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They tease, encourage, they scold and even ridicule each other but there is no malice. The teasing and ridicule I have often felt is similar to the "scrambling play," and conveys the same feeling of acceptance and belonging as that early period of close and intimate play.

As they grow together they re-examine the traumatic experiences of each other's early life and recognize the effect that it had upon them and how they responded. They know that they are changing and recognize their release from fear and hostility as they acquire a better image of themselves and relinquish old and self defeating patterns and acquire the ability to become more responsible and to be contributors to the environment in which they live.

In the homosexual, the hostility diminishes and their self image improves and eventually they accept the role that nature assigned them and embrace its responsibilities and renounce that pattern to which they turned in an attempt to terminate their feelings of loneliness and alienation born of the derogatory image and fears they acquired as a result of experiences they had as well as those of which they were deprived.

REFERENCES
1. Samuel Hadden, Childhood Play and later sexual adjustment, Penna. Med. 69:3, pp. 84.

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The Pastoral Implications of Church Teaching on Homosexuality

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During the November 1970 workshop on homosexuality and religion held at the Catholic University the question was presented to me whether I would give absolution in the confessional to a homosexual who had every intention of ceasing a homosexual liaison, or what is sometimes called a homosexual "marriage." The interrogator added that this homosexual did not feel that he was doing wrong in such an overt practice of homosexuality, because he knew of no other way to have a stable human friendship, and did not want to lapse into the promiscuous kind of life so characteristic of many homosexuals.

I replied that in conscience I could not give absolution to this individual, unless he agreed to give up this practice because I regarded such a way of living as a serious violation of the Christian norms of sexual conduct. To this reply it was objected that I had overlooked the fact that the individual
did not regard his behavior as contrary to the law of God. I responded to this objection with further observations. If this person really believed that his conduct was not sinful, he had no solid reason to present it in the confessional. The fact of presentation of his homosexual actions indicates that he expects the confessor to respond with approval or disapproval. Granting, however, for the sake of discussion that a given individual really HAD BEEN in good faith about the serious gravity of this matter until the time of his confession, he has an obligation to accept the advice of the confessor on the immorality of his past conduct in this issue and to take whatever steps are necessary to free himself from such a homosexual union. It is theoretically possible that this individual has not been aware of the immorality of his conduct before confession, but such ignorance does not free him from the obligation of following what has been the common teaching of moralists on this subject. However, empathetic the confessor may be to the subjective difficulties of the homosexual penitent, he is not free to give approval for the continuation of the homosexual liaison. Since he exercises the power of forgiving or retaining sins in the name of the Church, he is bound to follow solid moral teaching both in instructing the penitent and in demanding that the penitent change his way of life.

My arguments were further challenged by another moral theologian who claimed that I was mistaken about the nature of the judgement made by the priest in the confessional. Penance was not the “legalistic” judgement which I had described, but an act of mercy in which Christ brings pardon and peace to the sinner. To refuse him absolution would be to pass a judgement of condemnation on him and to exclude him from the sacraments. The priest should absolve this person.

To this challenge—supported by others in the audience—I could do no more than point out that there was a serious difference of opinion between two moralists on the confessional approach to the overt homosexual. I decided to develop the controversy at a later date, and in this article I will submit my views on the matter.

The first question is whether two men living together in overt homosexuality are following the law of God with its prescriptions for the right use of sexual love and faculties. Holiness Scripture in Genesis 1-2 and again in Ephesians 5 indicates that the idea of sexual love is found in an enduring life together of man and woman called marriage, in which personal love is the same time procreative. The Scriptures speak of woman as the helper of man, and of man leaving parentage to cling to his wife, so that they become one flesh, out of which proceeds offspring. Apart from philosophic reasoning on the matter, both Old Testament and New stress the personal and procreative values of marital union—which the procreative good having the edge.

While Ephesians 5 alone is not used to demonstrate that marriage is a sacrament, it does indicate its sacred nature by comparing the bridgegroom with Christ and the bride with the Church. Christ loves his Church in the way in which a man loves his wife and desires that she remain unblemished and beautiful. Ephesians 5, like Genesis 12, and Tobias, teaches the holiness of heterosexual activity within the bond of marriage. On the other hand, nowhere in Holy Scripture is any kind of homosexual union approved or condoned; and in several places it is explicitly condemned.

