



Press

[NY1 Pick of the Week](#)

[TV footage on NY1](#)

[National Catholic Reporter](#) - *Gay music teacher fired by diocese stars in off-Broadway play about his experience*

[Playbill Announcement](#) - *Broadway Actor Turned Fired Gay Catholic Teacher Bringing Solo Show Communion Off-Broadway*

[Broadway World Announcement](#) - *Matthew LaBanca's COMMUNION Comes to the Cell Theatre in November*

[The Jersey Journal](#) - *Play delves into a 'Communion' broken when a gay teacher marries*

[Call Me Adam](#) - *Call Answered: Matthew LaBanca Interview: COMMUNION Play - Praying for Inclusion*

[Communion on News 12 Long Island](#)

[New Ways Ministry](#) - *Fired Gay Church Employee Writes Off-Broadway Play About His Story*

Podcasts

VIDEO [The Forum, St. Bart's Episcopal Church, NYC](#)

Why I'll Never Make It

- AUDIO [Matthew LaBanca Creates a One-Man Show After Being Fired From a Private Catholic School](#)
- AUDIO [FINAL FIVE with Matthew LaBanca, Performing Artist and Teacher Fired from his Job](#)

Dismissed With Prejudice - AUDIO [Matthew LaBanca and Theatrical Ministry](#)

Artistic Finance

- VIDEO [Holy Dismissal - Producing Faith and Identity On Stage](#)
- AUDIO [Holy Dismissal - Producing Faith and Identity On Stage](#)

Radical Love Live - [VIDEO Spiritual Trauma, Hope, and "Communion"](#)

Sisters of St. Joseph of Brentwood

- VIDEO [BREAKTHROUGH Season 3 Ep 6: COMMUNION with Matthew LaBanca](#)
- VIDEO [BREAKTHROUGH: SEASON 2 EPISODE 11 - Matthew LaBanca's Journey to COMMUNION](#)

Reviews

"Profoundly personal and deeply moving, Matthew LaBanca's 'Communion' takes us behind the headlines to reveal the inspiring story of his struggle to remain part of his church community as both a believer and a gay man."

- **James Martin, SJ**, author of [*Building a Bridge*](#)

"The heavens definitely opened their doors as the truth, heartbreak, and perseverance were revealed! Matthew LaBanca's COMMUNION is well written, acted, and delivered. The angels above are definitely guiding Matthew on using this show to bring about change." - **Adam**

Rothenberg [Call Me Adam NYC](#)

"Raw. Deeply moving. Love prevails. Teacher's play confronting gay discrimination in the church [is] an off-Broadway hit." - [Jake UK](#)

"LaBanca is such a charming presence. Communion is a powerful testimony, a potent exercise in empathy." - **David Barbour**, [Lighting & Sound America](#)

"Gripping... LaBanca draws us in and amazes us. Full of light and joy, it takes a personal story to the heights of a universal statement." **Karen D'Onofrio**, [Electronic Link Journey](#)

"Very well done and very compelling... It's really well-written. I highly recommend seeing it." -- **Michael Portantieri**, [Broadway Radio](#) (59:00)

"Touching... In 'Communion, the versatile actor/writer LaBanca is a natural theatrical animal... he sings, dances, even leads us in song [with] his engaging style." - **Rob Weinert-Kendt**, [Outreach 2024](#)

"An entertaining presentation and ultimately a very moving play." **Andy Humm**, [GayUSA Live](#)

"LaBanca's performance in his own play defies superlatives. His heart is so big, his caring and devotion are so sincere, it makes it all the more painful when he is expected to endure a tribunal

of the Catholic Diocese. But Matthew is a warrior. Warriors cannot and do not shut up.” - **Tony Marinelli**, [Theatre Scene](#)

It's not easy to carry an entire piece all by yourself— particularly one which is so personal. The intensely charismatic LaBanca meets that challenge. Guaranteed to foster discussions about religion, sexuality, identity, tradition, prejudice, and much more, this Communion is well worth receiving! -**Jed Ryan**, [Lavender After Dark](#)

Religious Leaders / Celebrities

“This is truly a great show - important and hugely entertainment, thanks to Matthew’s gut-wrenching performance. The show has much relevance in today’s world, and we know it will live long and prosper.” - **George and Brad Takei**

“I loved your piece and I'm so grateful for your invitation to be guided, challenged, educated, and nudged by you and your remarkable story. I hate that you had to experience the maddening pain of all you've gone through, but the incredibly generous art into which you've reshaped that pain is truly breath-giving.

