

Daily Meditation 01/06/2023

Pope Benedict vs. Signs of Our Times: Homosexuality

Good morning.

We continue our meditations on the legacy of Josef Ratzinger. Today's meditation is on his attitude toward homosexuality. And I repeat some of his special emphasis in his language about how homosexuality is an "intrinsic moral evil" and any inclination is an "objective disorder." And much more of his attitudes toward gay and lesbian people.

I have in my hand here an article that goes through many of his denunciations of theologians who dared to talk differently about homosexuality, and unlike him, had done their homework since back in the 1970s! Psychologists and the Psychological Association in America find that homosexuality is utterly natural for 8-10% of the human race.

It's just such a pity and a scandal that people in the Vatican would not have read this. It's another example, like the Galileo case, of turning its back on science.

So in 1999, the National Catholic Reporter pointed out that the Salvadoran father, priest, Robert Nugent, and Jeannine Gramick, a sister of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, were attacked by Ratzinger for working with gay people of the time and proposing acceptance of openly gay and lesbian people.

In 1984, long before that, Ratzinger ordered an imprimatur lifted from the book *Sexual Morality* by Father Keane, published back in 1977 by Paulist Press, a Catholic publisher. Keane had said that homosexual conduct cannot be understood as "absolutely immoral."

In 1986, he ordered Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen of Seattle to transfer the pastoral care of gay people to an auxiliary bishop and denounced him for allowing a mass for the Catholic gay group, Dignity, in his cathedral. And he put out a document on pastoral care of homosexuals, from which we get statements such as I have in my essay.

In October 1986, Father John McNeil, a Jesuit priest, was expelled from his order for his book in 1977, called *The Church and the Homosexual*, where he said that gay relationships should be judged by the same moral criteria as heterosexual relationships. Originally, this Jesuit's superiors had approved the book and given it permission to be published.

In 1987, Father Charles Curran was fired from teaching at the Catholic University of America, because he had written that "Homosexual acts in the context of a loving relationship which strives for permanency can in certain sense be objectively morally acceptable." That's a quote from his book.

Of course, I was silenced by Ratzinger. And one of the complaints against me was that I did not condemn homosexuality.

So the list goes on and on. And you know what folks do is at least as important as what they say. And these doings and denunciations and expulsions, shutting down of books and so forth, revealed where Ratzinger was at regarding this topic and what he did not know from today's science, or care to learn from today's science.

But it also revealed, because it keeps coming up, all kinds of theologians and priests and sisters rose up to try to instruct the Vatican, and above all to work, at a pastoral level, with gay and lesbian people, but as you can see, Cardinal Ratzinger would have none of it. So this too is part of his legacy. There's no other word for it except homophobia.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.