

The "Considerations" may be read in their totality on the Internet at:

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20030731_homosexual-unions_en.html

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Homosexual Unions are “Immoral”

The Holy See's document published on July 31, 2003 says that all laws that seek the legal recognition of homosexual unions are a "gravely immoral" act and cannot be voted by Catholic politicians.

"Faced with the legal recognition of homosexual unions, or the legal equating of these to matrimony with access to rights proper to it, it is necessary to be opposed in a clear and incisive way," the text reads written by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

The 10-page "doctrinal document," entitled "Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions between Homosexual Persons," is signed by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, and by Archbishop Angelo Amato, prefect and secretary, respectively, of the said Vatican Congregation.

"There are absolutely no grounds for considering homosexual unions to be in any way similar or even remotely analogous to God's plan for marriage and family. Marriage is holy, while homosexual acts go against the natural moral law," the document states.

"Homosexual acts 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," it clarifies.

However, the same document states that nonetheless, according to the teaching of the Church, men and women with homosexual

tendencies must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity."

"Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided. They are called, like other Christians, to live the virtue of chastity. The homosexual inclination is however objectively disordered and homosexual practices are sins gravely contrary to chastity," it stresses.

The "Considerations" are proposed not only to believers, but to all persons of good will, because their ethical judgment is not only based on Christian Revelation but above all on right reason.

In fact, the document bases its opposition to the recognition of homosexual couples on four arguments: the order of right reason, the biological and anthropological order, the social order, and the legal order.

The "order of right reason," discussed in the "Considerations" maintains that "laws in favor of homosexual unions are contrary to right reason because they confer legal guarantees, analogous to those granted to marriage, to unions between persons of the same sex."

Homosexual behavior can be a private or public phenomenon. The "difference between homosexual behavior as a private phenomenon and the same behavior as a relationship in society" is when it is "approved by the law, to the point where it becomes one of the institutions in the legal structure." In this case, it "would result in changes to the entire organization of society, contrary to the common good." Moreover, legal recognition of homosexual unions would obscure certain basic moral values

and cause a devaluation of the institution of marriage."

According to the argumentation of "the biological and anthropological order," the Vatican document states that homosexual unions "are totally lacking in the biological and anthropological elements of marriage and family which would be the basis, on the level of reason, for granting them legal recognition."

"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," the document points out.

The argumentation from "the social order" reminds readers that society "owes its continued survival to the family, founded on marriage. The inevitable consequence of legal recognition of homosexual unions would be the redefinition of marriage, which would become, in its legal status, an institution devoid of essential reference to factors linked to heterosexuality; for example, procreation and raising children."

Lastly, the argument from "the legal order" explains that not granting juridical recognition to homosexual couples is not an act of discrimination, as homosexuals "can always make use of the provisions of law -- like all citizens from the standpoint of their private autonomy -- to protect their rights in matters of common interest. It would be gravely unjust to sacrifice the common good and just laws on the family in order to protect personal goods that can and must be

guaranteed in ways that do not harm the body of society."

The document states that if "it is true that all Catholics are obliged to oppose the legal recognition of homosexual unions, Catholic politicians are obliged to do so in a particular way, in keeping with their responsibility as politicians."

Should a law of this kind already be in existence, and it is not possible to abrogate it completely, the Catholic parliamentarian "could licitly support proposals aimed at limiting the harm done by such a law and at lessening its negative consequences at the level of general opinion and public morality, on condition that his absolute personal opposition to such laws was clear and well known and that the danger of scandal was avoided."

The document concludes with:

"The Church teaches that respect for homosexual persons cannot lead in any way to approval of homosexual behavior or to legal recognition of homosexual unions. The common good requires that laws recognize, promote and protect marriage as the basis of the family, the primary unit of society. Legal recognition of homosexual unions or placing them on the same level as marriage would mean not only the approval of deviant behavior, with the consequence of making it a model in present-day society, but would also obscure basic values which belong to the common inheritance of humanity. The Church cannot fail to defend these values, for the good of men and women and for the good of society itself."