While individual passages condemning homosexual practices have probative value, the better argument is the overall orientation of both Old Testament and New to present heterosexual marriage as the institution within which man’s sexual powers may have most perfect fulfillment. All these passages from Holy Scripture should be understood in conjunction with arguments from human reason and experience. To understand the purely human arguments against homosexuality it is necessary to explore a few speculative points about the basic purpose of man’s sexual nature. The traditional school of thought has regarded the use of the sexual faculties as both personal and procreative. The act of sexual intercourse between man and wife need not lead in every instance to procreation, but it should not be deprived of its procreative power. Some who would oppose the teaching of Humanae Vitae because of its absolute prohibition of contraception in marriage would still insist that the acts of marriage have a procreative value as well as a personal value in perfecting a man and a woman. A comparatively new school of thought holds that one can separate completely the procreative value of sexual union in marriage from many other nonprocreative values of sexual union, which run the spectrum from normal heterosexual intercourse through the various deviations of heterosexual acts and through the various forms of homosexual acts to acts of bestiality. The basic principle of this new norm of sexuality is that sexual acts may be used in any self-fulfilling way, provided that no injury is done to the neighbor.

Now no demonstration is needed to show that a homosexual act precludes all possibility of transmission of life. It can be justified only by abandoning the traditional understanding of the purpose of sexual acts in favor of a theory which looks primarily, if not exclusively, to the fulfillment of personal values as the moral norm of sexual conduct.

In light of the traditional view of sex and marriage I hold that homosexual acts are an inordinate use of the sexual faculties. Inordinate, not only because opposed to the procreative purpose of sexual activity, but also to the heterosexual purpose of sexual activity, namely, an act of mutual love between a man and a woman in marriage—a point already made in the Scriptures. Since, moreover, homosexual acts run contrary to very important purposes of sexuality, they are a grave transgression of the divine will.

The procreation and education of children within the institution of marriage is a very important goal of human sexuality; but homosexual acts render this goal impossible; therefore they are a grave violation of the divine will, because the more important the goal, the more serious is the violation of that goal.

An additional argument is that homosexual acts are a deviation from the usual attraction of man for woman which leads to the foundation of the basic unit of society, the family. This line of reasoning, as well as the previous argumentation, will not be accepted by many homosexuals who believe that “natural” has a different meaning for homosexuals than it does for heterosexuals. In any case, the combined weight of both Scriptural teaching and human reasoning leads to a solidly established conclusion that within a Christian perspective homosexual acts are a privation of human sexuality and a grave moral evil in the objective order.
agree with this conclusion. He regards aberration of the sexual instinct; but if the homosexual as suffering from an homosexual acts as encyst has developed to the stage where friendship as the lesser of two evils. He which one is excused from grave guilt under the compromise principle, by which the person must live. The acceptable. Presupposing truly human sive then that is a separate problem evil. If the homosexual is also avoid an action which is objectively which level of grace his use of the the tendency to towards homosexual acts psychology it also presupposes that several distinctions and by suggesting reverse is not true. What is harmful desires which by their erotic nature are the genital region which often concern 'into his own one and the same time. He has consciously he believes that he wants his Letter on chastity, although it may be a for self control. He wants to be chast, he will take care of the use of the marital faculties the thoughts, and the spirit. Further Frances Cairns would not

"No other motive on... other hand, the chaste person must make it ready for flexible the human freedom is the other hand, the chaste person must make it ready for flexible..."

The compromise principle is not...
homosexuals are seeking to change their sexual orientation or at least to make a better adjustment to it. To be sure, the vast majority of homosexuals are not interested in psychiatric treatment, but at least some have realized their hopes of change. In the face of these developments in therapy the pastoral counselor should not be too quick to advise an invert that he cannot change or to accept his overt homosexuality as an inevitable evil. Curran’s theory of compromise does not apply. This brings us to the question asked at the homosexual workshop: Should the priest allow the homosexual to remain in good faith concerning the objectively grave evil of his acts? No. It is a disservice to him to allow him to remain in his present state of mind, as if he could not help his homosexual behavior. It is inhuman that some behavioral scientists seek to help the homosexual transcend his sexual difficulties in a life of rational self-control, while clergy, both Catholic and Protestant, accept only homosexual styles of life as perfectly justifiable. Edward Sagarin regards as myth the idea that a homosexual cannot be changed. He believes that their reiteration of the unchanged nature of their condition is a rationalization by which they hope to gain public approval for their way of life.

