

Let's *Talk* About Homosexuality

Part 3: Moral and Pastoral Considerations: What the Church Teaches ... and Other Catholic Voices

Segment 2: Pastoral Considerations

“In their difficulties, may [God’s people] always find, in the words and the hearts of a priest, the echo of the voice and the love of the Redeemer.”

... Pope Paul VI (Humanae Vitae)

“A person with a gay or lesbian orientation is a full-fledged member of the Church, a daughter or son of God, with no footnotes or asterisks. This is clearly Church teaching.”

... Bishop Kenneth E. Untener

“Do not judge, so that you may not be judged.”

...Mt 7:1

As the first segment of Part 3 shows, the Church, in its official writings, has stated clearly and definitively its teaching on the objective immorality of homosexual behavior.

What are we to do, then, when sincere, thoughtful Christians attempt to apply these moral norms to their behavior and find them to be in contradiction to their own lived experience?

Bishop Raymond Lucker notes the particular quandary that seems to surround pastoral ministry to gay and lesbian persons: ¹

“Official, authentic teaching of the Church says that [homosexual behavior] is against Catholic teaching. This is an application of moral principles; we can spell it out and explain the teaching, and then say it needs to be given respect.

“Furthermore, I ask: Why is it that we can say to people that authentic teaching of the Church opposes war, and yet there are so many people who are involved in the

military/industrial complex – good Christians – who use violence as a means of solving problems?

“Why is it that we can say to married couples that the authentic teaching of the Church is that artificial birth control is wrong, and yet we will reach out and welcome everyone in the community when we know that 85% of Catholic couples don’t follow that teaching?

“To these people, we say, ‘Well, do the best you can. Come to the community, come to the sacraments.’

“Yet, we are so specific about teaching regarding homosexual behavior. I struggle because I believe that authentic moral theology recognizes that in the application of moral norms there can be differences of opinion on how we respond to moral norms. And there are many Catholic theologians who support this view.

“People say, I didn’t choose to be born with a homosexual orientation; this is who I am. And we are faced then with the question of whether God gives to every gay and lesbian person the gift of celibacy, for it is a gift of God, and not given to all. Reasonable people respond by trying to discern what God expects of them. And authentic, traditional Catholic pastoral theology reaches out and embraces all people, gays and lesbians alike, and says to them: You have to do the best you can. You have to respond to the grace of God who calls us.

“Father Dick McCormick, who probably is one of the foremost theologians of the Catholic Church in this country, talks often about the need to make pastoral decisions. And Tom [Bishop Thomas Gumbleton] speaks so very clearly of how important it is for us to welcome, to be open, to listen. These are pastoral approaches and we are called to deal pastorally with others. I would emphasize that we need to listen to the experience of homosexual people, just as we need to listen to the experience of people in all other areas of human activity.”

The need for pastoral care and concern, of course, bears on the mental, emotional and psychological well-being of the individual – as well as on the question of moral behavior. Paul Giurlanda, associate professor of religious studies at St. Mary’s College of California, writes of the “internalized inferiority” that can do enormous damage to young homosexuals.²

He tells of an actual case, not all that long ago, in which a young black child named Ruby knew that only white people could eat vanilla cookies. He cites Robert Cole’s famous study showing how early in life African-American children can internalize the inferiority to which society can assign them: “She (Ruby) drew white people larger and more lifelike. Negroes were smaller, their bodies less intact. While Ruby’s own face lacked an eye in one drawing, an ear in another, the white girl never lacked any features.”

Giurlanda continues: “Now think of an 11-year-old boy sitting at a yellow kitchen table leafing through the dictionary: *homopterous*, *homorgan*, *homo sapiens*, *homosexual*...He reads the definition (‘*characterized by sexual inclination toward those of the same sex*’) and begins to feel his face burn. He begins to cry, so loudly that his parents and older brother rush from various parts of the house. ‘What’s wrong?’ What, indeed.

“The child Ruby had one advantage over this child: She could speak about her fear and pain. And her mother could hold her in her arms and tell her that the obscenities the white people shouted at her on the way to school were not true. But what if the hurt is so shameful that even your father would throw you out of the house if he knew? (Recently, a young man told me that his mother shamed his little brother out of crying by calling him a ‘fag.’ How excruciating to hear your own mother use who you are as a term of abuse and be unable to say anything about it.)

