

# **The Vatican, Sexuality, and Homosexuality**

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*Abstract: The stand of the Roman Catholic Church on homosexuality is a sub-set of its general position on sexuality: genital sexuality must be engaged in only within marriage—a union in which every act of “conjugal love” must possess a unitive dimension and be open to the possibility of procreation. Since homosexual love making can never be open to this possibility, it can never be acceptable, even if it can be characterized as loving in the context of a lifelong commitment. The alleged necessary connection between the unitive and procreative dimensions is sustained by the support of metaphysical theology. Can it be maintained without it?*

“The Church inevitably arrives on the scene, late and a little out of breath.”  
Bernard Lonergan (quoted in Leland J. White, 2001, p.134).

Organized religion continues to be a powerful factor in society's evaluation of behaviour. Even those who have expressly abandoned religion often remain deeply influenced by the teachings of the very institution they have rejected. Rueda points out that "religion provides the strongest category by which human acts are evaluated—the virtuous/sinful continuum"—and that "there is no question that religious institutions have freely applied . . . the category of sinful when analyzing homosexual behaviour." He concludes that "religious belief is probably the single most important factor in the near-universal rejection of homosexual behaviour."<sup>1</sup>

In the past forty years, the Roman Catholic Church has been a high-stakes player in a daring winner-take-all cultural struggle. In the face of unprecedented social changes, the Holy See has attempted to offer a consistent rational position on marriage, abortion, homosexuality, contraception, tubal ligation, vasectomy, masturbation, artificial insemination, coitus interruptus, and sodomy (both anal and oral). To its credit, it seeks an integrated, comprehensive, principled position—a goal that only increases the risks involved if cracks are found in the foundation.<sup>2, 3</sup>

### **The Basic Theological Scaffolding and One Scientific Postscript**

The basic tenet of Vatican pronouncements<sup>4</sup> on homosexual activity is that it is always immoral, even sinful. To support its position, the Church employs a quite particular theological framework:

(1) There is a God who cares about the temporal lives and eternal souls of all people--about 6.4 billion at last count. Because He<sup>5</sup> is a caring God, He intervenes in human history: He commands, punishes, and rewards in this world and the next, enters into covenants, demands obedience, entertains petitions (prayers), has a Divine Plan for all persons (that includes details about permissible sexual activity), and has sent His only son not to judge the world but to save it.<sup>6</sup>

(2) God reveals His nature and His will through divinely inspired Scriptures. His pronouncements, whether given directly (as we are told they were communicated through Moses to the Ancient Israelites) or prompted by the Holy Spirit (as in the case of the Apostle Paul to the Early Christians), are definitive, clear, and unchanging.

(3) God has revealed unequivocally through the Old and New Testaments that homosexuality is an abomination.

(4) Faced with the presence of gays and lesbians in its midst and their demands for an inclusive society, the Church responds in a way that accords with its view of Scriptural and other types of authority.

(5) As a corollary, all evolutionary theories that offer alternative explanations for sexual drives, pleasures, and practices as well as mating patterns must be rejected.<sup>7</sup> As a result, theological space is created for the Church's view that male-female, anatomical complementarity and marriage are God-given.

## **Types of Arguments Employed**

### *Scriptural authority*

The Church claims that its position possesses a “clear consistency with the Scriptures” and rests on “a solid foundation of a constant Biblical testimony.”<sup>8</sup>

### *Natural law*

Those who are not much swayed by the dictates of Scripture may be persuaded by immutable laws that can be grasped by reason, albeit “illuminated by faith.”<sup>9</sup> Elsewhere, it is claimed that arguments drawn from natural law are directed not only to those who believe in Christ, but—as they can be grasped by reason—are available to all persons committed to promoting and defending the common good of society<sup>10</sup>—often on the basis of some kind of utilitarian reasoning. Natural law is presented as eternal, objective, universal and “transcend[ing] historical contingency.”<sup>11</sup> In accordance with such law, God orders, directs, and governs the entire universe and all the ways of the human community. As a result, civil law cannot contradict right reason (that explicates natural law) without losing its binding force on conscience.<sup>12</sup>

### *Theological interpretation*

When reason needs buttressing, the authors of the basic documents lace the argument with metaphysical/theological assertions that fall outside rational appraisal. Thus, we read that marriage is “the wise and provident institution of God the Creator,”<sup>13</sup> that the marriage of those who have been baptized “represent the union of Christ with His Church,” that the allegedly inseparable connection between the unitive and procreative aspects of conjugal love is “established by God,” that interference that impairs the capacity for procreation “frustrates His design which constitutes the norm of marriage, and contradicts the will of the Author of life,”<sup>14</sup> and so on. In this theological cathedral, you leave your reason in the nave and are borne to the sacristy on faith.