The next question whether the priest should give absolution to a homosexual who will not promise to take effective steps to avoid overt acts should also be answered in the negative. The very heart of sacramental penance from the penitent’s point of view is metanoia, a radical change of heart and of mind with regard to past sin. The mercy of God is exercised primarily in giving the sinner the power to bring about this change of heart. If there is no change of heart on the sinner’s part, the absolution of the priest is not valid and sin remains. Most reluctantly, therefore, a priest should refuse absolution to a homosexual penitent who refuses to show any sign of repentance. This does not mean, however, that he condemns the homosexual, or presumes to judge infallibly the interior state of his soul. In the name of Christ and the Church he exercises his power to forgive sins provided the penitent is truly sorry for them. If he judges that the penitent is not sorry, he may not in conscience grant absolution. He leaves the door open for the penitent to come back. He urges him to reflect upon the matter; and to renew his sorrow for sin long before he can come to a confessing. Above all, he seeks to impart some hope to the homosexual.

The priest should help the homosexual to see that there is hope for him in the free sublimation of his sexual instincts and not in the allegedly “stable” homosexual relationship which, in many instances, truncates personality development. There is such a vast difference between marriage and a homosexual liaison that the term “marriage” should not be used to designate the latter. If a homosexual seeks to be creative in the sense of finding new opportunities to develop his powers of knowing reality and loving other humans, he will find it abundantly in a life of service to the many; and this life of service, in turn, will be supported by a spirit of chastity and prayer.

Again, why must the conversation about friendships among humans always get bogged down with the notion that such friends must express their love in a genital way? The chaste homosexual can form many fruitful friendships in his service of Christ without allowing himself to become so deeply involved with anyone that he feels he must avoid his companionship. With the help of a confessor or spiritual guide he will be able to discern the signs of solid friendship as contrasted with infatuations. Works like C. S. Lewis, The Four Loves, or St. Francis de Sales, Introduction to a Devout Life, have much to tell him about diverse forms of human love and divine love. What the homosexual needs (and so do we all) is the sense that he is beloved by God and men, and can love in return. For some this involves genital expression in marriage; but for many love finds a vast variety of other expressions.

Some Conclusions: There is no solidly probable opinion in favor of allowing homosexuals to live together in some form of permanent overt relationship; the traditional teaching is that it is objectively grave matter and not an object of good faith; much more important is the need for all priests to realize their power to help the homosexual live a life of love in the service of Christ and the community.

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1. Pierre Grelot, Man and Wife in Scripture N.Y.: Herder and Herder 1964. This work gives abundant documentation on this point.

2. In the Old Testament: Lev. 18:2 and 20:13. In the New: Romans 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; and 1 Tim. 1:9-10. The most explicit passage is Romans: “For this cause God has given them up to shameful lusts; for their women have exchanged natural intercourse for what is against nature, and in the same way men too, having given up natural intercourse with women, have burned in their lusts towards one another, men with men practicing that which is countless; receiving in their own persons the fitting punishment of their perversity.” Notice the context in which the practice of homosexuality is
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D. A. Starr, M.D.

In the end, one of the major effects of the current social turmoil may prove to be its effect on that section of the population now passing thru early adolescence. We have recognized that noxious influences in the fetal environment turmoil may prove to be its effect on that section of the population now passing through rapid differentiation. I submit that this same principle holds true in the context of the individual in the family and society; that those members undergoing the most rapid differentiation will be the most vulnerable to noxious influences in the environment.

The following comments appeared in a recent World Health Organization report entitled "Mental Health of Adolescents and Young Persons". I quote: "Many adults project the atmosphere of uncertainty and anxiety, both material and moral, in which they live on their children, who in turn become anxious and want to escape from their anxiety by breaking away and forming youth societies. Indeed while the adult world often rejects the OLD MORALITY OF CONFORMITY IT APPEARS INCAPABLE OF HELPING THE YOUNGER GENERATION TO FORGE A NEW MORALITY. By abandoning or questioning traditional value systems without replacing them.

Dr. Starr (Mrs. Charles Olsen) born in New York, got her M.D. at the State of N.Y. College of Medicine in 1950. A Diplomate of the American Board of Psychiatry & Neurology, Fellow of the A.P.A., Senior Attending at the Washington Hospital Center and Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the Medical College of Howard University; she is in private practice in Washington, D.C. and has four daughters.

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10. "P.C. and 39, develops the thesis that the norm of sexual acts is found in marital union... which preserves both values.


13. So holds John J. McNeil, S.J., "The Christian Male Homosexual," Part II, 747-758 Homicide and Pastoral Review, July 1970, Vol. 70, no. 10, Fr. McNeil cites Havelock Ellis in support of his opinion, overlooking a passage in Ellis' "Psychology of Sex," New York, Garden City Reprint, 1954, 253-255, in which Ellis says: "It must be further remembered that the inverted sexual impulse is peculiarly apt for the ends of sublimation..." It has often happened that inverts have devoted themselves with ardor to valuable social and philanthropic work for the benefit of the young of their own sex and found joy and satisfaction in the task...

