

# What does the Church teach about homosexuality?

*Faithful Questions – February 2020*

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# Overview

- Caveats and Conditions
- Definitions
- Nature and purpose of sexuality
- Catechism overview
- Response to sin
- Incorrect societal “theology”
- Practical situations
  - Invited to a gay wedding
  - Child/relative indicates they are gay
  - Frequently interact with a gay person
- References
  - Don’t take my word for it!

**Intermission!**



# Caveats and Conditions

- Please be patient and wait for full explanations
  - Much of what will be discussed tonight is complex and can't be well communicated, particularly with the appropriate balance, in a single sentence
- Please be generous to my phrasing
  - I try to avoid theological terminology in my talks, particularly in their most technical sense.
  - Sometimes this makes it hard to state things precisely
- This is just an overview
  - Couldn't possibly cover everything





# Definitions

- Many terms in English are troublingly imprecise. Here's how I will be using them
  - Gay or Homosexual – A person who has exclusive or predominant sexual attraction toward persons of the same sex.
    - I am not assuming they are sexually active
    - I am not assuming they consider it morally right to act on their attractions
  - Homosexual acts – A specifically sexual act done between persons of the same sex



# Nature of Sex



# Procreative and Unitive

- The sexual act has two proper natures: It is procreative and it is unitive
  - Procreative: To make new life
  - Unitive: Brings the couple closer together
- Any sexual act that is closed off to either of these is a misuse of our sexual abilities



# Lust versus Love

- Lust

- *Lust* is disordered desire for or inordinate enjoyment of sexual pleasure. Sexual pleasure is morally disordered when sought for itself, isolated from its procreative and unitive purposes. (CCC 2351)
- Lust is the desire to receive sexual pleasure \*from\* someone. The sexual partner is merely a vessel from whom to take that pleasure.

- Love

- Love is an act of giving ourselves to others. It is a self-less act. It desires the good of the other.





# 6<sup>th</sup> Commandment

- Catechism uses 10 commandments as organizational framework for discussing morality
- 6<sup>th</sup>: “You shall not commit adultery”
- Catechism Section covers a plethora of sexual sins
  - List on next page





# 6<sup>th</sup> Commandment – cont.

- Catechism section list of sins
  - Lust
  - Masturbation
  - Fornication
  - Pornography
  - Prostitution
  - Rape
  - Homosexual acts – will cover in detail later
  - (Then a section on proper love of husband and wife)
  - Adultery
  - Divorce
  - Polygamy
  - Incest
  - “Free unions” (pre-marital sex, concubinage, etc.)



Catechism on  
Homosexuality



# Paragraph 2357

- Text of paragraph 2357
  - Homosexuality refers to relations between men or between women who experience an exclusive or predominant sexual attraction toward persons of the same sex. It has taken a great variety of forms through the centuries and in different cultures. Its psychological genesis remains largely unexplained. Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity,<sup>141</sup> tradition has always declared that "homosexual acts are **intrinsically disordered**."<sup>142</sup> 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. Under no circumstances can they be approved.



# Paragraph 2358

- Text of paragraph 2358
  - The number of men and women who have deep-seated homosexual tendencies is not negligible. This inclination, which is **objectively disordered**, constitutes for most of them a trial. They must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of **unjust discrimination** in their regard should be avoided. These persons are called to fulfill God's will in their lives and, if they are Christians, to unite to the sacrifice of the Lord's Cross the difficulties they may encounter from their condition.





# Paragraph 2359

- Text of paragraph 2359
  - Homosexual persons are called to chastity. By the virtues of self-mastery that teach them inner freedom, at times by the support of disinterested friendship, by prayer and sacramental grace, **they can and should gradually and resolutely approach Christian perfection.**



# Key Catechism points

- Homosexual acts are immoral
- The Church doesn't claim to know the cause of homosexual temptations
- Numerous people have this temptation
- Gay people should be treated compassionately
- Gay people can go to heaven (“they can ... approach Christian perfection”)
  - In regards to their sexuality, they do this by living chastely



# Definition of key words

- **Disordered**
  - (When in reference to an act) Doing something or using something in an way that it was not intended
- **Intrinsically**
  - Belonging to the essential nature or constitution of a thing
- **Gravely**
  - Magnitude is great – perhaps so great that it could be a mortal sin



# Understanding tough phrases

- **Gravely Disordered**

- It means the act is both wrongly oriented, and thus sinful, but also to the degree that it could affect our salvation.

- **Intrinsically Disordered**

- It means there is no contextual situation in which that act isn't disordered

- **Unjust discrimination**

- We discriminate sometimes in acceptable ways (mothers get more time off when they have a baby than fathers). So discriminating against gay marriage is OK, but discriminating against gays in housing is unjust.

