

SEXUAL HERESIES OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

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This is one of the saddest essays I have ever committed to paper.

It may be called my last Roman Catholic will and testament.

Most of the time we concede authority to a church to declare what teaching is heretical because it deviates from established norms.

Over the centuries that judgment has been the basis for dissident churches to form and incorporate their own institutional system of faith and morals. Some reform movements remain within the institution, challenging established custom or practice they deem deviate from earliest Christian ideals.

The history of Christianity is the history of “heresy”. The criterion has been the deviation or conformity with Roman Catholic orthodoxy and authority: Montanist , Donatist, Albigenses, Anabaptist, Quietism, and Protestantism, etc. have all waged doctrinal war against issues of Catholic faith and morals and consolidated their adherents into rival sects or religious faith. (*Ronald Knox)

What if the church that one believes in is teaching false or aberrant doctrine or morals, but there is no real impetus to establish a new institution or church? What if one lacks motivation, energy or desires to reform the institution?

Currently that is the **Catholic Situation**. Abandonment of practice or affiliation is the most common solution of U.S. Catholics to their faith dilemma. Men and women brought up and even well educated in Catholic doctrine and practice have simply walked away from affiliation

One-third of Roman Catholics in the U.S. consider themselves “ex Catholics”. (*Pew 2015) Disaffection with mainline Christian faiths and Evangelicals is also recorded.

Reasons for disillusion among all Christians may share elements in common, but RC interests need to take a look at the beam in its eye.

One major reason for this **Catholic Situation concerns sex and the false, unbelievable teaching about human sexuality that church authority insists is official.**

FALSE TEACHING RC moral doctrine teaches **masturbation** is intrinsically evil. This position is indefensible. Despite the pastoral rationales employed to make discussions seem reasonable the basic stance of church teaching is based on an **erroneous understanding of Natural Law**. Wasting the seed was the argument against, self-abuse or pollution as masturbation was labeled and condemned.

Some of the rulings from Vatican offices about masturbation are comic and ridiculous. For instance, their logic of its inherent evil forbids masturbation even in obtaining a specimen for medical reasons.

Their solution: a man must have intercourse with his wife wearing a condom that is perforated with a pinhole. Thus he can collect his semen for study and preserve the integrity of sex.

A physician can perform a prostatic manipulation to obtain a specimen from the single man.

According to this logic rape is a more moral—natural—act than masturbation.

The church uses this same mistaken understanding of natural law as a basis to claim that artificial **birth control** (pills, IUD, or 10 other options) is also intrinsically evil. This prohibition includes any use of a condom—even to protect from the possibility of the spread of HIV infection.

Any and all sexual activity outside of a valid marriage is also ruled a grave sin. This extends to serious occasions of sin. Courtship and preparation for marriage become a moral farce under such strictures.

The same prohibition applies to widowed or divorced men and women.

Roman Catholic teaching about sex is dominated and obsessed with concern over sexual pleasure. While in seminary training there were unending discussions about nocturnal emissions. Was it a grave sin if one awoke enough during the event to enjoy it? Parallel endless questions about the gravity of “French kissing” and “how far” an unmarried couple could go without committing a mortal sin dominated RC sex education talks.

Priests teach sin resides in pleasure. Orgasms have to be controlled at all costs, even at the sacrifice of reason, justice and honesty. Who is in control of sin and forgiveness? Clergy, of course, in the eyes of the Church.

The reality and quality of human relationships are discounted or diminished.

Homosexual sex and love fall under the same church interdict of intrinsic evil—an “inclination to an intrinsic evil”. That stance renders the homosexually or lesbian oriented person more defective than other humans saddled merely with original sin.

Certainly there is a long tradition of naming homosexuality “against nature”. We now know enough now about human sexual nature that for some men and women same-sex love, association, and sexual exchange is natural and should be judged and governed by the same social and responsible behavior as men and woman who have a heterosexual orientation and relationship.

The hypocrisy of Vatican teaching about homosexual orientation and behavior is so blatant that any thinking and informed person knows of its existence and its frequent occurrence and preponderance among the hierarchy of the RC Church.

A concomitant psychological problem among the RC hierarchy (based in hypocrisy) is their **sociopathy**. The institution supports, advances, rewards and protects leaders who blatantly and/or secretly act out their characterological pathology with men, women, money or power.

A well-regarded priest suggested that one solution would be for *100 celibately observant homosexual priests* to identify themselves publically. (Fr. Thomas Resse, S.J. at Santa Clara U., 2012) He is correct. It will take public declarations to save and reform the Catholic priesthood and to insure its integrity.

Freud's (1935 letter) mature view of homosexuality is far more reliable than any scriptural arguments used as a basis for disdain or persecution:

"May I question you why you avoid it? Homosexuality is assuredly no advantage, but it is nothing to be ashamed of, no vice, no degradation; it cannot be classified as an illness; we consider it to be a variation of the sexual function... Many highly respectable individuals of ancient and modern times have been homosexuals, several of the greatest men among them. (Plato, Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, etc). It is a great injustice to persecute homosexuality as a crime—and a cruelty, too."

