

Homosexuality

- I. Introduction
 - a. CCC # 2357: “Homosexuality refers to relations between men or women who experience an exclusive or predominant sexual attraction toward persons of the same sex.”
 - b. Before proceeding, it is *very* important to make a distinction between desire and behavior.
 - i. desire: the inclination to do or have something
 - ii. behavior: the acting out of a desire
 - c. All of us sometimes experience desires that we shouldn’t give in to.
 - i. Called “concupiscence.”
 - 1. Our desires sometimes lead us in the wrong direction
 - ii. E.g., I experience a desire to tell a lie
 - 1. It’s called a temptation
 - 2. It doesn’t make me a liar, *unless I actually do tell the lie.*
 - iii. temptation ≠ sin
 - 1. unless one gives in to the temptation through action
 - a. sinful behavior
- II. Homosexual behavior (that is, erotic/sexual acts between two members of the same sex) is always immoral
 - a. Biblical Testimony:
 - i. Remember that the books of the Bible were written by many different people, in vastly different times, and in different cultures.
 - 1. “What should be noticed is that, in the presence of such remarkable diversity, there is nevertheless a clear consistency within the Scriptures themselves on the moral issue of homosexual behavior.”¹
 - ii. Relevant passages:
 - 1. Genesis 19:1-11: the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah clearly identified with the disordered acts of the sodomites.
 - 2. Leviticus:
 - a. 18:22: “You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination”
 - b. 20:13: “If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination...”
 - 3. I Cor 6:9: “...neither the immoral, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor

¹ CDF, “Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons,” #5.

drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God.”

4. Rom 1:26: “For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. Their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural, and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committed shameless acts with men and receiving in their own persons the due penalty for their error.”
 5. I Tim 1:10: “... the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, immoral persons, sodomites...”
- b. Church Teaching: “Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, tradition has always declared that homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered. They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity.”²

i. Complimentarity is missing

1. As we have seen in earlier discussions, sexuality is designed to be the physical expression of a complete self-gift from each spouse to the other.
2. Man and woman are designed in such a way so that each has what the other lacks, and hence their gifts to each other are really mutually fulfilling.
3. But in same-sex eroticism, each already has what the other can offer.
 - a. *A gift loses its meaning when it is already possessed by the recipient.*
 - i. Think of a friend giving you a DVD for your birthday; and you’ve just bought the same one for yourself the day before.
 1. Both you and the giver will be disappointed at the unexpected redundancy of DVDs.
4. Or think of what happens when you try to connect a plug to a plug, or a socket to a socket.
 - a. Nothing happens; you become frustrated because the plugs and sockets can’t offer each other anything beneficial.
 - b. Only when a plug and socket are joined does electricity occur.

² CCC # 2357.

5. Now, the man's soul and the woman's soul are made differently from one another, so that the two persons might compliment one another.
 - a. Remember the maxim: "the human person is expressed through the body"
 - i. *There is a fundamental connection between the way the body works and how personal relationships work*
 - b. Therefore, this complementarity between man and woman is also present at the bodily level, and essential to their proper expression as complimentary human persons.
 - i. To go against bodily complementarity is not just to go against the meaning of the body itself, but to attack the person, and his capacity for forming relationships

ii. Not open to new life

1. In the last two sections we have seen that sexual union and procreation are not to be directly separated from each other.
 - a. We must never sterilize sexual behavior, by removing its procreative potential.
2. In practice, this means we must not seek climax in a way not designed for the generation of new life.
 - a. E.g., masturbation, ejaculatory oral or anal sex.
 - b. (Note that acts of this kind between members of the opposite sex are also immoral).

iii. Not according to the natural law

1. God didn't set things up this way.
 - a. He made human nature with a definite structure and design.
 2. Have to remember that sexuality is not a human institution; it's a divine institution, *made between a man and a woman*.
 - a. You don't see any homosexual couples in Eden.
 - b. We didn't make it, so we're not simply free to remake it.
- c. Naturally harmful: observation alone shows the damage that is done to relationships, mental health, and physical health by homosexual activity:
- i. Thomas E. Schmidt: "Suppose you were to move into a large house in San Francisco with a group of ten randomly selected

homosexual men in their mid-thirties. According to the most recent research from scientific sources, whose authors are without exception either neutral or positive in their assessment of homosexual behavior, and with the use of lower numbers where statistics differ, the relational and physical health of the group would look like this”

1. **Relationships:**

- a. “Four of the ten men are currently in relationships, but only one of those is faithful to his partner, and he will not be within a year. Four have never had a relationship that lasted more than a year, and only one has had a relationship that lasted more than three years. Six are having sex regularly with strangers, and the group averages almost two partners per person per month. Three of them occasionally take part in orgies. One is a sadomasochist. One prefers boys to men.”

