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ORDERED AND DISORDERED FRIENDSHIPS: SOME CLASSIC DISTINCTIONS

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IN AN INTERVIEW FOR THE BBC IN 1992, HENRI NOUWEN, THE AUTHOR OF A PRODIGIOUS number of books in the domain of spirituality, disclosed that he wanted to write more explicitly about sexuality, but allowed that he had not yet found the right language: “I hope I will one day.” The current American scene invites - indeed prods - us to make choices using classifications that can be defective, deceptive, and morally evasive as descriptives of attractions or affections for someone of the same sex.

Daily, there is a plethora of androgynous images that can subject many average persons to considerable confusion, if sexual identity were to be determined on the basis of a strong arousal of curiosity at a certain time. Advertisers and promoters are mightily aware of the attention gained by such images. The “identity crisis” of the early 60s, which struck more and more responsive chords in the youth of that time, is ever associated with ambiguous projections by entertainers and surely more aggressive modeling and posturing.

The Western movies of earlier, vintage years - which consistently chose to portray “love” almost exclusively in terms of man/woman romance - harkened to a more uncomplicated period, and may have made such experiences as Milton’s painful loss of a young friend, which led to the composition of the poem “Epitaphium Damonis,” seem to belong to obsolete sensibilities. The cinema of those times, both black-and-white and Technicolor, did dramatize “love scenes” which may not have corresponded to the complete range of honest human affections that had simply always been around. Of course, there were many notable exceptions, and movie-goers will promptly come up with a “short list,” such as *Shane*, based on Jack Schaefer’s winsome novel (1949) of the same name.

But society has indeed come to a pass, and many of a new generation now have the conviction that they must be prepared to denominate themselves *heterosexual* or *homosexual* (or perhaps *bisexual*) - and to do so, please, early on in life. I remember some thirty-five years ago dipping into articles in the *Supplement de la Vie Spirituelle*, a journal founded by the eminent Dominican psychologist Albert Ple, and discovering that the French were making some distinctions that were rather neat, distinctions that we either did not have in the English-speaking world or just were not using: distinctions between *sexue* and *sexuel*.² If I have followed them aright, *homosexuated* inclinations or images or relationships might be capable of becoming *homosexual*, but are not of themselves that. *Homosexuated* might even be used as an adequate modifier of aspects of attachments common in adolescence and youth. Evelyn Waugh’s *Cara*, in Chapter Four of *Brideshead Revisited*, observing compassionately the young collegians Sebastian and Charles during their Venetian summer holiday, shows an astute intuitive knowledge of the reality, even as she avoids - and mercifully so - using that term.

In a *homosexualized* mental image, for example, there might be an impression, perhaps vague in its message or disturbing, but not in itself homosexual. And being involuntary, it would lack, of course, a component part of a “human action.”

But long before the French psychologists handily differentiated between such notions - and when most of our parents or grandparents, observant of the human condition, were totally content to lump many an infatuation under the generic label “crush” - arch-classic manuals of ascetical theology were using terms universally familiar to generations of clerics and seminarians, at least until the last three decades or so. Adolphe Tanquerey’s *The Spiritual Life: A Treatise on Ascetical and Mystical Theology* widely diffused an approach that had been followed for years.³

The Spiritual Life recognizes true friendship, false friendship, and “that friendship wherein there is an admixture of the supernal and the sentimental.” False friendships could be *carnal*, *sentimental*, and *foolish*. The three are summarily identified, but there are common threads in all: in their origin, development, and effects: “impetuous, all-absorbing, and exclusive.” “The illusion,” Tanquerey advances, “that such affection will last forever is often brusquely destroyed by separation and the forming of new attachments” (289). Generally, the focus in the manual is as much on the distractions and dissipations of these investments as upon the potential threat of impurity. Tanquerey is careful, of course, to present remedies (289-290) for the dangerous friendships identified.

Underlying the categories above, however, was a much more fundamental distinction that Tanquerey and countless other spiritual writers used and presumed. This distinction is standard, for instance, in the *Imitation of Christ* (see I, 6; III, 27; *passim*), and posits that attachments and affections are, basically, either *ordered* or *disordered* (or *inordinate*).