### *Church authority*

The relationship of “the sacred Tradition, sacred Scriptures, and the Magisterium of the Church are so connected that one of them cannot stand without the others. . . they work together under the action of the Holy Spirit.” Thus, “[w]ith the Holy Spirit’s assistance, [the Church] ceaselessly preserves and transmits without error the truths of the moral order.”<sup>15</sup> It claims boldly that “no member of the faithful could possibly deny that the Church is competent in her magisterium to interpret the natural moral law.”<sup>16</sup> However, in the event that some in the Church raise theological objections forcefully, disciplinary measures can be, and have been, deployed.<sup>17</sup>

### *Natural Sciences*

Finally, the Catholic perspective “finds support in the more secure findings of the natural sciences”<sup>18</sup> though the Church allows that it can “transcend the horizons of science” and, in any case, it can determine which findings are secure and which are not.

## The Vatican's Position on Sexuality

The Vatican's position on sexuality arises within a complementary view of marriage "based on the natural law as illuminated and enriched by divine Revelation": "The Church . . . in urging men to the observance of the precepts of the natural law. . . teaches that *each and every marital act* must of necessity retain its intrinsic relationship to the procreation of human life. . . This particular doctrine. . . is based on the inseparable connection, established by God, which man on his own initiative may not break, between the unitive and the procreative significance which are both inherent to the marriage act." [italics added]<sup>19</sup>

Hanigan claims that prior to 1931, the Church held that the primary purpose of human sexuality was the procreation of children. All other purposes were secondary. Thus, "all forms of contraceptive intercourse, all intercourse during pregnancy or after menopause, and all sexual activity leading to orgasm outside the act of genital intercourse . . . are against God's will as revealed in nature, and so are seriously disordered."<sup>20</sup> The simplicity of this position may have been attractive to some, though its very comprehensiveness made it highly vulnerable to criticism.

### *The Minor Arguments Against Contraception*

Hanigan entitles his excellent 1988 book, *Homosexuality: The test case for Christian ethics*. In my view, birth control is the more basic test case because it threatens to break the unitive from the procreative dimensions of sexuality. If it does, then there are consequences for the Vatican's pronouncements on homosexuality.

In *Humanae Vitae*,<sup>21</sup> the Vatican produces a series of minor and quite disputable arguments against contraception:

- it could open the way for marital infidelity;
- it could lead to a lowering of moral standards;
- the young need incentives to keep the moral law (and "it is an evil thing to make it easy to break that law");
- a man grown accustomed to the use of contraceptives may "forget the reverence due to a woman...[and] reduce her to being a mere instrument of his own desires"; and
- public authorities who have no respect for the moral law may use their power to "intervene in the most personal and intimate responsibility of husband and wife."

Consistent with Kohlberg's conception of Stage One morality, the Church favours maintaining the fear of unwanted pregnancy as an important motive for moral behaviour. As for the concern that the woman might become just an instrument for a man's sexual desire, it is much more likely that she would feel the security of the lower risk of pregnancy, and so, be able better able to promote the unitive dimension of the relationship. But then, no one asked women what they thought.

### *The Major Argument Against Contraception*

Hanigan provides a subtle account of changes in the Vatican's position from *Casti Connubii* (1931) through *Gaudium et Spes* (1965) to *Humanae Vitae* (1968). In the first, he claims that "in a highly qualified way" the Pope accepted the rhythm method of birth control as

morally permissible; in the second, the unitive and procreative aspects of sexuality were not ordered hierarchically but placed in parity; in the third, that the Pope “gave independent status to the unitive meaning and good of sexual relations.”<sup>22</sup> In 1968, the Vatican itself daringly asked whether under our “new circumstances” which involve consideration of “responsible parenthood,”<sup>23</sup> “Could it not be admitted . . . that the procreative finality applies to the totality of married life rather than to each single act.”<sup>24</sup> It asked whether “the time has come when the transmission of life should be regulated by their intelligence and will rather than through the specific rhythms of their own bodies.”<sup>25</sup>

The questions were bold but the answers, negative.<sup>26</sup> In any case, its posing of “opposites” is disingenuous. The Church is not against birth control or the use of a person’s “intelligence and will.”<sup>27</sup> The “rhythm method” and abstinence are forms of birth control and both require considerable intelligence and will. Were medical science to succeed “in determining a sufficiently secure basis for the chaste limitation of offspring,”<sup>28</sup> couples could engage in unlimited sex (during certain periods) that fostered only the unitive aspect of marriage, and not the procreative. The “inseparable link” would then be broken. The real argument is over the means and whether it is ever morally acceptable to use “artificial” methods of birth control such as shields (condoms and diaphragms), chemistry (“the pill”), or surgery (vasectomy or tubal ligation).