2. **Mental and Physical health:**

- a. “Three of the men are currently alcoholics, five have a history of alcohol abuse, and four have a history of drug abuse. Three currently smoke cigarettes, five regularly use at least one illegal drug, and three are multiple drug users. Four have a history of acute depression, three have seriously contemplated suicide, and two have attempted suicide. Eight have a history of sexually transmitted diseases, eight currently carry infectious pathogens, and three currently suffer from digestive or urinary ailments caused by these pathogens. At least three are HIV-infected, and one has AIDS.”

The point? Homosexual activity hurts those who engage in it.

III. Common Objections:

- a. “What if the homosexual urge is based in biology? What if you’re born with it?”
- i. Even then, it wouldn’t justify gratifying desire
 - ii. E.g., a crack-baby
 1. Child is born with a biological addiction to cocaine
 2. Doesn’t mean you should give the child the harmful substance

- iii. E.g., 2: some might say the desire for rape, fornication, adultery is biological (desire for immediate sexual gratification, regardless of fittingness)
 - 1. But acting out that desire is still wrong.
- b. “The Catholic Church shouldn’t condemn homosexuals. It’s unloving, discriminatory, bigoted.”
 - i. The Catholic Church never condemns homosexual persons. It condemns homosexual activity.
 - ii. I may tell my son not to play in the street; that doesn’t mean I’m judging him, or condemning him personally, or that I don’t love him any more.
 - 1. It means I’m trying to warn him against behaviors that will hurt him.
 - iii. So too, we Catholics are called to love homosexuals, and not judge them --- even those who practice homosexual behaviors. But we are also to speak out against their actions, for their own good.
- c. “Catholic teaching robs homosexuals of their right to express their love and have sex.”
 - i. Those who suffer from homosexual urges are still free to love, and to express their love
 - 1. There are plenty of non-erotic expressions of love
 - 2. Think of the deep love of Friendship, or Familial Affection, or the supernatural love of Charity
 - a. These are deep, powerful forms of love, whose expression does not rely on sexual acts or gestures.
 - ii. No one has the right to sex
 - 1. Sex is a gift to be received and offered, not an entitlement to be demanded.
 - a. To treat sex as a right, as something owed, destroys its real meaning and value.
 - i. Leads to a rapist mentality (“I have a right to this, so I’m going to take it!”)
 - 2. To some people, the gift of the marital embrace is not offered.
 - a. Those having taken the vow of celibacy, those with a physiological condition, those who have not yet found a spouse, those with strong homosexual urges.
 - b. The proper attitude for such people is to respond with gratitude for those gifts which are present in life, and offering up those gifts which are not present as holy sacrifices to God.

- IV. So what's a person with a homosexual inclination supposed to do?
- a. The same thing as the rest of us: *try to be a saint!*
 - i. Pursue the virtues, live a life of holiness, rejoice in the beauty and hardships of this world, and be unspeakably happy with God in the next.
 - ii. It is a common misunderstanding to think that the Catholic Church teaches that people with homosexual temptations can't be happy or holy.
 1. This is only true if you think you need sex to be happy and holy.
 - a. This is absurd; look at priests, nuns, single people, children.
 - i. You'll find plenty of people living full, joyful, saintly lives.
 - b. The person with homosexual inclinations should therefore:
 - i. Live chastely
 1. This is possible: the witness of celibates, the witness of Our Lord Himself testifies to it.
 2. We have free will, and though it may be difficult, it is possible for us to master our desires and conform them to truth and authentic love.
 - ii. Strive after a life of holiness
 1. prayer and virtue
 - iii. Don't let your "sexual orientation" define who you are!
 1. We are much more than our urges, much more than our sexual instincts
 2. We are children of God, redeemed by Christ, and destined for everlasting happiness in Heaven.
 - c. Pursue Therapy
 - i. Some individuals can experience a diminishment or a change of same-sex attraction.
 1. E.g., Dr. Gerard Van den Aardweg, a Dutch psychotherapist, has been helping men and women diminish same-sex attraction from his Amsterdam practice since 1963.³

³ *The Battle for Normality: A guide for (Self-) Therapy for Homosexuality.* C.f., The Catholic Medical Association, "Homosexuality and Hope."