I've been letting Judson folks know about their chances to see this incarnation and I wish the piece a long life. The world needs to hear your story. It will help us to tell new stories and to get rid of the outmoded harmful stories that still hold so many of us captive.”

With deep gratitude and admiration,

Rev. Micah Bucey

Senior Minister, [Judson Memorial Church, NYC](#)

“Matt, I wanted to congratulate you on such a powerful show! The structure, the storytelling, the set, the dialogue, and your heart and soul that was so obviously poured into all of it, made this an absolute triumph! Thank you for your courage in raising your voice in justice and love. We’re with you every step of the way.”

[Rev. Susan Sparks](#)

Senior Pastor, [Madison Avenue Baptist Church, NYC](#)

"Sweet. Poignant. We loved seeing the show. We're both really glad our community had a chance to interact with your piece and for your work and witness. Please consider St. Bart's a friend!"

The Reverend Peter D. Thompson

Vicar, St. Bart's Episcopal Church, NYC

&

Zack Nyein

Senior Associate Rector, St. Bart's Episcopal Church, NYC

Last Thursday I had the privilege of attending a preview performance of Matthew LaBanca's show, Communion. It tells the story of his struggle with the Catholic Church after being fired from his jobs as a Catholic school teacher and parish choir director for marrying his husband. I HIGHLY recommend the show for all LGBTQ Catholics and allies and am excited to see how it challenges and changes the Church.

- **Jason Steidl Jack**, Religion Professor, St. Joseph's University, NYC

Last evening I was fortunate to see a sneak peek of Matthew LaBanca's new play "Communion". An engaging and entertaining story that must be told and shared with everyone.

Matthew did a phenomenal job sharing his heartbreaking story of the harmful effects of religious dogma and discrimination that continues to exist even today. Faith communities that tell people they are broken, less than, and separated from God and thus should be separated from service and mission to God's people are wrong These misguided teachings that take away hope, livelihoods, and sometimes life itself.... usually leads to a crisis of faith for everyone involved, the person targeted as well as the people that witness the effect of these words and traditions ... These harmful teachings and traditions must stop.

Thank you Matthew for so eloquently taking the audience along on your personal journey of growth and healing after experiencing religious traumaThank you for being an #Upstander.... Standing up and speaking out because without #Upstanders like you the religious trauma will simply continue..... your story will help save lives

.... 

- **Jane Clementi**, Founder, Tyler Clementi Foundation

Hi Matt. I just saw the show tonight with the UFT crowd. You were amazing. What a powerful show. I'm really impressed. Great message. So empowering. Glad I finally got to see it. All the best.

- **Danny Dromm**, Former NYC Council Member, pioneer of the LGBT rights movement in Queens / organized the first Queens LGBT Pride Parade and Festival.

Brilliant, passionate, moving and heartfelt. Well done. I am stunned how moved I was by the piece and you.

- **Melissa Sklarz**, Candidate, New York State Assembly's 30th District in Queens. he first transgender elected official in New York

What a performance and a production....So intimate... and engaging and challenging as you unwrap the layers and layers and layers of homophobia. It's ready for the road to schools and communities... Somewhere there's a beautiful message in there about people in the pews while the closeted gay hierarchy ...You are taking the great risk of pouring out your heart and your love and storyYou do it with great energy, art and heart !!! - **Brendan Fay**, Human Rights Activist, Theologian, Public Speaker and Filmmaker

Audience Quotes

"It was worth every penny of the investment and I look forward to hearing about the great future ahead. We loved every moment of it and in days where not much is in the world to be happy about, this made me very happy." - **Anonymous donor**