I add from my study of history and psychology that some of the most notable saints—women and men—in the Catholic Church roster were either homosexual or bisexual in orientation. Even if at their time they could not name that entity they were unstintingly honest with themselves. Saints are not hypocrites.

The patent hypocrisy of clerical sexual practice and behavior in contrast to the teaching and control church authority impose on other members of the Christian community is unsustainable to hordes of Catholic people. The situation is evidence based.

CLERGY SEXUAL ABUSE OF MINORS The well-publicized reality that RC clergy in significant numbers sexually abuse minors is one social factor emerging in the U.S. as the poster child for Catholics' sea change in devotion. Many use this reality to justify their disaffiliation and exodus from affiliation and practice.

The sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy is neither an unknown phenomenon nor new problem in the church. (Cf. Doyle, Sipe & Wall, 2006)

Church sponsored efforts to study and control the problem of child abuse and to prevent it have all failed and will continue to fail because the hierarchy refuses to acknowledge that the causes are in the system they control—and in themselves.

The RC hierarchy has relinquished moral authority.

It does not teach the truth about human sexuality. It fails to practice the most basic truth it does stand for—truth, justice and charity.

Statistics, even from church sponsored studies, if understood, demonstrate that between six-and-one-half (6 1/2 %) and nine (9%) percent of Catholic clergy in the U.S. involve themselves sexually with minors. This is a conservative estimated baseline.

Those who have studied the incidence in other countries estimate that the proportion is higher. (P. Rodriguez in Spain places the figure at 22%.)

The Church (and churches) refuses to face the truth. They continue to deny, minimize, rationalize or project the problem of abuse to causes and contexts outside themselves and the culture they treasure and preserve.

Clergy abuse of minors is not a passing phenomenon. It is a perpetual feature of the Roman Catholic clerical training and structure. In short, the culture produces, encourages, fosters and protects a certain element among its membership who abuse—often with impunity and rationalized as no real offence or a minor sin at most. “Father is only human” or “Everyone sins” are commonly heard excuses in clerical circles.

Well-publicized efforts at preventing clergy abuse and protecting children—even the current Vatican Commission—will inevitably come to nothing if the structure and function of clerical culture remain unchanged—unreformed.

Highly touted efforts by U.S. bishops to protect minors from abuse by clergy so far are essentially window dressings rather than reforms.

CELIBATE VIOLATION There has been ratification by Vatican officials that at any one time no more than fifty-percent (50%) of priests are practicing celibacy. (Cardinal Jose Sanchez, Prefect of the Vatican Dicastery of Clergy said before BBC cameras in May 1993, “I have no reason to doubt the accuracy of those figures.”) [c.f. Sipe 1990]

There is a time, place and persons for religiously motivated celibacy. I have studied and written what celibacy is and is not. (*Living the Celibate Life*, 2004)

Few men who have made the promise of celibacy understand its real meaning and definition. RC clergy are the chief antagonists to an honest consideration of celibacy and its practice.

Requiring **mandated celibacy**, as a requirement for ordination to the RC priesthood is a pretense and sham. It serves primarily power and institutional control, not people.

Most Catholic religious institutions are **corrupt**. Yes, many have some good, kind and serving men and women, but only a small number—only enough to keep that service viable to a minimal degree. This is true even of the most observant societies, and religious communities. Reform is a necessity not optional for survival.

Many years ago a major religious superior who had just returned from his required visit to Rome said: “The organization to which I belong is corrupt from the top down.” It has taken me a long time, much study and devotion to submit to his judgment.

DENIGRATION OF WOMEN is an antique attitude and a current reality in the culture and operation of the RC Church. Nuns even when I was a boy were treated like slave labor. Their compensation was minimal. When I was a boy their full time teaching (and labor like scrubbing the church floor on their hands and knees) received \$25.00 a month.

It might be argued that their station has improved over the decades, but the evidence that religious women lack a status equal to men is so obvious it needs no argument. Until women have a status, respect

and authority equal to men within the institution the RC church will not be the Church of Jesus Christ where “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise”

Those who use Scripture to justify teaching on the “inherent” connection between sex and sin should remember that there is more scriptural justification for slavery and stoning of adulterous women (not men) than onanism and sodomy.

I do not leave the Catholic Church. Were I Jewish I could not leave my birth right. But I cannot embrace or propagate the moral tenets its authority insists are essential for membership.

I join St. Paul and all of Christ's followers who are free of the laws of the modern Scribes and Pharisees. I reject the Roman Catholic Church's sexual heresies.

I love my brothers and sisters who are still bound to the institutions that are shackled to that authority, but are internally conscience-free for their particular reasons and circumstance.

I am one with those who are part of a Church but state: Here I stand, I can no other. June 15, 2015