

# Catholic university allows play after parish is asked to cancel it

SAN FRANCISCO – Two days after San Francisco Archbishop George H. Niederauer requested that a Catholic parish cancel a scheduled performance of a gay-themed play by high school students, the University of San Francisco stepped in and allowed the play to be performed on its campus.

Titled “Be Still and Know,” the play was performed at the university’s Presentation Theater March 8.

University spokeswoman Anne-Marie Devine said Jesuit Father Stephen Privett, the university president, knew Archbishop Niederauer had requested the parish showing be canceled.

According to a press release, the university was asked by those producing the play to provide the space and believed the reason for its requested cancellation was because of the parish venue, not the content of the play.

The play “explores the Bible’s view on homosexuality and the struggles adolescents have with their sexual identity and their identity as Christians,” according to a news release issued by Sacred Heart Preparatory, which produced the play.

John Loschmann, the drama director at the school, which is operated by the Sisters of the Sacred Heart, wrote the play. It is an adaptation of a book for young adults, “The God Box” by Alex Sanchez.

The play previously had been performed Jan. 30-31 and Feb. 5-7 at the high school’s theater and was to be performed March 8 at Most Holy Redeemer Church until Archbishop Niederauer asked that it be canceled.

The University of San Francisco has been criticized over other theater performances, notably its yearly showing of “The Vagina Monologues.”

Organized into various monologues delivered by a number of actresses, the play



contains graphic descriptions of sexual acts. The women discuss their sexual experiences as well as rape and other forms of violence against them.

The school is one of only two California Catholic institutions that have been showing the play and one of only 15 in the nation to do so, down from a high of 32 in 2003, according to the Cardinal Newman Society, a Virginia-based group that advocates adherence to magisterial teaching on Catholic campuses.

The second California school, Jesuit-run Santa Clara University, will no longer be showing the play. Jesuit Father Michael Engh, who took over as president Jan. 1, ordered the cancellation of its planned production.