

**Knight Initiative Teach-in Remarks
January 23, 2000**

**The Rev. Ed Bacon, Rector
All Saints Church**

My name is Ed Bacon. I am the Rector of All Saints Church. Again, I want to welcome each of you to All Saints for this event. All Saints Church has been in the vanguard for more than a decade in proclaiming the great good news that God's radically inclusive love is not limited to heterosexual people. Quite the contrary. All Saints stands as a joyful and grateful community of faith that celebrates the energy and life that brims over when gay and lesbian couples are not closeted or relegated to second class status. In fact, time and time again heterosexual couples bear witness to the fact that their family life and their relational life are strengthened because of gay and straight couples worshipping and working together. Couples who are struggling to be faithful and loving and committed over the long haul gain strength from other couples who are doing the same. Heterosexual couples are strengthened not weakened by homosexual couples whose relationships are based in mutual love and commitment.

We are standing together tonight against a proposition that is mean-spirited and bigoted. When most people look on the surface of the fourteen words of the proposition, those words seem harmless enough. They are stated in the affirmative. They seem quite positive. But God's people of all faiths are always called to look beneath the surface. We are called always to look at the roots of something as well as the fruit of something. My brothers and sisters, when you scratch beneath the surface of this proposition you see the roots of injustice. The fact of the matter is, my friends, this proposition was conceived in sin and born in iniquity. Conceived in the sin of fear and born in the iniquity of bigotry, conceived in the sin of hatred and born in the iniquity of playground bullying, conceived in the sin of prejudice and born in the iniquity of cruelty. The forces beneath this proposition are not the forces of love. They are the forces of intolerance and discrimination. They are not the forces of reconciliation and peace. They are the forces of division and rancor. The mind-set that gave birth to this proposition is the same mind-set that is anti-immigration, anti-people of color, anti-progress and anti-change. The vision behind this proposition is not a society of diversity and color and texture and reconciliation but a society that is bland, biased, narrow, divided and stratified.

The forces behind this proposition admit that this is an attempt to preemptively discriminate against people who are homosexual. They believe that love between two men and love between two women is inferior to the love between a man and a woman. They believe that such love is disordered and perverted. They believe that committed love of ten, fifteen, twenty-five, fifty years between

two men or two women is less honorable, precious, valuable than the same between a man and a woman. The forces behind this proposition want to institutionalize a caste system of relationships. If you are loving and committed and you were born straight, you will be protected. But if the love of your life to whom you are committed is the same gender as you, watch out. Not only will your relationship not have legal protection, this proposition will be used as leverage to undo the Domestic Partnership Act and every other legal protection and civil right.

Do not be deceived. If this proposition prevails, it will not be the last proposition and law that we see enacted against minorities in California. If they prevail, the proponents of this proposition will not give up until they drive every homosexual son and daughter of God back into the closet. But the appetite of prejudice will not be sated by this proposition. The same mind-set which wants to force gays and lesbians to wear a legal badge of inferiority wants other minorities to do the same. Bigotry has an insatiable appetite. The gluttony of intolerance seeks to devour every human being who is different. Pastor Martin Niemoller learned that about bigotry in Hitler's Germany. He said,

"In Germany, they first came for the communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Catholic. Then they came for me -- and by that time there was nobody left to speak up."

Edmund Burke was right. He said, "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good people to do nothing."

My sisters and brothers, we are people of God. It is a tragedy that the good leaders of the Mormon Church and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese have allowed themselves to be hijacked by the forces of intolerance and bigotry that gave birth to this hate-filled initiative. But those of us who see both its roots and its fruits must bear witness to the truth that we see. We are called to speak up against injustice and violence. In God's Heaven, God has no children who are second class. God has no children who are inferior. God has no children who are disordered. There is only the rainbow of children of God in God's family – all loving relationships are equally important – all equally blessed – all equally loved – all equally honored. And the people of God are to help to make heaven happen on earth. Do not be guilty of doing nothing. Do your part by fighting against, giving against and working against this pernicious, evil, and unjust proposition.