There was never in any reputable spirituality the suggestion that *ordered* same-sex attractions were unusual



“David and Jonathan” from *Julis Schnorr von Carolfel, Die Bibel in Bildern (Leipzig)*

or were aberrations, or that strong but fundamentally true same-sex friendships were to be avoided. Drawing on St. Francis de Sales’ *Introduction to the Devout Life* (III, 19), Tanquerey made no proscription of these friendships. And the deep psychology underlying those paragraphs on chastity dealing with mortification of the affections of the heart (1120-1121) was presented without respect to gender. Same-sex friendships, like any incipient friendships, did require examining. Relationships that involve characteristics that repel would also, I suppose, require both examination and a selection of strategies for working through them. Attractions as well as struggles to like were doubtless both part of community life.⁴

Not once did Tanquerey concern himself with making a distinction between *homosexual* or *heterosexual*. He would not have found here a basis for the conferring of an identity. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the terms “heterosexual” and “homosexual” came into our language only in 1892 in C.G. Chaddock’s translation of Krafft-Ebing. Thus the notion that an attraction to someone of one’s own sex confers a particular identity upon an individual, or assigns one to a specific class of persons, is of rather recent usage.

However keenly interested Tanquerey was in all that could hide out in the heart, he was mistrustful of energies involved in determining anything like an “identity” from empirical observations of feelings or dispositions. He did deal in a most forthright manner with “attractions,” and insisted that the spiritual quality of a friendship—a precious thing in itself—be examined. As for “normalcy,” as we have come to understand it since the spuriously “scientific” and (at the time) wildly-embraced Kinsey Reports, that was of no interest to him whatsoever.

Albert Ple, a generation later, advanced the proposition that since the moral theology of St. Thomas has for its object human acts in their singularity, he must affirm that “homosexuality and other sexual deviations do not exist.” Taking a characteristically gallic delight in positing dramatically a “paradox,” he then proceeds: “What

exists are men and women who yield to impulses [*pulsions*], and surrender to activities quite diverse and always complex.” Concrete realities. Not attempting to be coy, Ple was nevertheless careful to underscore-rather prophetically - a point which he regarded as important, as well as to express an aversion to abstract or floating concepts. Once done, he moved on, as the title of his article suggests, to approach the issues as presented. And he did so, in 1972, in his habitually sympathetic manner.

How, then, in the 1960s, did a whole new practice of pastoration to “the homosexual” begin to appear, develop vastly - and then, in some cases, subsequently pick up a new moral slant? Even before the publication of *Humanae Vitae*, an English commentator-with Joseph Fletcher’s erstwhile popular *Situation Ethics* (1966) in hand - came up with a response to the last part of the question: that with the growing ecclesiastical abrogation of the proscription against contraception, it becomes inconsistent to hold old views and the old line of morality on a wide range of sexual activity.⁶



Tanqueray and his contemporaries dealt, to be sure, with the whole concept of *temptation*, conspicuously absent from many of today’s pastoral approaches. Readers more familiar with the *Screwtape Letters* - or before that, *Paradise Lost* than with *The Spiritual Life* do not need to be convinced that the devil knows a heap about psychology. If a rebellious being in the spiritual underworld could whip up bad dreams for such a pure man as Spenser’s Redcross Knight, and if another plotting servant of evil could - through early morning visitations and dalliances-succeed in diverting from some of his duties and obligations the most noble Sir Gawain of the fourteenth-century English alliterative poem *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, would not the powers of Satan be assiduous in using other tactics to seduce other victims? Such as a suggestion of a disordered attachment of yet another sort? Or a nagging question of personal identity brought on by an attraction-or the absence of an attraction? A character somewhat like C. S. Lewis’ Screwtape might advise seizing any anxiety, if it surfaced, if it would permit a crack in the door, creating unrest in the spirit or fostering vacuous diversion.

The context of anxiety did not necessarily sur-

round souls in warfare with temptation, but such anxiety unmistakably shows itself to be infectious in the stories - which often chronicle pain and isolation - of a number who announce struggles with sexual identity. Elaborating extensively on a maxim of St. Francis de Sales, Bishop William Bernard Ullathorne, in a celebrated conference of the time, warns of the anxiety which results from the process of self-conscious introspection born of a want of interior self-discipline:

Beware of anxiety... Next to sin, there is nothing that so much troubles the mind, strains the heart, distresses the soul, and confuses the judgment...

Anxiety is the uneasiness and trouble of mind to which we give way because of some difficulty of which we cannot see the solution, or because of some uncertainty respecting oneself or another. It is more than uneasiness and disturbance, more than solicitude and trouble; it is attended with fear and perplexity, and inclines the soul to sadness. It has a certain paralysing influence compressing the soul with the ligaments of fear, suspense, and uncertainty, that impede and stifle the freedom of her powers....⁷

Even men firmly committed to ordered relationships must remain vigilant before a spiritual assault that might spin convoluted proposals across the imagination. Widely divergent cultural and ethnic practices in the common life of men or of women in general, as in the manner of the exchange of amicable greetings or in the code of dress, will sometimes be puzzling to an outsider. In his great *Treatise*, Tanqueray reverted to the “classic” tradition of temperaments and character types, notably in his appendices, and this knowledge he passed on as a useful integument in equipping soldiers of Christ. It surely accounted for a huge range in the outward display of affection - and in the processing of troublesome emotions. There was something sure in staying with “male and female He created them,” and manualists like Tanqueray - and psychologists like Ple-wisely rejected proposing identities around psychological and other variables, notably those which go back to adolescent impressions.

