

How does the Church view homosexual inclination?

While the Church teaches that homosexual acts are immoral, just as all sexual acts outside of marriage are immoral, she does distinguish between engaging in homosexual acts and having a homosexual inclination. While the former is always objectively sinful, the latter is not. To the extent that a homosexual tendency or inclination is not subject to one's free will, one is not morally culpable for that tendency. Although one would be morally culpable if one were voluntarily to entertain homosexual temptations or to choose to act on them, simply having the tendency is not a sin. Consequently, the Church does not teach that the experience of homosexual attraction is in itself sinful.

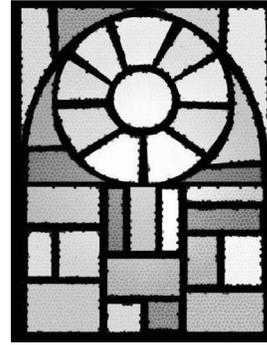
I have friends who are gay who I truly care about and want to be happy, what is the Church saying about the acceptance of them?

Many of us have family or friends who are gay. We of course want no less for them than we do for those who are heterosexual. It goes without saying that they should be treated with dignity, respect and compassion and any and all forms of unwarranted discrimination should never be tolerated. What the Church asks of gay people is no different from what it asks of all of us regardless of sexual orientation.

How do sexual orientation discrimination laws conflict with the religious liberty of the Church or me as an individual?

Anti-discrimination laws in other states and countries have already infringed the religious freedom of Catholic entities. Catholic Charities in both Boston and San Francisco shut down their long-standing adoption programs because they would have been forced to place children with same sex couples to continue operating. A Knights of Columbus chapter in Canada was sued for denying a same sex couple from having a wedding reception in their club social hall. Similarly, individuals are running into conflicts with their religious liberty. A wedding photographer in Colorado was sued for refusing to photograph the commitment ceremony of a gay couple.

To elevate sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression to preferred status inevitably leads to either forcing people to provide service in their businesses which they find personally offensive, immoral, and yes, even sinful or expecting them to abandon their chosen work since acting consistent with their values would subject them to sanction and penalty.



Respecting Sexuality

What is the connection between sexual orientation discrimination laws and same-sex marriage?

The cases in every state where same-sex marriage or civil unions were imposed by the courts hinged upon sexual orientation anti-discrimination laws - Massachusetts, Connecticut, California, New Jersey, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Iowa. Iowa's Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), similar to Pennsylvania's, was overturned by the state supreme court citing their anti-discrimination statute.

Doesn't the Church teach tolerance and acceptance for all people?

Advocates of same-sex marriage have long tried to create the impression that those who oppose it are full of hate and intolerance; but this is not about hating anyone. It's about protecting the institution of marriage. Jesus taught a much higher concept - love of neighbor. Tolerance as a Gospel principle means love and forgiveness of one another; it does not mean compromising our basic beliefs.

Does denying marriage to homosexual persons demonstrate unjust discrimination or lack of respect for them as persons?

Because a marriage and a same-sex unions are essentially different realities, it is not unjust to treat them differently. "In fact, justice requires society to do so."*

Respecting the dignity of homosexual persons does not conflict with upholding God's intent for marriage in which sexual relations have their proper and exclusive place. Christians must give witness to the whole moral truth and also oppose as immoral both homosexual acts and unjust discrimination against homosexual persons.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* urges that homosexual persons 'be treated with respect, compassion, and sensitivity' (No. 2358). It also encourages chaste friendships.** Such friendships, whether between homosexual or heterosexual persons, are a great good benefit to society (See *CCC*, No. 2347).

* *Between Man and Woman: Questions and Answers About Marriage and Same-Sex Unions*, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2003

Learn more at www.pacatholic.org



September 2009

Published by the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference Institute for Public Policy. For more information, contact PCC at PO Box 2835, Harrisburg, PA 17105 717-238-9613, info@pacatholic.org, or log on to www.pacatholic.org.