

and what is different differently, i.e., to give each one his due in justice. This principle of justice would be violated if de facto unions were given a juridical treatment similar or equivalent to the family based on marriage. If the family based on marriage and de facto unions are neither similar nor equivalent in their duties, functions and services in society, then they cannot be similar or equivalent in their juridical status" (Pontifical Council for the Family, *Family, Marriage and "De Facto" Unions*, no. 10).

Why does the Church care about whether someone is gay or not? It's a private matter.

Society today fails to make the distinction between public interest and private interest. Society and the public authorities must protect and encourage what is in the best interest of the public. In issues of public interest, public law intervenes. Marriage and the family are of public interest; they are the fundamental nucleus of society and should be recognized and protected as such. De facto unions are the result of private behavior and should remain on the private level. (See the Pontifical Council for the Family, *Family, Marriage and "De Facto" Unions*, no. 11).

There are all kinds of families today. Same-sex couples are just another way to be a family.

The redefinition of marriage negates the necessity of mothers and fathers, and reduces parenting to a cliché: all you need is love. "[Children] would be deprived of the experience of either fatherhood or motherhood. Allowing children to be adopted by persons living in [homosexual] unions would actually mean ... that their condition of dependency would be used to place them in an environment that is not conducive to their full human development" (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons*, no. 7).

Many families do not have a mother and a father raising their children together (as in the case of death or divorce, for example). These situations, however, are a matter of *circumstance*, not design. "The fact that some married couples do not have children either because of infertility or personal decision does not determine the purpose of marriage. Exceptions do not invalidate but prove the rule; individual practices do not invalidate the objectives of an institution; variations do not nullify a norm. The inherent biological fact remains that marriage between a man and a woman will usually result in children which no shift in the realm of ideas, social trends or new technologies can change" (Zenit, "Same-Sex Marriage—Why Not? A Primer: Question and Answers From the Canadian Bishops' Conference," April 5, 2003, <http://www.zenit.org/article-17358?|=english>). Marriage

promotes the relationship of the couple and the continuation of society.

Being raised by a mother and a father who are married, however imperfect they may be, is a fundamental right that every child deserves and is in their best interest. "Marriage itself constitutes the most human and humanizing context for welcoming children, the context which most readily provides emotional security and guarantees greater unity and continuity in the process of social integration and education" (Pontifical Council for the Family, *Family, Marriage and "De Facto" Unions*, no. 26).

The Church doesn't have the right to impose its morality on homosexuals and tell them whom they can or can't love.

The Church does not impose morality on anyone. She proposes principles rooted in objective truth and natural law oriented toward the good of all society. The Church's teachings are not based on popular opinion.

"Exclusive attention to the [...] individual, his intentions and choices, without referring to the social and objective dimension, oriented to the common good, is the result of an arbitrary and unacceptable individualism that is blind to objective values, against the dignity of the person, and harmful to the social order. Therefore, it is necessary to promote a reflection that will help not only believers but all men of good will to rediscover the value of marriage and the family. In the Catechism of the Catholic Church, we can read: "The family is the original cell of social life. It is the natural society in which husband and wife are called to give themselves in love and in the gift of life. Authority, stability and a life of relationships within the family constitute the foundations for freedom, security and fraternity within society"" (Pontifical Council for the Family, *Family, Marriage and "De Facto" Unions*, no. 12. Also see the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 2207 and 2332ff).

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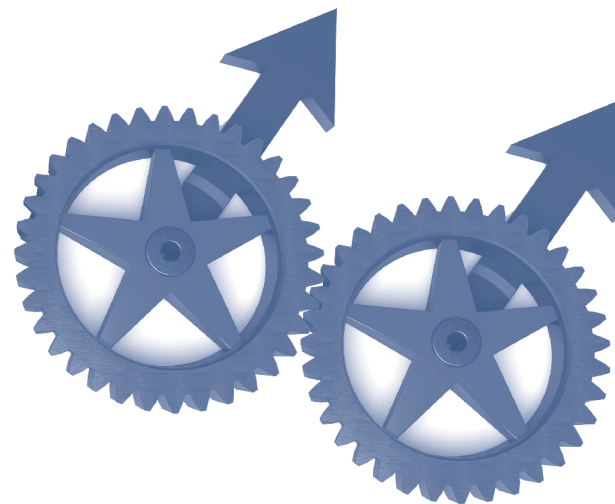
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Homosexuality



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Why is the Catholic Church against homosexuals?

Many people often misunderstand or misrepresent the Church's teaching on homosexuality. The Church is *not* against homosexuals *as persons*. It never has been and never will be. Both the Bible and the Church's Tradition condemn homosexual *acts*, not persons, and forbid other acts that violate the natural law such as fornication, adultery, and abortion.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* ("CCC") says, "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. Under no circumstances can they be approved" (CCC 2357).

The Church's teaching on homosexuality is firmly rooted in biblical teaching: most notably Genesis 19:1–19; Leviticus 18:22–25, 20:13; Romans 1:24–27; 1 Corinthians 6:9–10; and 1 Timothy 1:10.

