

Vatican intervenes into AIDS debate, scores 'Catholic homosexual' lobby

by Kathleen Klenetsky

The Vatican made a dramatic intervention into the debate on AIDS in late October, when it issued a 14-page document reaffirming the Roman Catholic Church's condemnation of homosexual behavior. Authored by Josef Cardinal Ratzinger, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the document received the personal approval of Pope John Paul II.

The "Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons" is a new step in the campaign which the Pope, Ratzinger, and their allies have waged to strengthen the Church, so that its full moral authority can be wielded in the battle against pagan hedonism.

In his letter, Cardinal Ratzinger restates the Church's traditional position that people who engage in homosexual activities commit an "intrinsic moral evil" and that even inactive homosexuals are at moral risk: "The particular inclination of the homosexual person, although not a sin in itself, nonetheless constitutes a more or less strong tendency toward a behavior which is intrinsically evil from the moral standpoint."

The letter is just as straightforward in addressing the "confusion" that has developed within the Church on homosexuality. Noting that "an ever-increasing number of persons . . . is exerting very strong pressures to push it to accept the homosexual condition, as if it were not a disorder, and to legitimize homosexual acts," Ratzinger warns: "Even inside the Church a tendency has been formed, made up of pressure groups of various names and sizes, which attempts to pass itself off as representing all homosexual persons who are Catholic. In fact," Ratzinger notes, "its followers are mostly persons who either ignore the teaching of the Church or seek in some way to subvert it."

"There isicism homosexual persons who have no intention whatever of giving up their homosexual conduct," the letter continues. "One of the tactics used is that of asserting, in tones of protest, that any criticism or reservation toward homosexual persons, their activities, and their lifestyle, is a form of unjust discrimination."

"In some nations, therefore, an actual attempt is going on to manipulate the Church by gaining the often well-inten-

tioned support of her pastors, with a view to change civil statutes and laws. The goal of such action is to make such legislation conform to these pressure groups' own conception, according to which homosexuality is at least a perfectly innocuous reality, if not downright good.

"Those who within the community of faith are pushing for legitimizing homosexual acts often have close ties with those who act outside of it. Now these outside groups are moved by a vision opposite to the truth on the human person, which has been fully revealed to us in the mystery of Christ. They manifest, even though not in an entirely conscious way, a materialistic ideology, that denies the transcendental nature of the human person, as well as the supranatural vocation of every individual. . . ."

The letter calls upon all bishops to be particularly watchful over theologians and priests who may attempt to subvert the teaching of the Church; it enjoins them to withdraw all support from homosexual organizations that "associate among themselves, without clearly establishing that homosexual activity is immoral," and to prohibit the use of buildings belonging to the Church or Roman Catholic universities to homosexuals: "To some, such permission to use a property of the Church may seem only a gesture of justice and charity, but in reality it is in contradiction with the very aims for which these institutions were founded, and can be the source of misunderstandings and scandal."

Homosexuality and the Aquarian Conspiracy

The rise of an organized homosexual movement, replete with bestial and satanic overtones, has been a hallmark of the United States' 20-year decline into a moral hellhole, known as the "Aquarian Conspiracy." In this orchestrated revolt against Judeo-Christian tradition, typified by the rock-sex-drug counterculture and by the neo-Malthusian preachments of the zero-growth lobby, every form of behavior that degrades the human person, including homosexuality, has been actively encouraged.

Over the past decade, homosexuality has become one of the leading *causes célèbres* of the liberal (more accurately: Gnostic) forces which have attained great influence in the American Catholic Church. The Vatican has clearly been

concerned about the proliferation of homosexuality within its ranks. The issue figured strongly in the Vatican's recent disciplining of Catholic University theologian Fr. Charles Curran—who teaches that homosexuality can be a positive moral good under certain circumstances—and of Seattle Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen, who has permitted Dignity, an organization of homosexual Catholics, to use churches under his jurisdiction for religious services.

Fr. James Jorgenson, a Seattle priest who regularly celebrates mass for Dignity, recently wrote a letter to the *National Catholic Reporter*, in which he claimed that “Homosexuality is no sin and pastoral practice should underscore that.” Jorgenson castigated the “Roman Church” for “empowering the voice of homophobia,” in contrast to Archbishop Hunthausen, through whose “faithful assistance, the spirit of God herself [sic] has convinced my friends at Dignity of their goodness.”

