



Homosexuality in the Priesthood

Op-Ed by Monica Migliorino Miller

The concerns with homosexuality and the priesthood are both practical and theological. First, the practical:

The John Jay School of Criminal Justice reported that 81% of the victims of sexual abuse by priests were male and the majority of these were over the age of 13. This means that the sex scandal was primarily a homosexual problem. The Instruction demonstrates that the church is facing up to some hard facts and seeks to be responsible.

The theological dimension is just as significant but is, of course, mostly ignored (or downplayed, skewed, or mocked) by the media and "gay" supporters. That's to be expected, but there is plenty of room for catechesis for serious, practicing Catholics in this regard. Dr. Miller, who teaches theology at St. Mary's College of Madonna University, writes:

Most of the arguments in favor of allowing homosexuals to be ordained are rooted in a functional (meaning deficient) view of the priesthood. This view says that one's gender and sexual identity are irrelevant to the "job." After all, homosexual priests can fulfill priestly tasks and are often persons of deep compassion.

However, the priesthood is not a functional vocation, it is a sacramental vocation. Far more important than what a priest can do for the church is what a priest is for the church. The document states the ordained priest acts in the person of Christ and sacramentally enters into the role of Christ as bridegroom to the church and thus exercises a true spiritual fatherhood. The priest sacrifices marital intimacy with a woman to enter into the greater sign of Christ's universal spousal love for the church. The priest should possess an interior conformity to the meaning of the spousal love of Christ -- a meaning inherent in the nature of masculinity itself. The priesthood is, then, in essence, a heterosexual vocation.

This nuptial love of Christ is the only way of making any true historical/liturgical sense of his male gender. In the Christian faith husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church, and from the very beginning man and woman serve as signs of the marriage of Christ and the church. The male priest sacramentally exemplifies the truth of Christ as bridegroom to the church and thus should be able to identify with the nuptial meaning of his vocation.