"Matthew was fired from his church job and teaching position almost two years ago after a parishioner saw photos of his wedding to his amazing husband. It rightfully became a national story. Since then, Matt has been using his talent as a playwright and performer to develop a theatrical experience that invites audiences to examine their own relationships with religion, love, and equity. If you enjoy theater and you care about equity for LGBTQ+ people, I strongly encourage you to check out Communion." - **Jason Sirois**, DEI Consultant and Coach

So proud of Matthew LaBanca and his one man show that he has written. Making art out of a very sad time and changing people's minds with love, music, and more love. - **James Gray**, Broadway director and choreographer

"Matthew LaBanca has completely outdone himself with his new one-man show Communion. It's a conglomerate of all of Matt's gifts as a writer, an actor, a musician, a teacher, and most importantly, a fine human being. It's Matt's true story. Matt is capable of taking us through all our emotions with this premise and indeed he does in spades. You will be moved, changed, and even enraged." - **Tracy Rosten**, Broadway Actor

"Very moving and entertaining" - **Lee Feldshon**, Entertainment Lawyer

"Matthew's skillful writing and performance surrounding personal events makes a compelling, must-see story. His one-man show unfolds a cast of characters you will hold in your heart and mind long after you leave the theater." - **Emmi Herman**, Author

"Watching Communion was watching healing in action. It was a beautifully performed hour proving we can rise above the painful happenings in our lives often by telling them to others."
-**Traci Bair**, Actor

"Matthew LaBanca's incredible true story is so beautifully told by the man himself it'll pluck at your heart strings while also challenging the way you think about religion. The seamless writing and beautiful direction keep the evening moving along but it's Mathew himself that you'll be smitten by. When characters tell you about his calling to music and his ability to connect with students you absolutely believe them which will break your heart even more as the story progresses. Go join Matthew's choir and be a part of his magic!" - **Travis Greisler**, Broadway Actor and Associate Director

"Matthew's story was very relatable. As a lapsed Catholic, I understand the struggle of wanting to think the best of the Church, even when the best is not what's given. And because it was so beautifully presented, I felt it more strongly than I expected to." - **Nick DeMatteo**

"Matthew pulls no punches on a journey that's smart, painful, outrageous and ultimately joyful. His reflection on personal responsibility in situations we don't create but are affected by was super poignant. This story may seem like an isolated incident but really has the power to unify unexpected groups of people. It should be seen everywhere." - **Cathryn Lundgren**, Photographer

Last night we were invited to the preview of Communion . For me it was very painful as the story parallels our own story of being thrown out of Saint Benedict's Catholic Church choir in 2003 after getting married. Matthew LaBanca has done a wonderful job in this one man show. -
Michael Ralph Sabatino

"Communion's message is both powerful and sweet. The play works because Matthew LaBanca embodies both these traits. He tells his story with deep anger, as someone who can't understand how his church could fail to recognize his full humanity; and with deep love, for the children and parents of his former choir, his husband, and his own spiritual calling. It is because of this love that the audience can unmistakably see what the authorities of his church refuse to. A one-person show with an activist bent, and perhaps especially one about religion, runs the risk of coming off preachy. But LaBanca instead engages the audience with warmth, twinkles of joy and songs from his choir days, off-setting the painful details of his story and helping create the community in theater that he cannot, at least yet, have with his church." **Gaby Alter**, Songwriter & Composer

"I have never enjoyed and been moved by a solo show as much as I have with Communion. Matthew's performance is emotional and vulnerable as he leads the audience through the poignant moments of his true story with the perfect blend of storytelling and captivating delivery. His story is poignant, charming, shocking, and heartbreaking. I was wiping both happy and sad

tears away throughout the show! Truly one of the best shows I've seen all year. Matthew is wonderful." - **Shaina Vencel**, Actor

Sound Bites

"Communion is interactive, eye-opening, and inspiring."

"Powerful, heartbreaking, funny, and enlightening!"

"Matthew is a brilliant, talented actor and storyteller."

"It's the best show I've seen in a long time. I can't stop thinking about it."

"This show is going places!"

"You will be blown away!"

"A magnificent evening."