But Ratzinger's letter, distributed to every bishop, signals that Rome has decided to go on the offensive against homosexuality as a concentrated expression of moral and spiritual degeneracy, particularly within the Church. “Make no mistake,” a Vatican prelate was quoted by the *Washington Post*, “this statement against homosexuality and how it is to be treated by the Church's priests is directly linked to the Vatican's attacks on the liberal doctrines of the Church in the United States and Europe.” It is “no coincidence” that Curran and Hunthausen “offended the Vatican because of their stand on sexual ethics, particularly their tolerance and acceptance of homosexuals,” he added.

The paradigm shift

Ratzinger's letter does not mention AIDS, but it does make an unmistakable allusion to the deadly epidemic: “Even when the practice of homosexuality may seriously threaten the lives and well-being of a large number of people, its advocates remain undeterred and refuse to consider the magnitude of the risks involved,” it says. “The Church can never be so callous.”

What the letter does, is to place the issue of homosexuality (and, by extension, AIDS) in the context of the broader framework of natural law and the health of society as a whole, and to examine from that standpoint, what makes homosexuality, in contrast to heterosexual love, “intrinsically evil.” “The Church is aware,” Ratzinger writes, “that the opinion, according to which homosexual activity would be equivalent to, or at least as acceptable as, the sexual expression of conjugal love, has a direct effect on the conception that society has of the nature and rights of the family, and seriously endangers them.”

As an alternative to this fraudulent theology of homosexuality, Ratzinger poses “the theology of the creation,” expounded in *Genesis*, “which supplies the fundamental standpoint for adequate comprehension of the problems posed by homosexuality. God in his infinite wisdom and omnipotent love, calls into existence all reality, as the reflection of his

goodness. He creates man in his image and likeness, male and female. Human beings are therefore creatures of God, called upon to reflect, in the complementarity of the sexes, the inner unity of the Creator. They achieve this task in a singular manner, when they cooperate with him in the transmission of life, through reciprocal wedded donation.

“To choose someone of the same sex for one's sexual activity is to annul the rich symbolism and meaning, not to mention the goals, of the Creator's sexual design. Homosexual activity is not a complementary union able to transmit life; and so it thwarts the call to a life of that form of self-giving which the Gospel says is the essence of Christian living. . . . This does not mean that homosexual persons are not often generous and giving of themselves; but when they engage in homosexual activity they confirm within themselves a disordered sexual inclination which is essentially self-indulgent. . . .”

Aquarian Conspirators fight back

In its Aug. 8 issue, *EIR* published an article reporting on the opposition to Proposition 64. We showed that many of those involved in the anti-Prop 64 campaign, particularly those linked to the U.S. Catholic Church, feared that the initiative might spur a “counter-paradigm shift” away from the Aquarian Conspiracy, and strengthen the “conservative family-centered agenda” of the Pope and Cardinal Ratzinger, as George Wiesolek, social justice director of the San Francisco Archdiocese, put it.

It is not surprising, that the same networks that led the fight to defeat Proposition 64, including those who claim to be Catholic, have greeted Ratzinger's letter with howls of outrage. Terry Coughlin, president of the New York chapter of Dignity, says that the Vatican “has gone further than they've ever gone in the past, in lack of understanding” of homosexuals' plight. “This is part of a whole process” of cracking down on pluralism in the Church, he moaned. “If the bishops don't address this issue head on,” then there'll be no stopping Rome.

One element of the Vatican document that has caused special panic in the United States is its allusion to AIDS. “That is outrageous!” exclaimed Jeffrey Levi, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. “A Church that is supposed to be showing compassion and caring for those who suffer from the horrible disease instead is furthering bigotry and hatred. The hostility of the Catholic Church to gay men and lesbians has made solving this problem more difficult. A statement like this from the Vatican is only going to worsen the AIDS crisis, not resolve it.”

A spokesman for the Los Angeles-area Interfaith Council on AIDS (which opposed Prop 64), said the document “is causing great pain” to Catholic pastors. But one Catholic theologian who strongly supported the Vatican statement, believes it will “bolster the moral backbone” of American Church leaders who do not condone homosexuality, but have feared to speak out because of political pressure.