

# Gays

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Such dissenting views are strongly challenged by church supporters who say they ignore the total vision of Scripture, which presents married heterosexual union as the only legitimate place for people to express their love sexually.

For example, Christ condemned divorce as a deviation from God's ideal of marriage. And the marriage Jesus described was heterosexual, not homosexual, Courage founder Father John F. Harvey, OSFS, emphasized in his 1987 book *The Homosexual Person*.

One passage from Father Harvey's book notes that in His discussion with the Pharisees, Jesus quoted the Genesis story on the creation of men and women.

Father Harvey wrote: "Jesus answered: 'Have you not read that the creator from the beginning made them male and female and that He said: 'This is why a man must leave father and mother and cling to his wife and the two become one body? ... Here Jesus reaffirms the monogamous, heterosexual norm of sexuality found in Genesis.'"

Father Harvey's arguments ring home with Jim Johnson, Courage's pastoral representative for the western United States. In an interview with the *Catholic Courier*, Johnson described himself as a former homosexual who had gradually attained a heterosexual orientation through therapy and work with a Courage support group.

Johnson and Father Harvey both believe homosexuals can change their sexual orientations by analyzing their past relationships with parents of the same sex. In *The Homosexual Person*, Father Garvey asserted, in fact, that homosexuality is neither a disease nor a mental illness, but a "developmental abnormality."

The priest acknowledged that no one can say with certainty why individuals are homosexual, but said this fact does not preclude his ability to draw some conclusions from evidence compiled through 35 years of working with homosexuals.

"No one knows what causes homosexuality in the individual case," he told the *Catholic Courier* in a phone interview from New York City. "(But) you can (guess) when you listen to people year after year where you find in every case (when) you're dealing with a man, a broken relationship with a father." Similarly, Father Harvey asserted that the sexual orientation of most lesbians can be traced to their broken relationships with their mothers.

The priest backed up his claim by quoting several psychologists, including Dr. Elizabeth Morley, author of *Psychogenesis: The Early Development of Gender Identity and Homosexuality: A New Christian Ethic*.

"Morberly (states) ... that the homosexual man or woman 'has suffered from some deficit in the relationship with the parent of the same sex and that there is a corresponding drive to make good this deficit through the medium of same-sex or homosexual relationships,'" Father

Harvey wrote.

He told the *Courier* that through deep prayer and counseling —including a process of coming to forgive one's parents — a homosexual may be able to live a celibate life and, in some cases, actually change his or her sexual orientation.

Johnson said he had been detached from his father as a youngster, and stressed the importance of a child having a loving, adult role model of the same sex. "If anything happens to disrupt the normal process (of development)," he said, "(a boy) will try to look for the love of this father for the rest of his life."

While supported by some in the psychological community, the opinions of Johnson and Father Harvey do not carry much weight with the U.S. medical establishment.

The American Psychiatric Association, for example, dropped homosexuality from its lists of neuroses in 1973, a point that Dignity members stressed.

"I don't place any credence in (the idea) that people can really be changed," remarked "Mike," a Dignity member. "I've known too many people who supposedly have changed and then revert back only with more guilt than before ..." he later added.

Schieb concurred with Mike's contentions. "In 1973, the American Psychiatric Association took homosexuality off its list of illnesses, but I don't think the Roman Catholic Church has taken it off of theirs," Schieb said.

Whether one accepts the contention that

a homosexual orientation can be altered, few would deny that gay people generally have been ostracized within a church that claims its mandate is universal love.

Father Harvey noted in *The Homosexual Person* that many of his clients said they feared what would happen if their homosexuality were to be discovered. He wrote of how a seminarian had come to him once and confided his homosexuality.

The seminarian told of "rough experiences" in confession and described how he "cringed inwardly" when the nuns on the faculty of the school where he taught would tell homosexual jokes.

The young seminarian suffered the kind of lifetime treatment one local non-Catholic gay briefly experienced when he attended his Catholic lover's funeral.

"Bill," a Rochester-area resident, watched his lover "Joe" die of AIDS last year after a two-year struggle. Bill recalled that at his lover's funeral, for which Joe had written specific liturgical plans, the celebrant subtly ignored Bill when speaking of the dead man's "family."

"I don't think (the priest) really acknowledged my relationship with Joe at all," Bill said. "I was kind of put off by that."

Joe's mother, who spent her last days with her son, reciting the rosary at his bedside, summed up the difficulty of living as a gay in a church in which one is rarely accepted without conditions.

"Except for Dignity, there is no place for a homosexual to be welcome when he is out of the closet," she concluded.

# Bishop

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"One in Christ Jesus: A Pastoral Response to the Concerns of Women for Church and Society," defends the church's stand against the ordination of women to the priesthood but says this stance and others must not be used to justify oppressing women.

The 99-page draft encourages women to participate in all liturgical ministries that do not require ordination. An amended draft is to be voted on at the bishops' general meeting in November.

That the proposed pastoral letter declares sexism is a sin is one of its "redeeming

features," said the LCWR statement.

But "patriarchy as an embodiment of sexism" is not "subjected to the critique it requires," it said.

"Obviously, our church represented in our bishops, is not ready for this kind of critical analysis. Because that is so, they will not be able to write a pastoral that is not intrinsically contradictory," the statement said.

Bishop Clark pointed out that he too saw patriarchy as "a real issue, and we certainly have to address that. I personally believe the church has a long way to go. But I don't mean the church alone apart from the culture and the age."

Further, Bishop Clark observed, "I think the LCWR position is that we can't

make progress until (the issue of patriarchy is resolved). My argument has been, 'Let's take it one step at a time and keep advancing.'"

The statement called the theological anthropology developed in Chapter 1 of the second draft of the pastoral letter "an important and necessary formulation for a teaching church in its insistence on the fundamental equality of all persons."

This position on equality, however, the statement said, is "undermined and contradicted in the subsequent development of the pastoral."

"The problem emerges in the phrase 'equal in dignity,' which seems to veil a distinction and raise questions about qualifications of equality. For example,

does equality in dignity imply equality in rights and responsibilities?" the statement asked.

Contains reporting by Lee Strong and information from wire reports.

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