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## How Homosexuality Harms the Church

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One of the most common defenses of homosexual behavior is: "This does no harm to you or any other third parties." To which my response is: "No harm? Well, it has pretty much ruined the Catholic Church in America."

Homosexuality among priests, and sometimes among bishops; plus an attitude of tolerance towards homosexuals among non-homosexual priests and bishops, as if same-sex intercourse is no big deal; plus the colossal scandal of sexual molestation of teenage boys by homosexual priests; plus episcopal attempts to cover up this molestation; plus the widespread pretense among both lay and clerical Catholics that homosexuality had little or nothing to do with the molestation scandal; plus a pro-gay sentimentality found among many lay Catholics; plus Fr. James Martin, S.J. – all this has done immeasurable damage to the Church in the United States.

Anti-Catholics have been given a cudgel with which to beat the Church that is as good as, or even better than, the classic cudgels: the Spanish Inquisition and the trial of Galileo. A thousand years from now, late-night TV will still be making jokes about Catholic priests molesting young boys.

Non-Catholics (Protestants and Jews and agnostics and atheists) who in these morally corrupt times might have considered joining a Catholic Church that stands for goodness and truth have been driven away by the thought that the Church is as corrupt as any other of our rotten institutions.

We are told that Cato the Elder used to end all his speeches in the Roman Senate, regardless of the topic under discussion, with the words, "Carthage, it seems to me, must be destroyed."

If I were a Catholic parish priest, I would end all my homilies, regardless of the Scriptural readings of the day, and regardless of the main topic of my sermon, with words like these: "Allow me to remind you, dear friends, that the Catholic religion – the religion you and I profess to adhere to – has always condemned homosexual practice as a very grave sin."

If any priest, Cato-like, actually says this, he will upset certain parishioners, not a few of whom will drift away to a parish they perceive as being more tolerant and up-to-date, and they will take their money with them. And some parishioners will write to the

bishop complaining about their “homophobic” priest. More than a few bishops, I suppose, will recommend that the priest “cool it.” Such bishops, in a paternal attempt to guide their over-zealous parish priests, will explain: “Look, the people of your parish know perfectly well – without your reminding them – what the Catholic Church teaches about homosexuality. Why irritate them by harping needlessly on this theme?”

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But is my hypothetical bishop correct when he says that all Catholics know what the Church teaches about homosexuality? To answer that we must realize that the average Catholic makes a distinction between two ways in which the Church teaches something. Sometimes the Church is really serious in its moral teachings, e.g., when it tells us not to rob banks or not to beat our wives. But at other times (many Catholics believe) the Church is not truly serious, e.g., when it tells us that contraception is a serious sin or that homosexual intercourse is a very grave act.

Given all this, I’m lucky not to be a Catholic priest. My head would soon be served on an episcopal platter for the delectation of Catholics, both clerical and lay, who are far more humane than myself, far more respectful of the fundamental human right to engage in homosexual sodomy, a right almost universally acknowledged today by all right-thinking people outside of Africa, that “dark” continent where most people still don’t understand how progressive and ultra-modern homosexuality is.

Catholicism is a religion that asks of its adherents – nay, demands of them – that they believe a number of hard-to-believe things. It tells us we must believe that one God is three Persons, that God has become human, that a virgin has given birth, that a crucified man has come back from the dead, that Jesus has atoned for our sins, that bread and wine routinely become the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

If we can believe all that, why do we find it hard to believe that it’s a great sin for two men or two women to engage in sexual relations with one another? Once upon a time almost everybody believed that. And yet we actually do find it hard to believe – or at least many of us do. For the world believes precisely the opposite.

And by “the world” I mean all the “best people,” that is, the social and cultural elites of North America and western Europe. In America, the moral wisdom of these best people is communicated to the little people (you and me) by the journalistic mass media, by the entertainment industry, and by our best and most famous colleges and universities. A little further down the line, our public schools even communicate this wisdom to school children.

In March of 1937, Pope Pius XI wrote two very interesting encyclical letters, one in which he denounced Nazism (*Mit brennender Sorge* <sup>[1]</sup>), the other in which he denounced Communism (*Divini Redemptoris* <sup>[2]</sup>).

I submit that a papal letter on homosexuality is long overdue. The theory and practice of homosexuality, not to mention the great tidal wave of pro-homosexuality propaganda that is flooding the world – these things, it seems to me, are almost as grave a threat to the Church today as Communism and Nazism were in the 1930s.

I won't be holding my breath till Pope Francis writes such a letter. Nor will I hold my breath in hopes that the Catholic bishops in America will write a collective pastoral letter on the topic.

But is it too much for me to hope that some individual bishops here or there will address such an urgent pastoral letter to his priests and people?

**\*Image:** *Pope Pius XI* <sup>[3]</sup> by Philip Alexius de László, 1924 [Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford]

You may also enjoy:

**Rev. Jerry J. Pokorsky's** [Confronting the Gay Priest Problem](#) <sup>[4]</sup>

**Fr. Bevil Bramwell's** [Homosexuality in Romans One](#) <sup>[5]</sup>

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[1] *Mit brennender Sorge*: [https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xi\\_enc\\_14031937\\_mit-brennender-sorge.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_14031937_mit-brennender-sorge.html)

[2] *Divini Redemptoris*: [https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xi\\_enc\\_19370319\\_divini-redemptoris.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19370319_divini-redemptoris.html)

[3] Pope Pius XI: <https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/pope-pius-xi-18571939-228548>

[4] Confronting the Gay Priest Problem: <https://www.thecatholicthing.org/2018/01/07/confronting-the-gay-priest-problem/>

[5] *Homosexuality in Romans One*: <https://www.thecatholicthing.org/2015/06/14/homosexuality-in-romans-one/>

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