



Written by [Rebecca Terrell](#) on December 4, 2018

## Pope Francis: Homosexuals Should Not Be Priests

“The issue of homosexuality is a very serious issue that must be adequately discerned from the beginning with the candidates,” says Pope Francis, in referencing applicants to Catholic seminaries. His comments appear in a [book-length interview](#) entitled *The Strength of a Vocation*, released in 10 languages in early December.



He describes sodomy as a modern fashion that adversely affects the clergy. “In our societies it even seems that homosexuality is fashionable and that mentality, in some way, also influences the life of the church,” he notes. The pope cautions that religious life and sodomy should not mix, while homosexual acts — presented in the Catholic Bible as “abominations” — Francis incredibly terms as signs of “affection.” He says, “In consecrated and priestly life, there’s no room for that kind of affection. Therefore, the Church recommends that people with that kind of ingrained tendency should not be accepted into the ministry or consecrated life.”

The Catholic Church actually does more than “recommend” barring homosexuals from ministry. In 2005 [the Vatican published a ban](#) stating that the church “cannot admit to the seminary or to holy orders those who practice homosexuality, present deep-seated homosexual tendencies or support the so-called ‘gay culture.’” That 2005 decree reinforced a similar 1961 injunction. Other popes throughout history have dealt even more firmly with the issue. Saint Pius V ordered in 1568 that priests who committed sodomitical “crimes” be stripped of clerical rank and handed over to the secular authority. The 11<sup>th</sup>-century pope, Saint Leo IX, excommunicated guilty clerics and removed them from ministry. And fourth-century penalties for homosexual priests included public whipping and imprisonment followed by a life of monastic solitude.

Though the current pontiff’s remarks are far more sugar-coated than actions of his predecessors, he has nonetheless disappointed liberal fans. Recalling his infamous 2013 dodge when asked about sodomites in the priesthood: “Who am I to judge?,” *The Daily Beast* [accuses Francis of homophobia](#), remarking that the “pontiff once adorned the cover of *Advocate* magazine for his seemingly liberal stance on gay priests. Now he’s changing his tune.”

“The recently published comments are a significant departure from the Pope’s public image — specifically since he’s mostly sidestepped when asked pointed questions about key issues, including



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homosexuality and the Church's sexual assault crisis," [quips](#) *Out Magazine*. "Long praised by the media and worshippers alike as a 'modern' or 'liberal' Pope, this interview finally unearths how Francis truly feels about the LGBTQ [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer] community."

In his interview, the pontiff made no direct links between homosexuality and sex abuse scandals plaguing his church. The closest he came was a comment that we "have to urge homosexual priests and men and women religious to live celibacy with integrity, and above all, that they be impeccably responsible, trying to never scandalize either their communities or the faithful holy people of God by living a double life. It's better for them to leave the ministry or the consecrated life rather than to live a double life."

Claretian priest Father Fernando Prado Ayuso of Madrid, Spain, conducted the four-hour interview with the pope in August at the Vatican. Homosexuality was one of many topics Francis addressed in relation to the mission of Catholic priests and religious.

*Photo of Pope Francis: Casa Rosada*



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