Tanqueray’s chapters on human relationships follow, of course, from a much earlier section of the work: on how the three Divine Persons dwell within us, and how we find our true identity only in God. Is it not curious that as the inquiry into “sexual orientation” extends

itself everywhere and intensifies, the intimate love and friendship we are invited to have with each Person is either obfuscated or eliminated from the agenda? Without pursuing what Tanquerey does not hesitate to call a “sweet familiarity” with the Lord, souls which have a capacity for friendship may, with consequent disappointment, look (an old hit-song puts it this way) in so many faces, or in all the wrong places. This very intimacy occurs not only between God and the saints of heaven, but between God and every person who, by leading an interior life, consents to throw open the gates of his soul to the Divine Guests.⁸ In advancing the sublime vocation of man to know God and to enter into divine friendship with Him, Tanquerey and many a spiritual writer were not evading confrontation with difficult issues in the domain of sexuality. They chose to adhere, rather, to *their* agenda, and their writings remain a challenge to those who would fix the level of inquiry, at a price, upon tortuous paths in empirical psychology. Bishop Ullathorne is one of those old masters of the interior life who set down, without apology, the inherited “rules”:

There is a habit of self-introspection, too much indulged in by many well-meaning persons, that is disastrous to the spirit of religious cheerfulness and generosity. *Self-knowledge is invaluable*; yet it is not obtained by peering into our own darkness, but by seeing ourselves as we are reflected in the divine light. We shall never find what we are by dwelling in our own troubles, and making them whilst we are dwelling in them, but by getting our mind above them, and dwelling on the goodness of God, when that divine goodness will teach us what we are by comparing ourselves with Him. But when we dwell upon ourselves alone, and dwell in ourselves apart from the view of God, the truth is hidden from us, and we feel nothing but discouragement. Souls that act thus cling to themselves, discouraged, saddened, and disheartened. With their eyes bent upon their own breasts they see but themselves, and that in the shallowest way; it is only by looking to God that they can see themselves truly. “Know thyself,” says St. Catherine of Siena, “not in yourself, but in God, and God in you.” Then you will find what in the sight of God you are.⁹


*“Know thyself, not in
 yourself, but in God, and
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 -St. Catherine of
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And *that* is the identity that was pursued, relentlessly, by our ancestors in faith, when faith provided the principal factor in the “equation.” Tanquerey did chronicle the characteristics, dangers, and remedies of “particular friendships” - the term itself is, of course, a technical one. Negative connotations in ascetical theology attached to these friendships derive from writers having some experience in the dynamics of healthy community life.¹⁰ Similarly, the manualists categorically rejected what were termed “furtive glances” among individuals. In the circuit of an ascetical theology gone into sclerosis, there could always be pathological exaggerations, and some of them are demonstrated in occasional tales from alumni of boarding schools or seminaries on the subject of rigorous suspicion of friendships in pairs. But in his treatise, Tanquerey did draw effectively from a vast “patrimony” of the Church’s remembrance of unmistakably sound, chaste, and true same-sex, one-to-one relationships centered in the service of God: Gregory Nazianzen with Basil, and Paul with Titus and Timothy. And Tanquerey invariably presented them positively.

Through the centuries, observers of the friendship between young David and Jonathan in Second Samuel interpreted it as intense, but surely made the presumption in favor of its order. Subjecting the narrative of this classic “Bible friendship” to a scrutiny in “orientation” or “identity” invites labyrinthine complications that perhaps only our generation has chosen to make. Yet since the 1960s, the process goes on, surfacing here and there in a variety of places, most notably academic. If there has been something experienced as true in the lament of David of Bethlehem on the death of his friend - “I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan; very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women” (II Samuel 1:26) - then the Church’s expectation of order in same-sex friendships (and society’s too, traditionally) has not been misplaced. Since time immemorial there has been a special care in the Christian tradition to honor with vigilance such relationships, since, as the saying goes, the corruption of the best is the worst. “Homophobic” simply does not describe this reverential fear, which properly belongs to “fear of the Lord.” Consequently, we return to the fundamental consideration of language raised at the beginning of this article. The domain of so-called “gender studies” has extended dramatically over the past couple

of decades. But when notions of “order” get bypassed, as they most surely have been, confusion abounds, even as data is reported, and moral distinctions become blurred. Hence, we have the same media services moving forward the acceptance of diversity in the area of “sexual preference” yet reporting, mischievously, the “allegations” of homosexuality among celebrities. The ambivalence of point of view is unmistakable.

