

Church Play Casts Jesus as a Transgender Woman

A play performed in a Manchester, England, church portraying Jesus as a transgender woman has outraged critics who say the performance was a sacrilegious effort to promote homosexuality.

The play was performed in a Church of England on Sunday. It depicted Jesus as a transgender woman who refers to God as "Mum."

The drama challenged the traditional biblical ideas of marriage and sparked outrage among critics who found the performance extremely offensive.

The play called "The Gospel According to Jesus, Queen of Heaven," is a one-woman show performed by Jo Clifford. Clifford is an acclaimed Scottish playwright and professor who himself changed his gender from male to female.

His play imagines Jesus returning to earth as a transgender woman who relives the parables of the Gospels from the transgender perspective.

Clifford's play depicts Jesus saying, "I am the daughter of God and almost certainly the son also. My mum said let there be light, and I say I am the light..."

In another part of the play, Clifford distorts the Lord's Prayer: "Our Mother who art on Earth, blessed is your name." Against images of gay couples kissing, Clifford continues, "Give us this day our daily kisses, for yours in the Queendom..."

Clifford also rewrote the story of the prodigal to be that of a son who was disowned by his father for desiring a sex

change.

St. Chrysostom's Church in Manchester's Victoria Park featured the controversial play as part of the city's celebration of homosexuality during its annual Queer Contact festival.

According to experts of Church law, Bishop of Manchester David Walker had the authority to stop the staging of the play but did not do so.

"It is quite clear from the Gospels that the identity of Jesus is male, his 'mum' is Mary, and He always refers to God as 'Father.' So to suggest otherwise is contrary to Christian teaching," former Bishop of Rochester, Michael Nazir-Ali, told *Daily Mail*.

The former bishop also expressed his disappointment over Walker's refusal to stop the performance.

"In cases in which a play is to be staged in a church building, the bishop is perfectly entitled under Church law to direct the cleric in charge to ensure the content will be consistent with Christian teaching and not offensive to the public," Nazir-Ali said.

Another leading cleric and expert in church law told *Daily Mail*, "This play is wholly inappropriate for performance in a consecrated building."

Critics condemned Bishop Walker for allowing Jesus to be depicted as a transgendered woman in a place that is consecrated as holy to God.