"Maybe someone in your world is in need of his story."

"What an amazing performance!"

"It's the best show I've seen in a long time. I can't stop thinking about it."

"Keep telling your story."

"This story is one that must be shared widely."

*"Something that **MUST** be said and listened too."*

"A production that is profoundly touching and not to be missed."

"An eye-opening and inspiring story."

Raw Quotes

JASON SIROIS

My dear friend Matthew LaBanca is doing a show. You may have heard about his story; he was fired from his church job and teaching position almost two years ago after a parishioner saw photos of his wedding to his amazing husband. It rightfully became a national story
<https://linktr.ee/SupportMatthew>

Since then, Matt has been using his talent as a playwright and performer to develop a theatrical experience that invites audiences to examine their own relationships with religion, love and equity.

If you enjoy theater and you care about equity for LGBTQ+ people, I strongly encourage you to check out this developmental production of COMMUNION running through October 1st.
<https://communiontheplay.com/>

Congratulations Matt ❤️

ELIZABETH O'CONNOR

So utterly impressed by what you have created. This play was just executed so intelligently, so creatively, all the SOs. The way we always knew who was speaking, the feelings you were conjuring up from back then, the timely passages projected behind you. It was all so well orchestrated and shared with the audience. I see a lot of theatre and this one-man show is not to be missed. I hope to see it again Off-Broadway some day soon. **This story is one that must be shared widely.** Again, honored to have been there for opening night. Bravo to all involved. So happy to have you as part of our community!

Jessica Tyler Wright, Broadway actress

You were just brilliant my dear friend. Keep telling your story.

Tracy Rosten

Congratulations 🎈🎉🎊

it's called communion and i worship ur talent!!!

magnificent evening

Felicia Vilardi LaBanca

I cried, I laughed, I cried, I sighed, I cried. So proud of my amazing son and the strength and courage he showed in his performance. Such a well done job on something that MUST be said and listened too. We are ALL God's children. I love you Matt. Xoxox

Amy Marshall, choreographer

Most amazing show ever!!!

MICHELE ALDRICH

Powerful, heartbreaking, funny, and enlightening! I'm so proud of you Matthew LaBanca!! Amazing opening night...can't wait to come back on Sunday. There are still tix available for 9/28-10/1. Don't miss it!

SAMANTHA POLITAN

"Communion" is a one-man show written and performed by the very talented Matthew LaBanca. It is **an eye-opening and inspiring story**. It is his personal story that will both make you laugh and cry.

EMMI S. HERMAN

Just saw this brilliantly acted, directed (and produced:) play with a timely message. Go see it before the limited run closes. **You will be blown away!**

Elizabeth O'Connor

Felt honored to be in the audience. So many tears, so many laughs too. You really did an amazing job of telling such a personal, turbulent, true story.

Deirdre Andrews

What an experience!! "Communion" is truly amazing! Matthew, your talents, your spirituality, and your humanity are all on full display, resulting in **a production that is profoundly touching and not to be missed.**

Spoiler alert! Don't forget to bring your tissues!

JAMES CRONIN

Saw Matthew in this play today! It's the best show I've seen in a long time. Go- you'll really feel something. He's a brilliant, talented Actor and storyteller. This show is going places!

It's the best show I've seen in a long time. Matthew is a brilliant, talented Actor and storyteller. This show is going places!

Matthew- You were brilliant in the show! You're an amazing storyteller. You had us the moment you entered the stage. **I can't stop thinking about it.** I wish you all the success in the world with the show.

You've inspired me to work on my own story. My best to you and your whole creative team that you acknowledged- so well done. Bravo! 🍷🍷🍷⭐⭐⭐

JESSICA POYER

Hanley and I drove home via New York City, which was totally worth the trip to take in Matthew LaBanca's latest masterpiece, called Communion. It is a very personal story and is one that you should prioritize seeing. Matt is generous, kind, and so incredibly talented. Matt's story and beautiful performance confirmed Roberto's wise words "we just need to be good to each other".

KARIN LABANCA

maybe someone in your world is in need of his story.

Mitzi Muller

What an amazing performance!