	Not Gravely	Gravely
Not Intrinsic	Over eating on Christmas	Gluttony
Intrinsic	Minor slander	Homosexual act





**Intermission!**





**Intermission!**

**Time is Up!**





# Response to sin





# We are all sinners

- All of us fall short and sin
- We should have compassion for those who sin
- We should not be treating those who succumb to homosexual sins any different than other grave sin
  - I think it's fair to say that too many Catholics have violated this principle
- A person's sins, no matter how grave does not affect their human dignity
  - Example: AIDS ministries run by Catholics





# Confronting sin in others

- We are called to help others overcome their sins
- But how we do so is important
  - Must be well positioned to help
  - Must use techniques that have hope of being successful
- **MUST** be done with love and compassion
  - No matter what the sin is



**Incorrect societal  
“theology”**



# “God made me this way”

- That’s true, but implication is wrong
  - Human temptation to sin is a universal truth
  - We are called to strive to overcome our temptations
- Original sin
  - God created Adam and Eve directly
  - Yet they were tempted to sin
- Other examples
  - Me! (Gluttony)
  - Alcoholism – notable genetic components
  - Pedophilia – more evidence this has genetic components than homosexuality



# Gay people do good things

- That's true, but implication is wrong
  - All people have strengths and weaknesses
  - That a person has lots of good qualities does not mean that everything they do is good
- Good things can include things generally associated with marriage
  - Raising children
  - Loving their partner
- No need to deny that these are good





# I \*AM\* Gay

- Implication is that a person is fully defined by their sexual temptations
  - That's not true
- Think of how we generally refer to our characteristics
  - I am a sailor
  - I am a glutton
  - I am a deacon
- Consider using language that doesn't define person by sexuality
  - Alternate phrasing example: I have homosexual inclinations



# Practical situations



# Invited to a gay wedding

- Our presence at a ceremony generally indicates our approval of that ceremony
  - In that sense we should not be going to gay weddings
- However, there are times when accompaniment is a competing good
  - Will the harm of refusing to attend outweigh the good of not endorsing sin?



# Child/relative is gay

- 1<sup>st</sup> Question: Ask yourself if was some other serious sin, how would you address it?
  - Don't treat this sin different than others of the same magnitude
- Find ways to make it clear you don't define them by this inclination
  - Makes it easier for you to be both loving and at the same time stand against any sinful acts
- Focus on catechesis
  - They most likely don't understand our theology





# Friend/coworker is gay

- Use same principles as child/relative
- Principles of how to address sin in others may change appropriate actions
  - It is less likely you are well positioned to help them



# References



# National/International

- Catechism Part 3, Section 2, Article 6:
  - [https://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc\\_css/archive/catechism/p3s2c2a6.htm](https://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p3s2c2a6.htm)
- USCCB links on homosexuality
  - <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/homosexuality/index.cfm>
  - <http://www.usccb.org/about/doctrine/publications/homosexual-inclination-guidelines-page-set.cfm>
  - <http://www.usccb.org/about/doctrine/publications/homosexual-inclination-guidelines-general-principles.cfm>



# Local/Diocese

- Statement on gay marriage
  - <https://www.scd.org/sites/default/files/2017-06/StatementonSCOTUSmarriagedecision.pdf>
- Statement on Pope Francis' "who am I to judge" statement
  - <https://sacramento.cbslocal.com/2013/07/29/sacramento-catholics-say-popes-statement-on-gays-is-nothing-new/>





# Conclusion



# Conclusion

- Homosexual acts are sinful
- People tempted to them can be good Christians
- We are all called to live lives of holiness
  - When we fail we should strive to do better (and go to confession!)
- We should treat everyone who is tempted to sin with love and compassion



# Satisfaction Survey

- Did you enjoy this talk? Or not?
- Let me know:
  - <http://deaconken.org/blog>
  - <http://deaconken.org/blog/take-the-february-faithful-questions-survey>
  - <http://deaconken.org/blog/quiz/february-2020-faithful-questions-lecture-satisfaction-survey/>



# Next Time

- 2nd Tuesday – March 10th
- 7:00 PM in the Morris Hall
  - Standard Time
- Topic
  - Why do we confess to a priest?
- Future Topics
  - April: How can I keep my kids Catholic?
  - May: Is the Eucharist really the Body and Blood of Christ?





# Additional Information

- Webpage:
  - <http://deaconken.org>
- E-mail:
  - [ken@deaconken.org](mailto:ken@deaconken.org)
- Slides
  - <http://deaconken.org/blog/category/faithful-questions-seminar/>
  - <http://deaconken.org/blog/>
- Audio/Video may be available at a later date.
  - Check <http://deaconken.org/blog>



**2 Minute Break**  
**Think of your questions!**

02:00



**2 Minute Break**

**Time is Up!**







Questions?