The Church, then, must conclude that sexual intercourse in marriage is (1) acceptable when the couple have every intention of avoiding conception and (2) permissible when conception is impossible—as in cases where one partner is sterile, or the woman is post-menopausal. Hanigan recognizes that, if the unitive purpose of sexual intercourse is separated from the procreative, “there is no sexual practice that does not require re-valuation.”<sup>29</sup> More specifically,

*The mere fact [that] an intentional and biological inability to procreate can no longer be considered a moral barrier to sexual intimacy where the integral goodness of the unitive end of sexuality is possible of realization—at [that] point in the developing [of a] theological tradition, the morality of homosexual acts and unions is open for moral re-valuation.*<sup>30</sup>

### **The Vatican’s Position on Homosexuality**<sup>31</sup>

By 1976, the Church acknowledged that at least some people are not homosexual as a matter of choice, but “because of some kind of innate instinct or a pathological constitution judged to be incurable”<sup>32</sup>—that is, in their own theological terms, because God made them that way.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, the Church judges homosexual acts as “intrinsically disordered,”<sup>34</sup> immoral,<sup>35</sup> and in no way to be approved of.<sup>36</sup> What advice does the Church have for homosexuals? The Church “encourag[es] the homosexual person to lead a chaste life”<sup>37</sup> and to “crucify all self-indulgent passions and desires.”<sup>38</sup>

### *The Minor Arguments against Homosexuality*

The Vatican offers an array of minor arguments against homosexuality which, when their fatal deficiencies are demonstrated, would not be damaging to the major argument. The Church claims that homosexuality

- undermines a person's fulfilment and happiness;<sup>39</sup>
- is detrimental to health;<sup>40</sup>
- is a threat to marriage and the family;<sup>41</sup>
- corrupts the minds of the young;<sup>42</sup>
- constitutes a bad influence on children in same-sex families;<sup>43</sup>
- has calamitous consequences for society;<sup>44</sup>
- does not contribute to the survival of the human race;<sup>45</sup> and
- does not ensure the succession of generations.<sup>46</sup>

These arguments, I believe, can easily be refuted on the basis of empirical evidence and other forms of argument and are presented for persuasive effect on those who might be vulnerable to them.

### *The Major Argument against Homosexuality*

*Persona Humana*<sup>47</sup> makes clear that in Christian doctrine “every genital act must be within the framework of marriage” and must be open to the possibility of procreation. Since homosexual acts lack this “essential and indispensable finality,”<sup>48</sup> they are “intrinsically disordered and can in no case be approved of.”<sup>49</sup> To modify laws that would allow homosexuals to marry would be “approv[e] of deviant behavior . . . [and] obscure basic values which belong to the common inheritance of humanity.”<sup>50</sup>

Supposing one did not accept the theological scaffolding—that is, that God does not have a Divine Plan for all humans, and so, does not make any distinction between latex and rhythm methods of birth control, that every word of the Scriptures is not the Word of God, that error can seep into the Tradition, that the work of the Magisterium is not guided by the Holy Spirit, and so on. Does anything remain of the Vatican's position on homosexuality?

Hanigan (1988) offers an intriguing liberal interpretation<sup>51</sup> of what might be possible. He claims that at a minimum the Christian ideal for sexual activity “in its most complete, self-giving expression in sexual intercourse is that it be the ritual sign of a publicly acknowledged, mutually committed, and fully shared life.”<sup>52</sup> Hanigan distinguishes between an ontic good and an ontic evil. Children who are the product of sexual intercourse would be thought of as an ontic good. However, the lack of an ontic good is not an ontic evil. In his example,

*I have no talent for singing. Now, a fine singing voice is an ontic good, but its absence in me is not an ontic evil, for there is no meaningful sense in which it can be said to be due me as something essential to my human well being or anyone else's.*<sup>53</sup>

A marriage relationship may result in children, or it may not. The reason for a lack of children may be a physical impediment or a matter of mutually agreed upon choice. In either case, the marriage might still be deemed an ontic good.