“Furthermore, while he knows that he is on the very bottom of the grammar school heap – a ‘fag’ – at the same time, he feels himself to be ‘the only one.’ And when he prays, as we teach our children to do, what does this ‘different’ child say? ‘Why have you cursed me?’ ”

Imagine the effect of all this on young minds. Giurlanda cites a diary entry from a young gay person named Bobby Griffith who took his own life in 1982: “Feb. 19, 1982. Why did you do this to me, God? Am I going to hell? That’s the gnawing question that’s always drilling little holes in the back of my mind. Please don’t send me to hell. I’m really not that bad, am I?...Life is so cruel and unfair.”

Later in his article, Giurlanda poses the pastoral dilemma of reconciling for the homosexual adolescent his or her orientation with a moral evil: “For example, where and how is it appropriate to tell gay adolescents of their ‘intrinsic disorder’ and ‘inclination to moral evil’ ...? And how do we respond when they ask of God, “Why did you do *this* to me?”

“This question, ‘Why did you do this to me?’ is often asked along with another: ‘Why do they hate me so much?’ For along with the inner experience of self-hatred, we have the outer experience of hatred by others. The pastoral task of helping this boy or girl becomes even harder.”

Giurlanda concludes that “Catholic gay people must struggle not only against the grosser versions of sexuality, but against most forms of human intimacy. And they must do this with almost no institutional support, in a kind of social blackout.”

Giurlanda’s reference to the lack of institutional support is on target -- historically, and even today. In its resolution on ministry to the homosexual community, in Denver in 1972, the National Federation of Priests’ Councils reported that “the Church’s concern for and ministry to the homosexual community is practically invisible

and therefore non-existent in the United States.” Prior to the mid 1970’s, traditional pastoral counseling focused on two exclusive aims: conversion to a heterosexual orientation or total abstinence from all sexual expression. According to theologian and psychotherapist John McNeil, priests and laypersons involved in pastoral counseling have found very little success in attaining either goal without their clients experiencing severe emotional disorders, and even mental breakdowns.³

Pastoral ministry to gays and lesbians is beginning to change, though, in both its approach and its reach. The good news today is the slowly growing awareness in dioceses and parishes throughout the country that ministry to gays, lesbians, bisexuals and their families is critical to the well-being and spiritual life of a significant minority of their flock.

The bad news is that way too little of this awareness has yet been enlivened in pastoral programs of information, education, concern, acceptance and support that can help to eliminate what one gay celibate priest called the “oppression of homophobia within society and the church.” There is still a need to “walk the talk.”

Bishop Thomas Gumbleton writes in *America* magazine about the letter he received from the gay priest mentioned above.⁴ The priest admits his struggle with the knowledge of his sexuality and the “fear of witch hunts” which continues to keep a part of him in the closet. “How I long to be out (in appropriate ways),” he writes, “and honest with the people I serve. I fear rejection by the people I try to serve in love, which causes me much pain. Sometimes I wonder if I should remain a priest or go out into the sunlight in integrity and honesty.”

Bishop Gumbleton responds: “The truth, once again, seems to be that our teaching about homosexual persons is a matter of words, but not really something we are ready to act upon. When we get to the point of living our teaching authentically, no homosexual person will have to live in fear of becoming known as they really are. Also, children who are in the process of discovering their sexual orientation will never have to be afraid of taunts and rejection for their sexual orientation, nor will they feel, ‘I am the only one.’ There will be a teacher, a priest, a religious they can turn to and look up to. They will have a model for the hope of growing up and discovering how to live a full and happy life.”⁵

Let’s briefly look at some pastoral considerations as expressed by Catholic writers both within and outside official documents.

