

## Providence bishop faces backlash for homophobic tweet

By Maddie Kilgannon Globe Correspondent, June 1, 2019

Providence Bishop Thomas J. Tobin took to Twitter Saturday to tell Catholics not to celebrate Pride Month this June, saying the event runs counter to the teachings of the faith.

“A reminder that Catholics should not support or attend LGBTQ ‘Pride Month’ events held in June,” Bishop Thomas Tobin [tweeted](#) Saturday morning.

“They promote a culture and encourage activities that are contrary to Catholic faith and morals,” he continued. “They are especially harmful for children.”



Tobin’s tweets sparked an immediate backlash on social media from LGBTQ supporters, who tweeted directly to the Rhode Island bishop.

On Twitter and Facebook, Rhode Island Pride called Tobin’s remarks “shameful” and announced it will hold a demonstration on Sunday, 6:30 p.m., in front of the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul in Providence.

“Since Bishop Tobin called on Catholics to abandon Pride & the LGBTQIA+ community – we are taking Pride directly to them,” the event’s organizers [tweeted](#).

A spokeswoman for the Diocese of Providence could not immediately be reached for comment on Saturday night.

The leader of Rhode Island gay rights group said in an interview Saturday night that the group was insulted by the bishop’s tweet.

“We woke up this morning and we saw the bishop’s tweet and were honestly flabbergasted,” said Joe Lazzerini, the president of Rhode Island Pride in an interview Saturday night.

“He is like the Donald Trump of the Catholic Church, he goes on Twitter and spews out hate,” Lazzerini.

Lazzerini said that he especially took offense at Tobin’s assertion that the LGBTQ community is harmful to children “especially considering the Catholic Church’s history of covering up clergy sexual abuse of children.”

Lazzerini said he hopes that Sunday's rally sends a message that Tobin's "hate and intolerance" is not welcome in Rhode Island.

Lazzerini said he was raised Catholic. "The Church left me a long time ago, I didn't leave the Church ... I learned a long time ago that I wasn't going to be accepted there," he said.

Lazzerini said Tobin is welcome to attend the rally, so that he can show him what Pride is really about.

"There's so much hate in this world, and Pride is all about love," Lazzerini said.



Providence Bishop Thomas J. Tobin in 2013.

## Supreme Court Decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges*

**A prophetic dissenting statement** by Justice Samuel Alito on the United States Supreme Court's approval of same-sex marriage by a 5 to 4 majority vote in the *Obergefell v. Hodges* case on June 26, 2015:

"The decision will also have other important consequences. It will be used to vilify Americans who are unwilling to assent to the new orthodoxy. In the course of its opinion, the majority compares traditional marriage laws to laws that denied equal treatment for African-Americans and women. The implications of this analogy will be exploited by those who are determined to stamp out every vestige of dissent.

"I assume that those who cling to old beliefs will be able to whisper their thoughts in the recesses of their homes, but if they repeat those views in public, they will risk being labeled as bigots and treated as such by governments, employers, and schools."

**Source:** <https://www.politico.com/story/2015/06/supreme-court-justices-opinions-memorable-quotes-gay-marriage-119477>