

"... Other gays felt the same outrage at being shut away from God for performing sexual acts which differed little from those that society sanctioned in holy matrimony. So the little gay churches were springing up in the metropolitan area, with a priest here and a minister there who were brave enough to care.

Every Sunday I went to the small Church of the Beloved Disciple on Fourteenth Street and I prayed rather desperately. I did not pray to be miraculously changed back into a heterosexual. I prayed for the knowledge to know myself and accept myself totally...."

the Front Runner

By Patricia Nell Warren

Church of the Beloved Disciple

The Catholic Church of the Gay Community

The "Front Runner" is well written fiction; the Church of the Beloved Disciple is a living reality. Here is a traditional church that gay people can enter proudly, without fear of censure or denunciation. At Beloved Disciple, men and women can realize their full potential as God's gay people, for their gay sexuality is recognized as one of God's greatest gifts. Here, too, they can put their faith to work ... for this Church is involved in the many activities that are the responsibility of God's people.

The Eucharistic Catholic Church is the world's first gay church. Its work continues in name, fact and action at the Procathedral Church, The Church of the Beloved Disciple.

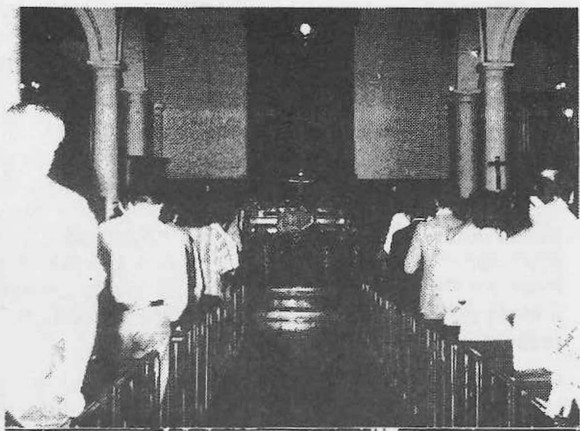
The Eucharistic Catholic Church was founded in 1946 by a young priest named Father George Hyde. The name "Eucharistic Catholic" was chosen to stress the Sacramental and Apostolic nature of its special ministry, the offering of the Eucharist, the Sacrament which has been consistently denied to homosexuals.



Fr. George Hyde, Founder of the Eucharistic Catholic Church, the world's first gay church.

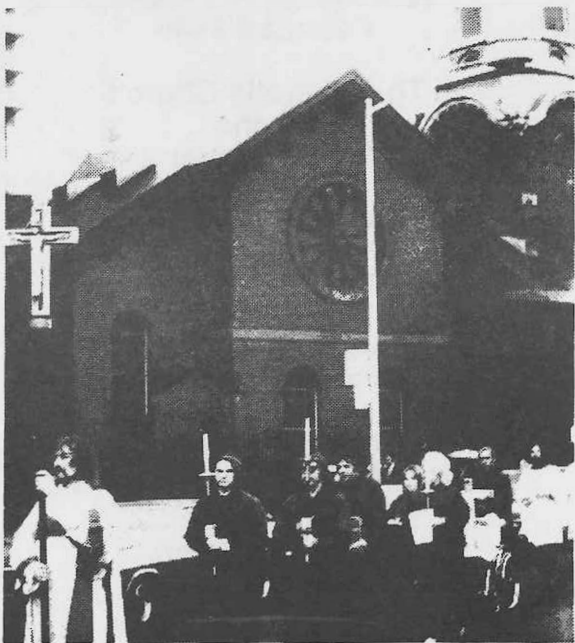
The first liturgy for gay people was celebrated at midnight on Christmas Eve, 1946, in the Cotton Blossom Room, a gay cocktail bar in Atlanta, Georgia, before a congregation of eighty-five gay persons. It was a moving and historic event. Despite the smallness of its numbers and the limits to its resources, the Eucharistic Catholic Church courageously ministered to gay people throughout the South and the Southwest, during a time of violent antihomosexual oppression.