Human sexuality and openness to the transmission of new life are intricately woven into the fabric of our nature, both physically and spiritually. Men and women are, literally, made for each other. The physical nature of men and women perfectly complement each other according to God's divine plan. That plan, articulated in the first chapter of Genesis, says that men and women are "made in God's image and likeness." God is love and life itself, and He created men and women to share His divine life, to be His spiritual children. Love *and* life are, therefore, intrinsic and essential to the complementarity between men and women.

Homosexual acts themselves are objectively and gravely immoral — not the person with a homosexual orientation — because there is no openness to the procreation of new life. Homosexuality undermines the truth, fullness, and wholeness of sexual communion.

The Church acknowledges and affirms the dignity of every human person.

Catholics don't think that persons with homosexual tendencies are "bad people" who will necessarily "go to hell." The Church condemns social discrimination in all its forms. The Catechism continues:

"[Homosexuals] 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" (CCC 2358).

The Church, in accord with her social teaching, recognizes the innate tension inherent in loving the sinner and hating the sin and, like Mary at the wedding in Cana, directs us to her Son, Who suffered and died for our sins. Homosexuals must be loved, respected and encouraged to participate in Christ's Paschal Mystery by uniting the cross of same-sex attraction to the suffering Christ (cf. Col 1:24) and by cooperating with God's will by living chastely.

But God made me this way. Why can't the Church accept that?

"As [Jesus] passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' Jesus answered, 'It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him.' [...] As he said this, he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and anointed the man's eyes with the clay, saying to him, 'Go wash in the pool of Siloam' (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing" (John 9:1–3, 6–7).

The man whom Jesus healed was born blind, yet Jesus did not say to him, "Sorry, I can't help you. You were born blind, which is the way my Father in Heaven made you." The man was "born that way" due to a defect of nature. His blindness was not his fault, just as someone born with fetal alcohol syndrome, trisomy 13, or spina bifida cannot be blamed for his or her condition.

Through Jesus Christ's passion, death and resurrection, and in cooperation with the grace of the Holy Spirit, God heals, elevates, and perfects our human nature (cf. Jn 10:10), sometimes in extraordinary ways. Men and women are, by nature, supposed to see, hear, walk, etc. We are not naturally homosexual. Even if scientists found a genetic propensity toward homosexuality, what would this prove? Mere genes don't prove that a condition is good or desirable. When Jesus healed the man born blind, He restored the man to the nature that God had originally intended from the beginning.

God made us in His image and likeness. We must discern whether the strong urges and longings we feel are concupiscent tendencies: carnal appetites whose end is self-gratification, or the language of the body, through which the Holy Spirit infuses man's soul enlightening his intellect and will, and endowing him with the capacity and freedom to direct himself toward his true good (cf. CCC 1704–1705).

Consequently, homosexual persons are called to chastity and it is the Church's sincere hope that "by the virtues

of self-mastery [and] by prayer and sacramental grace, they can and should gradually and resolutely approach Christian perfection" (CCC 2359). The same holds true for a spouse remaining chaste within marriage or a single person remaining chaste until marriage.

Women and minorities were once denied rights. Homosexuals should have rights too.

Comparing the rights of women and minorities to homosexuals is like comparing apples to oranges. An argument is often made from a defective sense of justice, saying that homosexual unions are a "civil right" and must be implemented for the sake of "tolerance" and "diversity." This misses the point entirely.

Being a woman or member of a minority is not a personal lifestyle choice, nor does this violate the natural moral law that comes from God. The natural law is designed to make us free and genuinely happy, since "human freedom finds its authentic and complete fulfillment precisely in the acceptance of [the moral law given by God]" (*Veritatis Splendor*, no. 35).

Let's look at a few examples of how these principles translate into human law. It is required that all persons operating a motor vehicle wear a seat belt. By its very nature, the seat belt law denies drivers the personal choice of whether or not to wear a seat belt. In this case, individual rights are subjugated for the common good since seat belts save lives and lessen the impact of rising medical costs.

Abortion and euthanasia, legal in some states, are clear violations of the natural law. Abortion takes the life of innocent, preborn children in the womb, and euthanasia violates the principle of justice, its core tenet being that some individuals have more value and worth than others based on their utility and efficacy. Even though these gravely sinful actions are legal, it doesn't follow that they are right. They clearly violate the rights and dignity of persons. Christians have an obligation not to follow them.

Many countries in the world have eliminated slavery and apartheid laws. These laws are wrong because all people are intrinsically valuable and not by nature property. Slavery and apartheid were about racial segregation, selective discrimination, and brutal oppression based on skin color. Laws that are in the best interest of the public are not based on individual rights or preferences. The redefinition of marriage attempts to change the true nature of a covenant relationship between one man and one woman by reducing it to an individualized lifestyle choice.

Furthermore, "equality before the law must respect the principle of justice which means treating equals equally