Ethical ideals also bear examination. If I do not reach the highest pinnacle of an ideal, I am not for that reason morally bad or religiously sinful. I may not sell all that I have, move to the slums of Calcutta, and serve the most indigent. Instead, I may give hours of my time and

expertise to promote United Way campaigns, coach boys and girls soccer, and work at a local food bank. I do not move out of my very comfortable home, sell my new car, and give up rather expensive holidays in warm climates. I may not be a candidate for sainthood, but still might be regarded as a morally good person.

Similarly, we *might* regard those instances of sexual intercourse when both partners are hoping to conceive a child as having a dimension of significance that is not present at other times. In the former instances, we could say that both the unitive and procreative elements are present. It does not follow that, if this is the ideal, we should strive for the ideal in every instance of sexual intercourse. Of course, the Church agrees with this proposition as well, but holds only that we should be “open” to the ideal. As for marriage, those with a physical disability, or who experience impotence, or who are gay, or those who declare that they do not want children should not be declared ineligible. They may not be able to attain the ideal, but then in many parts of our lives, few of us can.

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## Notes

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1. Rueda, 1982, p. 243.
  2. See Hanigan (1988) who recognizes this kind of possibility: “What does it mean to call homosexuality the moral issue on which Christian sexual ethics in general will stand or fall?” (p. 17).
  3. Callahan makes a similar observation: “[T]he interlocking assumptions and fundamental presuppositions that undergird current Roman Catholic teaching on sexuality are a tightly wrapped package. . . ,” but she concludes—correctly, I believe—that in the final analysis, “they are not rationally convincing, morally helpful, or theologically adequate.” Sidney Callahan (2001), p. 202.
  4. The Vatican’s position on all aspects of sexuality and its possible attendant relationships is found in eight documents published between 1968 and 2004 (see “Papal Documents” in the bibliography). The Church acknowledged even in 1968 that documents of this kind “have been more copious in recent times” (*Humanae Vita*, I, 4),
  5. In these circles, God is always referred to in the masculine form.
  6. “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” *The Holy Bible* (1953), John 3:16.
  - 7 Except those like Teilhard de Chardin’s, but he was silenced and his works were suppressed by the Holy See. Even after his death, the Church issued an Admonition:

“Several works of Fr. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, some of which were posthumously published, are being edited and are gaining a good deal of success.

Prescinding from a judgement about those points that concern the positive sciences, it is sufficiently clear that the above-mentioned works abound in such ambiguities and indeed even serious errors, as to offend Catholic doctrine.

For this reason, the most eminent and most revered Fathers of the Holy Office exhort all Ordinaries as well as the superiors of Religious institutes, rectors of seminaries and presidents of universities, effectively to protect the minds, particularly of the youth, against the dangers presented by the works of Fr. Teilhard de Chardin and of his followers.

Given at Rome, from the palace of the Holy Office, on the thirtieth day of June, 1962. Sebastianus Masala, Notarius.” This admonition was reasserted in a Communiqué of the Press Office of the Holy See (appearing in the English edition of *L'Osservatore Romano*, July 20, 1981) and has not been rescinded.
  8. The Church’s documents are replete with Biblical references: *Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics*,” *Origins*, 5, (January 22, 1976) draws on Romans 1: 24-27, 1 Corinthians 6:10, and 1 Timothy 1:10; *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons*, *Origins*, 16, (November 13, 1986) on Genesis 19: 1-11, Leviticus 18:22, Leviticus 20:13, 1 Corinthians 6:9, Romans 1:18-32 (not just 24-27), 1 Timothy 1, and Galatians 5: 22 and 24 (though only about “self-indulgent passions”); and *Universal Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1992/1994) on Genesis 19: 1-29, Romans 1: 24-27, 1 Corinthians 6:10, and 1 Timothy 1:10; and *Consideration Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons* (June 3, 2003) on Romans 1: 24-27, 1 Corinthians 6:10, and 1 Timothy 1:10. However, consistency is a weaker condition than some other forms of direction because it permits some degree of interpretation. Other commentators offer an even tighter view of Biblical authority. See, for example, Soards (1995, p. 70): “The

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Bible gives us ‘the whole counsel of God . . . unto which nothing at any time is to be added’ (*The Westminster Confession of Faith*, 6.006). This conviction does not seek to restrict the innovative work of God's Spirit, but it expresses the security of the believers that the Spirit does not contradict the voice of God as spoken in earlier times of God's involvement with humanity.”