Until 1970, when the Church of the Beloved Disciple was founded by Father Robert M. Clement to



Fr. Robert M. Clement celebrating the first public gay service in New York City for the Church of the Beloved Disciple, on July 19, 1970. Over 500 gay people participated in this service.

meet the spiritual needs of homosexuals in the New York Metropolitan area, there was no Catholic Church ministering to gay people here. At that time, the established churches would not even consider such a ministry.



In November, 1972, Beloved Disciple moved in solemn procession from its original location at 28th Street and 9th Avenue to new quarters on 30th Street and Lexington Avenue.

Beloved Disciple's founding was based on Father Clement's belief in the rightness and equality of homosexuals in God's creation. Since then, it has



The first service in Beloved Disciple's second location at the Moravian Church on Lexington Avenue.

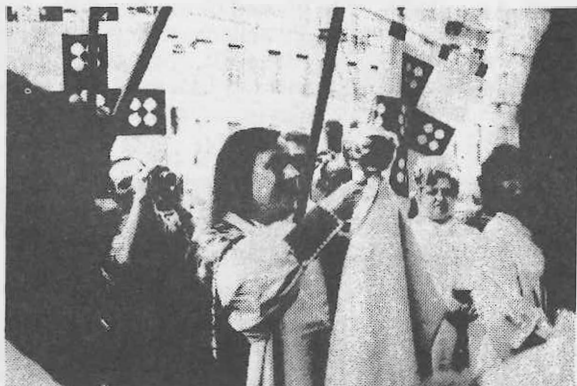
been an activist force in building the gay community and in helping to shape the emerging gay lifestyles. Beloved Disciple is a "front runner" of Gay Liberation; it speaks its convictions openly and with integrity.



Fr. Robert, Fr. John, and Fr. Leo in front of the Stonewall Inn, Christer Street, on Liberation Day, 1973.

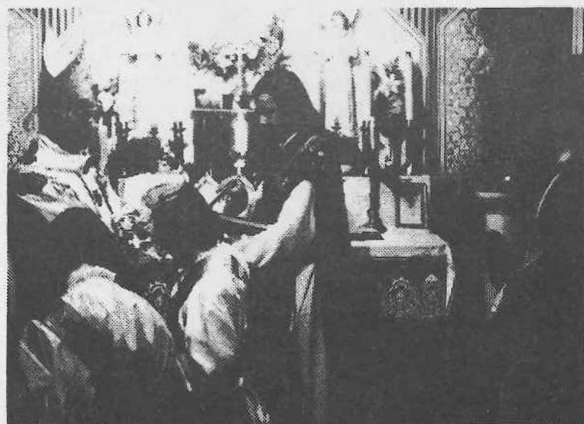
This Church proclaims a God of Love for all people. It is guided by the earliest Christian ethic, that of the Apostolic era, the time of the early Fathers of the Church. It maintains that a love and respect for oneself is the basis of a loving community. We worship here an adult God, not a God who is a nineteenth century prude or a sixteenth century tyrant. This church is not obsessed with man-made prohibitions or with local concepts or morality. Homosexuals have nothing to fear from God, as God is Love, and Love casts out fear.

The services of this church are based on the Sacraments of our Lord, the gifts of God's love to his people. As such, they are meant to be given openly and freely. The Mass or Liturgy used at Beloved Disciple is primarily derived from the ancient and beautiful Gallican Rite as set down in the sixth century for St. Germain, Bishop of Paris. It is the old-



Fr. Clement, holding the Blessed Sacrament blesses the front of Beloved Disciple's own building before the first service there in October, 1973. Beloved Disciple became the first gay organization on the Eastern seaboard to own real estate.

est, complete Western Liturgy and is the root of all Western Christian worship. As such, it is an ecumenical expression of faith to which all Christians can relate. Beloved Disciple traces its succession through the Western Church to the time of the Apostles. All that was beautiful and positive from



The ordination of Fr. John Noble and Fr. Leo M. Joseph on April 20, 1974, in Montreal, Canada. They became the first two openly gay men ordained to the Catholic priesthood.

the Church's earliest heritage has been sought out, reinstated, and cherished.

