

Marriage adviser resigns over Satan-homosexuality column

by [Daniel Burke](#)

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(RNS) A policy adviser to the U.S. Catholic bishops' anti-gay-marriage initiative resigned on Friday (Nov. 4), a week after writing a column that blamed Satan for homosexuality.

Daniel Avila had been an on-staff adviser to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage since June.

Unofficially, Avila referred to himself as the "bishops' marriage guy" and represented the USCCB's stance on marriage in Washington.

Sister Mary Ann Walsh, a spokeswoman for the USCCB, said Avila "willingly offered his resignation, and it was accepted."

Avila could not be immediately reached for comment.

In an Oct. 28 column published in the official newspaper of the Archdiocese of Boston, Avila wrote that "the scientific evidence of how same-sex attraction most likely may be created provides a credible basis for a spiritual explanation that indicts the devil."

The Boston Pilot retracted the column and issued an apology on Wednesday saying it "failed to recognize the theological error in the column before publication."

Avila also apologized in a statement on Wednesday. "The teaching of Sacred Scripture and of the Catechism of the Catholic Church make it clear that all persons are created in the image and likeness of God and have inviolable dignity," he said.

"I deeply apologize for the hurt and confusion that this column has caused," Avila added.

Avila also said that his column did not reflect the opinion of the Catholic bishops and was not authorized before publication. The USCCB has not taken an official position on the causes of homosexuality, Walsh said.

Avila, a lawyer, had been associate director of policy and research at the Massachusetts Catholic Conference for 14 years before joining the Washington-based USCCB.

Gay rights groups had called for Avila's ouster.

"I think it's appropriate that he has resigned," said Marianne Duddy-Burke executive director of DignityUSA, which advocates for gays and lesbians in the Catholic Church.

"I would hope that the bishops will follow it up with some significant action of repentance to demonstrate that they understand the harm that he has done to LGBT people and our families."