



## The power of love in a season of Pride

By Pedro Julio Serrano  
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“Congratulations, mija.”

With a kiss, a big smile and that greeting, a colleague of mine received the congratulations from her neighbor, a Latina grandmother, who felt the joy of recognizing her as part of the lesbian couple who appeared last week in *El Diario* announcing that they would get married in California this summer.

This grandmother intuitively understood the love and commitment that this couple had to each other for more than a decade — and how profound it is — that she immediately wanted to convey her happiness and respect to them.

As my colleague and her fiancée will do very soon, there are many same-sex couples from New York who will get married in the other jurisdictions inside and outside of the United States where same-sex couples have the freedom to marry. They are fortunate to live in a state with a governor who has decided to comply with a court order mandating that any same-sex marriage performed in other jurisdictions will be valid in New York. The decision came to be after a Latina woman, Patricia Martínez, who got married to her now-wife, sued her employer to gain access to health benefits.

New York Gov. David Paterson recently ordered state agencies to recognize any marriages of same-sex couples performed outside of the state. This directive will allow for couples to receive all the state and local rights, benefits and responsibilities conferred to heterosexual married couples.

This weekend, hundreds of thousands of people will converge on New York City for the annual Pride parade. It's a time when the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community celebrates the triumphs in the path toward full equality, but also contemplates the challenges that lie ahead until justice is achieved.

This year we can both celebrate the advances in the struggle toward full marriage equality and continue to convey the importance of being treated fairly.

It's about the freedom to honor the commitment with the person we fall in love with. It's about living in a society where everybody is afforded the same dignity, the same respect, and the same rights as anyone else. And as the Latina grandmother showed us, it's about celebrating what unites us rather than what divides us. And without a doubt, what unites us all is the power of love.

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