

## HOMOSEXUALITY

**111.** The Church utterly condemns all forms of unjust discrimination, harassment or abuse directed against people who are homosexual. Consequently, the Church teaches that homosexual people 'must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity' (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2358). In so far as the homosexual orientation can lead to sexual activity which excludes openness to the generation of new human life and the essential sexual complementarity of man and woman, it is, in this particular and precise sense only, objectively disordered. However, it must be quite clear that a homosexual orientation must never be considered sinful or evil in itself.

**112.** The Church has consistently argued that the meaning of marriage is not set by society alone. The essential meaning of marriage is given in God's plan of creation. In the beginning God created human beings 'male and female' (*Genesis* 1:27). It is from the personal union of man and woman that new life is born and it is within the loving context of such a relationship that a child can be welcomed and nurtured. Marital love involves an essential complementarity of male and female.

**113.** The Church teaches that sexual intercourse finds its proper place and meaning only in marriage and does not share the assumption common in some circles that every adult person needs to be sexually active. Everyone needs to develop the virtue of chastity whether married or unmarried, homosexual or heterosexual, engaged, single through choice, widowed or divorced. Moreover, there is more to a person than sexual inclination and more to love than sexual desire. The late Cardinal Hume emphasised the message of the Gospel that all love is from God. 'The love which one person can have for and receive from another is a gift of God' (*A Note Concerning the Teaching of the Catholic Church Concerning Homosexual People*, 1997), paragraph 17). The Church recognises the value of friendship between homosexual people when it is lived chastely in accordance with her moral teaching. What the Church does not countenance is any attempt to express this love in a sexual way.

**114.** It is an immemorial belief, founded on the natural law, that only a relationship between a man and a woman can be a marriage. This position, firmly rooted in Scripture and Church teaching, is not itself arbitrary or unfair and it should not be regarded as discriminatory.

## QUESTIONS

*Is there still unacceptable discrimination against same gender attraction people in our society? If so why?*

*Same gender marriage seems to be becoming acceptable in many parts of the developed world. Is it a step too far? Discuss*

*Why does the Catholic Church stand out among the other Christian bodies in its opposition to same gender marriage?*

*Does the church, the Archbishop of Dublin said recently need to do a reality check or is it present day society which needs the check? Discuss*