

Nun seeking to bridge gay gap to speak in N.M., Ariz.

Journal Staff Report

A controversial Roman Catholic nun whose ministry with gays and lesbians has been under investigation by the Vatican will hold a series of daylong workshops in New Mexico and Arizona over the next two weeks.

Sister Jeannine Gramick — co-founder of a group promoting "reconciliation" between the lesbian/gay community and the Roman Catholic Church — will present "bridge-building" workshops in Albuquerque, Las Cruces, Tucson, Scottsdale, Flagstaff and Farmington.

Gramick and the Rev. Robert

Nugent, who co-founded New Ways Ministry in Mount Rainier, Md., in 1977, have raised Vatican concerns since 1981.

A three-member American commission was named in 1988 but was inactive until 1994 when the panel, headed by Cardinal Adam J. Maida of Detroit, began studying whether the views of Gramick and Nugent are compatible with church teaching on homosexuality.

The probe was put on hold in February when more information was sought from Gramick and Nugent.

Gramick told Religion News Service at the time that the delay was "a hopeful sign," saying she expected the ministry would be recog-

nized as "valid and legitimate."

New Ways is founded on a pastoral rather than punitive approach to homosexuality — and is a advocate for lesbian/gay civil rights.

The ministry has been criticized for affirming a homosexual lifestyle and for contradicting church teachings that homosexuality is an "objective disorder."

Gramick has continued her ministry with the approval of her religious congregation (School Sisters of Notre Dame) and the knowledge of the Vatican.

She and Francis DeBernardo, program director at New Ways Ministry, will offer church teaching, scripture, spiritual approaches and

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pastoral outreach in the workshop — with opportunity for questions, comments and other feedback from workshop participants.

The workshop — which uses education, dialogue, story-telling and prayer — is aimed at Catholic clergy and lay people, educators, counselors, social workers, HIV/AIDS ministers and other professionals, gay and lesbian people and their friends and family members.

"We need to ask questions, seek the understanding of our tradition, and find nourishment for the common task of reconciliation," Gramick says of the workshop's goal.

Each workshop runs from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the following

locations:

■ Tuesday, Center for Action and Contemplation, 550 Atrisco SW (behind Holy Family Church) in Albuquerque.

■ Thursday, St. Albert the Great Newman Center at New Mexico State University, 2615 South Solano, Las Cruces.

■ April 27, Our Mother of Sorrows Parish in Tucson.

■ April 29, Franciscan Renewal Center in Scottsdale.

■ May 1, Holy Trinity Newman Center at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff.

■ May 4, St. Mary's Church, 2100 East 20th St., Farmington.

Cost of the workshop is \$35 in

advance, payable to New Ways Ministry, 4012 29th St., Mount Rainier, Md., 20712 (phone 301/277-5674, fax 301/864-6948), or \$45 at the door.

Partial scholarships (participant pays \$20) or full scholarships (no fee, but service on the day of the workshop) are available. Participants are asked to bring brown-bag lunches; coffee and tea will be provided.