Catechism of the Catholic Church:

- “Imputability [i.e., to attribute guilt to a person] and responsibility for an action can be diminished or even nullified by ignorance, inadvertence, duress, fear, habit, inordinate attachments and other psychological or social factors.” [#1735]

- “Although we can judge that an act is in itself a grave offense, we must entrust judgment of persons to the justice and mercy of God.” [#1861]

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

- “We would ask Bishops to support with the means at their disposal, the development of appropriate forms of pastoral care for homosexual persons. (*On the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons*, 1986)
- “Circumstances may exist...which would reduce or remove the culpability [i.e., to be held blameworthy] of the individual in a given instance.” (*On the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons*, 1986)
- “The God who is at once truth and love calls the Church to minister to every man, woman and child with the pastoral solicitude of our compassionate Lord.” (*On the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons*, 1986)

United States Council of Bishops

“In the pastoral field, we reaffirm that homosexual men and women must certainly be treated with understanding and sustained in Christian hope. Their moral responsibility ought to be judged with a degree of prudence. Parents, teachers, confessors and the whole Christian community should offer a special degree of pastoral understanding and care, particularly since having a homosexual orientation generally precludes a person from entering marriage.” (NCCB, *Human Sexuality*, 1991)

“More than twenty years ago we bishops stated that ‘Homosexuals...should have an active role in the Christian community.’ What does that mean in practice? It means that all homosexual persons have a right to be welcomed into the community, to hear the word of God, and to receive pastoral care. Homosexual people living chaste lives should have opportunities to lead and serve the community. However, the Church has the right to deny public roles of service and leadership to persons, whether homosexual or heterosexual, whose public behavior openly violates its teaching” (*Always Our Children*, 1998)

In his commentary on the CDF document, *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons* (1986), Archbishop John R. Quinn writes: ⁶

“The letter’s doctrinal and biblical analysis is complemented by its treatment of pastoral practice. Having ruled out homosexual acts as contrary to the teaching of Scripture and of God’s plan for creation, the letter quotes a 1976 document on

sexual ethics: ‘Culpability for homosexual acts should only be judged with prudence.’

“Then for the first time in a magisterial document, the letter admits the possibility that the homosexual *orientation* may not be ‘the result of deliberate choice.’ And having noted this, it continues: ‘Here, the Church’s wise moral tradition is necessary since it warns against generalizations in judging individual cases.’

“The reason for avoiding generalizations is: ‘In fact, circumstances may exist, or may have existed in the past, that would reduce or remove the culpability of the individual in a given instance, or other circumstances may increase it.’

“What is to be avoided is ‘the unfounded and demeaning assumption that the sexual behavior of homosexual persons is always and totally compulsive and therefore inculpable.’

“The pastoral stance, then, is to uphold the Church’s teaching and, within that framework, to be cautious in judging culpability – avoiding the extremes of saying that there is always culpability or that there is never culpability.”

Vatican CDF theologian Fr. Jan Visser is one of the authors of the Congregation’s 1975 *Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics*. Discussing the document in a newspaper interview, he said:

“When one is dealing with people who are so predominately homosexual that they will be in serious personal and perhaps social trouble unless they attain a steady partnership within their homosexual lives, one can recommend them to seek such a partnership and one accepts this relationship as the best they can do in their present situation.”

In his April 24, 1997 article headlined “We should listen, leave judgment to God,” published in the *Rochester Catholic Courier*, Bishop Matthew H. Clark writes:

“We recognize...that the practice of many individuals, homosexual and heterosexual, falls short of this norm [sexual activity only in marriage], that circumstances strongly alter the nature of cases and that we are wise to leave the judgment of hearts to God who knows all about us, our sin included, and yet continually calls us to deeper life. Such dispositions contribute much to the development of a church environment that allows all of us to accept, support and love one another as we try, even through our sins, faults and failings, to be generous and faithful in our response to God’s love for us. Don’t we all need that? I think so.”

In his book, *Homosexuality: Catholic Teaching and Practice*, in a chapter titled “Spirituality and other Pastoral Concerns,” Gerald D. Coleman writes:

“While total complementarity can be achieved only in the man-woman relationship of marriage, every person has a spiritual quest to be in partnership with others, thus fulfilling the *imago Dei* (image of God). This quest is doubtlessly painstaking and difficult for the gay man and lesbian woman who are called by the church to live this complementarity in chastity. It is not mere rhetoric to claim, then, that a homosexual person is challenged to a high degree of spirituality.”

And this from the 1980 letter from the English and Welsh Bishops:

“Pastoral care does not consist simply in the rigid and automatic application of objective moral norms. It considers the individual in his (or her) actual situation, with all his (or her) strengths and weaknesses. The decision of conscience...can only be made after prudent consideration of the real situation as well as the moral norm....The pastoral counseling of homophile persons cannot ignore the objective morality of homosexual genital acts, but it is important to interpret them, to understand the pattern of life in which they take place, to appreciate the personal meaning which these acts have for different people...”