Father Robert M. Clement, the founder and pastor of the Church of the Beloved Disciple, had been a priest for twenty-one years, serving other Catholic churches (all straight) in the New York area. Finally, after much soul searching, he realized that he could no longer lie to himself or to others. As a result, that first public gay service in New York City was celebrated on July 19, 1970. This service made worldwide headlines and did much to shake the complacency of the established churches in their attitudes towards homosexuals.



Bishop Clement, kneeling with the Gospel Book across his shoulders, just seconds after he became the first openly gay Catholic Bishop.

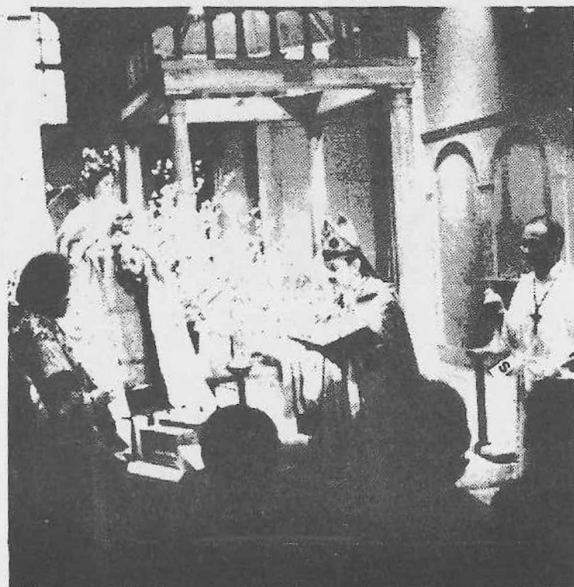
Three years later, the people of Beloved Disciple undertook the purchase of their own church property, and in 1973, the church moved to its present home on 14th Street, thus becoming the first gay organization on the Eastern seaboard to own real estate. Within a few short months, the dedicated parishioners had transformed a derelict, loft building into a beautiful church, and with their gifts of love—both work and financial—they continue to expand and improve its program facilities.

In July, 1974, in recognition of the marvelous achievements at Beloved Disciple, the now Archbishop George Hyde formally handed over to Father Clement the name, title-documents, relics and written history of the Eucharistic Catholic Church. In this way, the Church of the Beloved Disciple became the Procathedral of the Eucharistic Catholic Church, assuming and continuing its proud heritage.



The Most Rev. Robert M. Clement, Bishop of New York and the American Missions, Eucharistic Catholic, at his enthronement in Beloved Disciple.

On October 6, 1974, Father Clement was consecrated a Catholic Bishop, the first openly gay priest to receive this status in the history of Christendom. Archbishop Richard Marchenna of the Old Roman Catholic Church, the man who had ordained Father Clement to the priesthood twenty-five years earlier,



The Feast of Candlemas in Honor of the Blessed Virgin, celebrated in 1976 in Beloved Disciple's newly decorated church.

performed this ancient ritual, which was witnessed by millions through extensive television coverage. Thus, the Eucharistic Catholic Church arrived at its complete structure and thereby was able to fully proclaim its independent Catholic position.

Growth and expansion are always urgent needs of a church for Christ directed that His message be spread throughout the world. St. John's Seminary trains people for ordination to the priesthood, and five men have already been ordained, while the People's Priesthood Training Center trains laymen and laywomen to undertake all tasks not specifically reserved to those ordained.

With dedicated laymen and laywomen and a strong clergy, Beloved Disciple looks forward to a decade of growth and witness in this city, in the metropolitan area ... and throughout the world. And, we especially look forward to *your* involvement in this vital work for God and His Church!

**CHURCH OF THE BELOVED
DISCIPLE
(Eucharistic Catholic)
Founded 1946**

**The Catholic Church
for the
Gay Community**

**348 West 14th Street
New York, New York 10014
Phone: (212) 242-6616**

**Most Rev. Robert M. Clement, S.T.D.
Archbishop of New York
and the American Missions**

**Most Rev. John Noble, D.D.,
Bishop Coadjutor**

**Rev. Father Philip R. Clement,
Chancellor**

**SUNDAY MASSES
12:00 P.M. Mass
~~7:00 P.M. Mass~~**

Coffee Hours follow each Mass

**A Faith Worth Believing In ...
A Church ... Worth Belonging To ...**