

Today's Devotional is provided by Peter Covington

## CLELA ROREX

On March 8 the Drama Ministry presented the story of Clela Rorex, the first county clerk to issue a same-sex marriage license in the U.S. Her courage is worth remembering in Lent (and at all times), to understand it when we feel the need to risk rejection or harm, much as Jesus did in his journey to the cross, as he did for much of his ministry.

First a bit of the history. I have no evidence of Clela Rorex being a Christian, but she did decide to issue the marriage license because she felt it the right thing to do, based on her experience with discrimination against her as a woman. She had been married previously, living with her husband on a military base, a particularly macho environment, and when she divorced, she returned to her native Boulder, Colorado, where she was elected to the position of County Clerk. After she issued the marriage license to Dave Zamorra and David McCord in 1975, she received a great deal of hate mail and criticism and even death threats. A famous local war hero did ask for a license to marry his horse as form of protest to the marriage of two men. Clela did turn him down because his horse was younger than the age of consent!

But the point remains that she did what she believed to be the right thing and paid a heavy price in public ostracism and stress, and a great deal of grief.

What strikes me the most about her story is that she did not expect to be standing up for the cause of same-gender marriage. The issue simply fell in her lap for decision and she did the humane thing. That is usually how doing the right thing comes to us, not because we have been out campaigning for or against something but in small (and sometimes large) decisions that come before us unsought and sometimes unwelcome. Hopefully we make the right decision for the right reasons. Clela did consult the district attorney to



understand her legal ground rather than charging blindly ahead, and that is probably a best practice in such situations. But she chose to do the right thing when she least expected it.

This is quite a contrast to Kim Davis, another county clerk who more recently who took what she thought was a moral stand against gay marriage by refusing to issue licenses to gay couples in Rowan County, Kentucky. She was sued by some of the couples, legally enjoined by a court and the Governor and eventually went to jail.

Sometimes punishment for what you believe is proof that one is doing right (think of Dr. King), but most right is done as Clela did, doing right in the matters that come before us on a daily basis. “He has shown you, what is good and what the Lord requires of you: to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God”

Going to jail can happen in doing right, but it is not a requirement of being on the right side. Jesus did a host of right things long before he was sentenced to die. We have that power every day because God gives us those opportunities.