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Date: Sunday, January 26, 2014

Subject: Op ed

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I think an op ed is a great idea. I have just been reading some of the comments against Noel Whelan's article, some of which definitely prove a few points he was making over how vitriolic some people can be in the debate. Some of the comments also seem off the point.

On the other hand there are definitely things Noel has brought up that maybe we could address without losing him or others like as allies. In particular:

- Most gay people don't see this as an abstract debate on liberalism and conservatism but about the most fundamental civil and human rights that exist: the right to love who you wish and to help and protect the people that you love
- Its not surprising that people get angry because we are not debating abstract ideas but issues that affect us and the people we love in the most vital areas of our lives.
- There is homophobia in the world. Even the most privileged gay couple lacks the basic civil right of being able to walk down the street holding the hand of their partner.
- The most appropriate analogy for the quest for equality for lesbian and gay people are other struggles on civil rights. I was doing my masters in UCD in 1989 and I remember Noel Whelan's debate being advertised around the campus. However well intentioned, the debate title just added to my fear of UCD as a homophobic environment. He would not have based a debate on racism with a motion "Black people are inferior and unintelligent" - such has been the progress on that civil right issue.
- We reject the idea of loving the sinner but hating sin as applied to gay people. As Yeats would say, how can you tell the dancer from the dance. Hating the sin in effect means that it is excusable to hate our relationships with the people we love and therefore to deny any recognition of that relationship.
- And back to anger. I get angry Noel, not because I am a liberal but because my partner has spent time in a jail cell in Cavan and in London because he tried to get to Ireland to meet me. Thats what this means for people

Eoin