9. *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons*, 1986, point 2, para. 2.

10. *Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Recognition to Unions between Homosexual Persons*, 2003, “Introduction.”

11. *Persona Humana*, Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics, 1976, III.

12. *Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Recognition to Unions between Homosexual Persons*, 2003, Section III, “Arguments from Reason Against Legal Recognition of Homosexual Marriages,” point 6, para. 1.

13. *Humanae Vita* (1968), II, 8.

14. *Ibid.*, II, 13.

15. *Persona Humana* (1976), III, para. 3.

16. *Humanae Vita* (1968), I, 4. See also, “[The Church] . . . authentically interprets not only the revealed positive law, but also ‘those principles of the moral order which have their origin in human nature itself’,” *Persona Humana* (1976), III, para. 3.

17. See, for example, the fate of Charles E. Curran: “On August 18, 1986, I was handed a letter dated July 25, 1986, from Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the prefect of the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, informing me that one who dissents from the magisterium as I do is not suitable nor eligible to teach Catholic theology.” Charles Curran, *Tensions in Moral Theology* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), p. 7. See also his *Faithful Dissent* (Kansas City, MO: Sheed and Ward, 1986).

“In 1999, American bishops approved an American version of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, requiring Catholics who teach theology at Catholic schools to obtain a “mandatum” or certification from local bishops. While the bishops' document said that “academic freedom is an essential component of a Catholic university,” at least one bishop, Rembert Weakland of Milwaukee, urged his fellow bishops not to approve it because it “will create a tremendous pastoral disaster for the church in the United States.” The document was approved by a vote of 223-31.” Dennis B. Roddy, Staff Writer, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Thursday, January 25, 2001.

18. *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons*, 1986, point 2, para. 1.

19. *Humanae Vita* (1968), I, 4. The encyclical adds confidently that “We believe that our [secular?] contemporaries are particularly capable of seeing that this teaching is in harmony with human reason.”

20. Hanigan (1988), p. 42.

21. *Humanae Vitae*, 1968, II, 17.

22. Hanigan (1988), p. 45.

23. *Humanae Vitae* (1968), I, 10.

24. *Ibid.*, I, 3.

25. *Ibid.*, I.

26. The Vatican gave its most definitive statement of its position in *Humanae Vitae* (1968, 12): “The Church . . . teaches that each and every marital act must of necessity retain its intrinsic relationship to the procreation of human life.” More recent statements are not as unequivocal,

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but this 1968 version has never been obviously modified or repudiated. This has led Ross (2001) to declare that “[r]ecent Vatican actions and statements have made it quite clear that the Church’s teaching on the moral status of homosexuality is not likely to change any time soon.”

27. Indeed, in *Humanae Vitae* (1968, I, 10), the Church recognizes that “responsible parenthood means that man’s reason and will must exert control over [his/her] innate drives and emotions.”

28. *Humanae Vitae* (1968), III, 24.

29. Hanigan (1988), p. 47.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

31. This paper has concentrated on challenging what the Vatican has declared in its doctrinal documents; however, much could be said about the processes by which its decisions have been reached. For example, in *Evangelium Vitae* (95), Pope John Paul II remarked on the “...need to promote a serious and in-depth exchange about basic issues of human life with everyone, including non-believers, in intellectual circles, in the various professional spheres, and at the level of people's everyday life.” Hunt (2001) comments bitterly that “[i]t is hard to imagine a contemporary discussion. . .in which Church officials would make a blanket argument against homosexuality in the face of abundant data on lesbian lives. First, they would have to discuss the matter with lesbian women, not talk about people who are fully capable of representing their own position. This would be a breakthrough, signaling the willingness of kyriarchal Catholic theological policy makers to engage in dialogue, not rule by fiat.” Thus far, that dialogue has not begun.

32. *Persona Humana* (1976), VIII, para. 2.

33. Though in a rhetorical tease, one document suggests without committing itself to the position that Scripture condemns homosexual relations “as the sad consequence of rejecting God.” *Persona Humana* (1976), VIII, para. 4.

34. *Persona Humana* (1976), VIII, para. 4; *Letter to the Bishops* (1986), 3, para 2 &3, 7 para.2, 8, para. 2, 10, para. 2; *Some Considerations* (1992), II, para 10&12; *Universal Catechism* (1992/1994), 2359; *Considerations Regarding Proposals* (2003), I, 4, para. 1&3. In *Some Considerations* (1992), I, para 2, even the inclination itself “must be seen as an objective disorder.”

