuss ideas that conflict with the Archbishop's understanding of Catholicism without risking their jobs," said Kathleen Purcell, a constitutional attorney and former Catholic high school teacher. "This fundamentally alters the character of our schools. Teachers whose jobs are under threat if they step outside the line cannot provide a safe environment for students to learn."

The teachers are represented by the Archdiocesan Federation of Teachers Local 2240. In late April, California State Labor Leaders, Central Labor Councils and 19 local unions stood in solidarity with AFT Local 2240 to call upon the Archbishop to stop threatening teachers' legal protections. The Archbishop and the Teachers' Union remain at the bargaining table. Sal Curcio, a Sacred Heart Cathedral High School teacher and member of the union's Executive Board, stated, "We will not accept language that diminishes our legal protections."

At the rally on May 20, parents, students, teachers and allies will call on the Archbishop to step back from his proposed changes, and keep the current contract and handbook that have served the schools well.