Finally, when asked in an interview published in the *National Catholic Reporter* on November 4, 1994 what he would teach, Detroit Bishop Thomas Gumbleton replied:

“I will say what the church teaches – that to be actively homosexual is wrong. But every one of us has to come to terms with church teaching and apply it to our own lives in light of our own conscience with the guidance of the church. I don’t make judgments about a gay person’s conscience any more than about the military man at a SAC air base or on a Trident submarine who would fire a nuclear weapon, if ordered to. I think in some ways the church teaching on that is clearer than on homosexuality....And yet I cannot judge another person’s conscience. If that person comes to communion, I cannot refuse.”

Before leaving this discussion, we should at least mention a particularly difficult and painful aspect of our subject that is largely absent from official writings – and most others, for that matter: the situation of gay and lesbian people in heterosexual marriages. Fr. Robert Nugent calls ministering to married homosexual people one of the difficult pastoral challenges facing the Church today: “It is a challenge made especially traumatic and painful because other people, including spouses and children, are deeply affected by the tensions, conflicts and painful decisions that must be made when homosexuality touches a marriage. Repeatedly, married people speak of the helplessness they experience in trying to be honest with themselves, while attempting to avoid hurting the people they live with and love.”⁷

Indications are that such marriages, while definitely not commonplace, are not extremely unusual. How many are there? It’s impossible to determine with any

precision. Study samples are not representative because married homosexual people are highly unlikely to participate in such surveys. Nugent does cite studies that have found approximately 20% of gay men, and an even higher percentage of lesbian women, have been married at least once in their lives to a heterosexual partner.

Whatever motivation might influence the decision of a homosexual person to marry a heterosexual, Nugent notes, “The time to deal with homosexuality in marriage is before the marriage occurs” – through effective sex education and marriage preparation programs.

John McNeil touches briefly on the subject. He notes that “one priest, acting as a canon lawyer in a marriage tribunal, claims that over one-third of the divorce cases he handled were based in the fact that one or the other partner was homosexually inclined. For as I have pointed out, many homosexuals attempt to hide their condition by entering into marriage.”⁸

Ethicist Richard Sparks, C.S.P. also notes the tragic potential when a gay or lesbian person cannot find acceptance from their family, church and society:

“...far too many young gay men and lesbian women attempt heterosexual marriage, in an effort to ‘turn themselves around’ or to ‘hide’ their orientation within a socially accepted marriage covenant. If not dealt with up front, during puberty and adolescence, such repressed orientation issues often lie dormant for years, but not for a lifetime.

“Discovering -- at age 30, 40 or 50 – that one’s spouse, the father or mother of one’s children, is primarily homosexual and wants out of the marriage is a devastating blow. Was the whole marriage a lie? Should we stick with it for the sake of the children? If teens are allowed to deal more openly with their sexual feelings, fantasies and orientation at an appropriate age and in responsible counseling and educational settings, such later tragedies may be avoided.”⁹

Anyone interested in pursuing this topic needs to search the literature – or talk with an experienced pastoral minister, counselor or health professional.

As the Church continues its cautious move into this complex ministry, we close this segment of our series with words from a pastoral letter on family ministry written by Archbishop Rembert Weakland of Milwaukee more than 20 years ago:

“While recognizing the value of the nuclear family, the reality of present society has necessitated the broadening of our concept and practice of family ministry to acknowledge other lifestyles, including but not necessarily limited to, single-parent families, childless couples, the widowed, the separated, sexual minorities....It is our prayer...that all people will come to see the church as the caring and loving community it is meant to be. It is our wish that the unchurched and the lukewarm will see in our efforts a genuine desire to unite once again in

the true spirit of Christian unity. It is our deep desire that parents and singles, divorced and widowed, the young and aged, the heterosexual and the homosexual...will find in the Family of God the love, the encouragement, the acceptance and hope we all need to live productive and fulfilling lives.”

The Archbishop was ahead of the curve.

Segment 2 (Cont.): The Role of Conscience

“[We] are bound to follow our consciences faithfully in all our activity so that we may come to God, who is our last end. Therefore, we must not be forced to act contrary to our conscience.”

...Vatican II Document: Declaration on Religious Freedom, #3

“A human being must also obey the certain judgment of his conscience. If he were to deliberately act against it, he would condemn himself.”