35. *Letter to the Bishops* (1986), 15, para 1; *Some Considerations* (1992), I, para 2.

36. *Persona Humana* (1976), VIII, para. 8 (and repeated in *Some Considerations* (1992), I, para 1).

37. *Ibid.*, 13, para. 2.

38. *Ibid.*, 12, para. 2.

39. See “As in every moral disorder, homosexual activity prevents one's own fulfilment and happiness by acting contrary to the creative wisdom of God,” *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons*, 1986, point 7, para. 3.

40. See “Even when the practice of homosexuality may seriously threaten the lives and well-being of a large number of people, its advocates remain undeterred and refuse to consider the magnitude of the risks involved,” *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons*, 1986, point 9, para. 2.

41. See, for example, “...homosexual activity is equivalent to, or as acceptable as, the sexual expression of conjugal love has a direct impact on society's understanding of the nature and rights of the family and puts them in jeopardy,” *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons*, 1986, 1986, point 9, para 3; “Legal recognition of

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homosexual unions would obscure certain basic moral values and cause a devaluation of the institution of marriage,” *Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Recognition to Unions between Homosexual Persons*, 2003, Section III, “Arguments from reason against recognition of homosexual unions,” point 6, para. 3; “In assessing proposed legislation, the Bishops should keep as their uppermost concern their responsibility to defend and promote family life,” *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons*, 1986, point 17, para. 9.

42. See, for example, “Lifestyles and the underlying presuppositions these express not only externally shape the life of society, but also tend to modify the younger generation's perception and evaluation of forms of behaviour,” *Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Recognition to Unions between Homosexual Persons*, 2003, point 6, para. 2.

43. See, for example, “As experience has shown, the absence of sexual complementarity in these unions creates obstacles in the normal development of children who would be placed in the care of such persons. They would be deprived of the experience of either fatherhood or motherhood. Allowing children to be adopted by persons living in such unions would actually mean doing violence to these children, in the sense that their condition of dependency would be used to place them in an environment that is not conducive to their full human development.” *Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Recognition to Unions between Homosexual Persons*, 2003, point 7, para. 3.

44. “If, from the legal standpoint, marriage between a man and a woman were to be considered just one possible form of marriage, the concept of marriage would undergo a radical transformation, with grave detriment to the common good,” *Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Recognition to Unions between Homosexual Persons*, 2003, point 8, para. 1.

45. “Such unions are not able to contribute in a proper way to the procreation and survival of the human race. The possibility of using recently discovered methods of artificial reproduction, beyond involving a grave lack of respect for human dignity does nothing to alter this inadequacy,” *Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Recognition to Unions between Homosexual Persons*, 2003, point 7, para. 1.

46. “Because married couples ensure the succession of generations and are therefore eminently within the public interest, civil law grants them institutional recognition. Homosexual unions, on the other hand, do not need specific attention from the legal standpoint since they do not exercise this function for the common good,” *Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Recognition to Unions between Homosexual Persons*, 2003, point 9, para. 1.

47. *Persona Humana*, 1976, VII.

48. *Ibid.*, VIII.

49. *Ibid.*

50. *Considerations Regarding Proposals. . .*, 2003, “Conclusion,” 11. See Nilson, 2001, 61-62: “This summary sentence capsulizes the official teaching: homosexuality constitutes a deviation from the order of nature according to which humans are created male and female by God; moral norms based on the truth of human nature are unchangeable since “human nature” is complete and finished; sexuality is complementary, and the two dimensions of sexual activity, unitive and procreative, may not be “unnaturally” separated. Thus, the giving and receiving of sexual pleasure by homosexual persons, whether lovingly and permanently committed to one another or not, is contrary to the divine will. There are no conceivable circumstances that would warrant change in this teaching of the Church.”

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51. More recently Hanigan has taken either a less decisive (see Hanigan, 1998a, 1998b, and 2001) or a more conservative position. On this last point, see “Catholics Debate Homosexuality Georgetown Discussion Takes Place Despite Cardinal's Objections” by Caryle Murphy, Staff Writer, *Washington Post* (Sunday, December 7, 1997; page B04): “James P. Hanigan, a professor of moral theology at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, argued for maintaining the church's traditional teachings, which view all homosexual activity as illicit.”

52. Hanigan, 1988, p. 90.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 147.