

Church and Biblical Teaching Regarding Homosexuality

I. Catechism of the Catholic Church

See Sections 2357, 2358, 2359, online at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops website: <http://www.usccb.org/catechism/text/>

*Taken from **Part Three** (Life in Christ), **Section Two** (The Ten Commandments), **Article 6** (The Sixth Commandment)*

Chastity and homosexuality

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, 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.

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.

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.

II. Biblical teaching

- A. Genesis 1:26-27; 2:18-24: two accounts of the creation of man and woman
- B. Genesis 19: 1-29: story of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah
- C. Jude 1:7: New Testament reflection on homosexuality. Source of punishment is unnatural lusts.
 - "Likewise, Sodom, Gomorrah, and the surrounding towns, which, in the same manner as they, indulged in sexual promiscuity and practiced

unnatural vice, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.”

- D. Leviticus 18: 22-30: prohibitions on sexual relations
- E. Romans 1:24-27: men and women exchange the truth of God for a lie. The result:
 - “Therefore, God handed them over to degrading passions. Their females exchanged natural relations for unnatural, and the males likewise gave up natural relations with females and burned with lust for one another. Males did shameful things with males and thus received in their own persons the due penalty for their perversity.”
- F. I Timothy 1:10: sinful behavior that is opposed to the law and sound teaching
- G. Matthew 5: 17. “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish, but to fulfill.”
- H. John 8:11. The woman caught in adultery. Jesus is merciful, but says, “Go and sin no more.”

III. Church teaching in our time

- A. Pope John Paul II and the *Theology of the Body*
 - 1. What is the *Theology of the Body*?

“The *Theology of the Body* is Pope John Paul II's integrated vision of the human person - body, soul, and spirit. As he explains, the physical human body has a specific meaning and is capable of revealing answers regarding fundamental questions about us and our lives...His reflections are based on Scripture (especially the Gospels, St. Paul and the Book of Genesis), and contain a vision of the human person truly worthy of man. John Paul II discusses who man was in the beginning, who he is now (after original sin), and who he will be in the age to come.”¹
 - 2. Christopher West, author and frequent speaker on the *Theology of the Body*

“Whatever homosexual behavior may consist of, it *is not* and *cannot* be sexual union. Sexual union is brought about by the inseminating union of genitals.”²

“Any attempt to divorce our souls from the fundamental orientation of our bodies (yes, our genitals) is to embrace the ancient heresy of *dualism*...The biological *is* personal. It’s the body that shows us who we are and defines our call to sexual love. There’s no way around it.”³
- B. Persona Humana: Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics, Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith,
http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19751229_persona-humana_en.html
- C. U. S. Bishops

“Between Man and Woman: Questions and Answers about Marriage and Same-Sex Unions” <http://www.usccb.org/laity/manandwoman.htm>

D. “On the Impossibility of Same-Sex Marriage: A Review of Catholic Teaching.”
William May. *The National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly*. Summer 2004. 303-
316. <http://www.ncbq.com/>

¹ Quote taken from the Online Resource for Pope John Paul II’s *Theology of the Body*.
<http://www.theologyofthebody.net/>

² West, C. 2000. *Good News About Sex and Marriage*. Charis Books. p. 148-149.

³ Ibid.