...Catechism of the Catholic Church #1800

There is, we are told, no Hebrew word for conscience in the Old Testament. The closest word to it is *heart*. We are urged not to harden our *hearts*.... God probes the *hearts* of his people. And so we read from a Vatican II document what some scholars feel is one of the most beautiful passages in Church writings:

“Deep within our conscience we discover a law which we have not laid on ourselves, but which we must obey. Its voice, ever calling us to love and to do what is good and to avoid evil, sounds in our hearts at the right moment....For we have in our hearts a law inscribed by God....Our conscience is our most secret core and our sanctuary. There we are alone with God, whose voice echoes in our hearts.”¹⁰

It must be acknowledged that there are differing views of how the conscience should be properly formed, but personal responsibility remains central to the discussion. Patricia Schoelles, S.S.J. is president of St. Bernard's Institute, the Catholic graduate school for theology and ministry in Rochester, NY, and holder of a doctorate degree in theological ethics from Notre Dame. She writes about the exercise of conscience: ¹¹

“The actual making of a moral decision relies on the exercise of our conscience. Since the very beginning of Christianity, believers have stressed personal responsibility in the conduct of a Christian life. From the time of Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century, the Church has consistently maintained that we have an absolute obligation to follow our consciences in matters of moral decision making....

“Conscience is a profound aspect of the human person, touching on the very core of who we are, and represents that place ‘where we are alone with God.’ The exercise of conscience, then, is where I enact and live out my relationship with God.”

But how do we know if we have chosen correctly? How can we know the morally right thing to do? How do we know if a course of action, a relationship, a moral decision is the best one for me? The U.S. Bishops pose these questions in their 1991 booklet titled *Human Sexuality: a Catholic Perspective for Education and Lifelong Learning*. They allow there are few easy answers in discerning (i.e., “figuring out”) the right thing to do. They write:

“...Catholic tradition speaks of discernment as that process by which a person uses one's own reasoning ability, the sources of divine revelation (Scripture and tradition), the Church's teaching and guidance, the wise counsel of others, and one's own individual and communal experiences of grace in a sincere effort to choose wisely and well....At the same time, data from the physical sciences, information from the social sciences, and the insights of human reason can all contribute to one's discovering moral truth.”

The bishops reaffirm that Christian morality is determined by objective standards based on the nature of the human person and his or her acts. But they also recall the Vatican II bishops' statement that these standards “are not intended to preempt human evaluation and discernment, but neither are they reducible solely to sincere intentions or an evaluation of motives.” Patricia Schoelles also comments on this latter point in her article: “We trivialize conscience if we let it simply represent ‘me doing my own thing’ or ‘me rationalizing what I want to do over what I ought to do.’ ”

So how do we evaluate behavior from a moral perspective? Schoelles writes:

“Classically, there have been three things to consider when trying to determine the morality of a specific action:

- 1) the action itself – does this proposed action cause any harm of itself?
- 2) our intention in performing the act – assuming that our intentions may be mixed and complex, what primarily motivates us? Is that intention selfish or does it regard the well-being of others? How do we analyze this action in terms of our relationship with God?
- 3) the circumstances surrounding the performance of a given action.

“There is considerable theological debate, of course, around how the intention and the circumstances affect the moral evaluation of some actions...(but) most moral theologians hold that actions need to be considered within the context of the intentions of the one performing them and the circumstances which surround their performance.

“...Finally, most actions are not the result of simply choosing ‘good over evil’ as we sometimes assume. More often, we are left to choose between competing goods. Thus, we must try to ‘maximize the good’ possible in a given circumstance while limiting the possible harms that may result. We always act in limited circumstances where the consequences of our action will probably involve both good and bad results. In these cases, we try to act in such a way that the greatest proportion of possible goods will result, and the smallest proportion of possible bad effects will prevail.”¹²

Catholic theologian Richard McBrien defines Christian conscience as “the radical experience of ourselves as moral agents enlivened by the Holy Spirit.” He adds, “But since we never know ourselves completely...decisions of conscience are necessarily fallible and subject to correction and change. Catholic moral theologians, therefore, are in complete agreement with Pope John Paul II when he insists that conscience is not infallible (*Veritatis Splendor*, n. 32).”¹³

Later in his article on conscience, Fr. McBrien poses the difficult question:

“Given the inviolable character of conscience and the individual’s right to follow conscience, even when it is erroneous, what are members of the Church to do in the face of moral teachings with which they disagree? Are they bound to obey all official moral teachings of the Church and to assume, almost as a matter of course, that their consciences are necessarily erroneous and not to be followed if they are in conflict with those teachings? The following principles must be taken into account:

- 1) It is taken for granted that the Church’s moral teaching is normally a source for positive illumination for Christians in forming their consciences. If, however, after appropriate study, reflection, and prayer, a person is convinced that his or her conscience is correct, in spite of a conflict with the moral teachings of the Church, the person not only may but *must* follow the dictates of conscience rather than the teachings of the Church.

- 2) The Church has never explicitly claimed to speak infallibly on a moral question, so there is probably no instance as yet of a conflict between an individual's fallible decision in conscience and a teaching of the Church which is immune from error.
- 3) No teaching of the Church can hope to account for every moral situation and circumstance. Every teaching still has to be applied in particular cases. One is not necessarily repudiating the values affirmed in the teaching if one decides that the teaching does not bind or apply in a particular instance.
- 4) The teachings themselves are historically conditioned. What may have been perceived as morally wrong in one set of circumstances – e.g., charging interest on a loan in the Middle Ages – would be regarded as morally justifiable in another situation – e.g., charging interest on a loan today, in the context of commercial life.

On the other hand:

- 5) No individual or group of individuals can hope to identify and grasp moral truth by relying entirely on their own resources. We are all finite and sinful. We all need assistance and correction. We all rely on the moral vision of others as well as our own. The Church, as the Temple of the Holy Spirit and as a universal community, is a major resource of such moral direction and leadership”

Fr. McBrien writes that “...we are judged finally by God on the basis of what is in our hearts, not on what we actually did or did not do.” He quotes Benard Haring: “Everyone, of course, must ultimately follow his conscience; this means he must do right as he sees the right, with desire and effort to find and do what is right.” And then McBrien continues:

“So strongly rooted is this principle of primacy of conscience over both external act and external authority that Thomas Aquinas himself argued that ‘anyone upon whom the ecclesiastical authority, in ignorance of true facts, imposes a demand that offends against his clear conscience, should perish in excommunication rather than violate his conscience.’ (*IV Sentences*, dist. 38, q. 2, a. 4).

And so we return to the \$64,000 question. McBrien responds simply:

“In the final analysis, how does one know that she or he has made a good decision of conscience? One classic sign is *peace of mind*. You have no more pertinent questions to ask.”

Our series “Let’s *Talk About Homosexuality*” is offered as educational ministry. In that light, our next segment of the program will acknowledge some of the tensions evident among the faithful today on the subject of homosexuality.

Notes

Part 3: Segment 2: Pastoral Considerations

¹ Raymond Lucker. *Insights from Bishop Lucker*, transcript of presentation made April 18, 2001, at Guardian Angels Parish, Lake Elmo, NM.

² Paul Giurlanda. “What About Our Church’s Children?” *America*, May 8, 1993, pp. 12-14.

³ John J. McNeil. “The Church and the Homosexual,” 4th Ed., (Boston: Beacon Press), 1-2.

⁴ Thomas J. Gumbleton. “Teaching Authentically,” *America*, April 23-30, 2001.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ John R. Quinn. “Toward an Understanding of the Letter ‘On the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons,’” from *The Vatican and Homosexuality*, (NY: Crossroad, 1988) eds, Jeannine Gramick and Pat Furey, pp. 13-19.

⁷ Robert Nugent. “Married and Gay, Married and Lesbian,” an essay from *Building Bridges: Gay & Lesbian Reality and the Catholic Church*, 3rd ed., (Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1995), 81.

⁸ McNeill. *Op cit.*, p.137.

⁹ Richard Sparks. “What the Church Teaches About Homosexuality,” from *Catholic Update*, (Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1999).

¹⁰ “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,” #16, a document from Vatican II.

¹¹ Patricia A. Schoelles. “Making Moral Decisions,” Patricia A. Schoelles and Dept. of Evangelization and Catechesis, Diocese of Rochester, 1996.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Richard P. McBrien. “Conscience,” from *Catholicism*, by Richard P. McBrien (HarperSanFrancisco, 1994,) pp. 968-975.