Christ commanded his disciples to love one another. The Church has, through the centuries, challenged men and women who love to keep *order* in every relationship: to strive after the true, to reject the false, and to bring to light whatever might be mixing it up with the good. The Church has encouraged them to keep the fight against temptations predictable or otherwise, to keep pressing on in chastity, to keep repenting.

An eminent modern spiritual writer, rooted in the tradition surrounding Church understandings of brotherly love, has been careful, however, not to allow exaggerated notions of pure friendship that would border on “angelism”: “It is necessary to reject as a deadly error,” Rene Voillaume writes in one of his letters to the Little Brothers of Jesus, “that concept in asceticism which would have for a consequence the destruction of a healthy affectivity and every sensibility of the heart ... N’ayez pas peur d’aimer ainsi Jesus et vos freres, si tout se fait avec ouverture, virilite, et si le Seigneur reste vraiment le premier aime.”¹¹ In a word, do not fear practicing a transparent, manly and brotherly love in Christ, the “first loved.”

The first volume (Aa to Byzance) of the *Dictionnaire de Spiritualite*, that magisterial editing and publishing event (Paris: Beauchesne), appeared in 1937; with the addition of Volume 16 (Ubalde d’Alençon to Zypaeus) and, in 1995, the Tables, the project is now complete. Already in the initial volume, the entry “Attaches imparfaites” provided predictable commentary: “Celui qui se sent entraine par une *affection desordonnee* doit la contrarier ... comme l’enseigne saint Ignace. ...” (*Exerc. spir.*, No 97). And in the ultimate fascicle of Volume 16, in that gem of a brief entry “Me” - specifically under *false zeal* - Andre Derville evokes notions of *desordres* and *charite dereglee* (col. 1614). In the *DS* the classic vocabulary keeps coming back, decade after decade.

Yet many who search for knowledge about “orientations” and the alleged origins of them could read

profusely in many contemporary sources without once being confronted with the reality of disordered relationships to be straightened out. In the years immediately following the Second Vatican Council, it became routine to castigate roundly the old manuals and encyclopedic dictionaries (like the *DS* above or the *Dictionnaire de theologie catholique*), and, of course, *Summas* before them, with their invariable schemas, fine distinctions and conceptual proclivities. Tanquerey, for one, did lack the pedagogical approaches and the existential bents that have been an expectation since the 1960s; and in the wrong hands - of student or of master - *The Spiritual Life* could, indeed, overwhelm. But when it disappeared, so did much of the perennial wisdom contained in its pages, including the metaphysical underpinnings, which would be useful for current questions.

The failure to distinguish between *ordered* and *disordered* has been a loss in approaching relationships of any sort. Ordered has been one of those superb words that immediately carries a certain resonance and makes a statement. Definitions in the *OED* (“set in order, arranged, disposed; disciplined, regulated, controlled . . .”) appear obvious; and a demonstration of usage (from Whittier, 1872) - “And let our ordered lives confess The beauty of Thy peace” - is totally predictable in the imparting of clear notions. A relationship could be said, then, to be *in order* when it is (again to cite the *OED*) “in a condition in which everything ... *performs a proper function*; in which the elements or constituents are *properly disposed with reference to their purpose*; appropriate; correct.”

When St. Thomas, therefore, argues that “there must needs be some order in things loved” (S. T, II-II, Q. 26, Art. 1), there are vastly more consequences here than that God ought to be loved more than neighbor:

“Wherever we find a principle, order depends on relation to that principle” (Art. 6). Consequently, man should love his neighbor (Q. 44, “Of the Precepts of Charity”) for God’s sake so that his love “Wherever we find



Fr. Adolphe-Alfred Tanquerey

a principle, order depends on relation to that principle” (Art. 6). Consequently, man should love his neighbor (Q. 44, “Of the Precepts of Charity”) for God’s sake so that his love for his neighbor is (1) a “holy love”; (2) “a righteous love”; (3) “not for his own profit, or pleasure.. . so that [it] may be a true love” (Art. 7).¹²

How quaint it appears, this long treatise “on Charity” - *ordered* charity - and much else in this Part of the *Summa* as lead-ins to “relationships,” when viewed against the process that would evolve in the late 1960s, throughout the 1970s and beyond, reflecting “new directions” on an agenda of questions. In itself, “human sexuality,” even as an emerging term among Catholic ethicists, rather preconized the idiom of the day - and frequently succeeded in isolating opinion on topical issues from the rich tradition of speculative moral theology, notably in its prodigious inquiry into the virtues and vices. So difficult it is, when writing on the requirements of one teaching, to satisfy the exigencies of contiguous truths.

It is debatable whether “sexuality” and its compound words, though so current in conversation, conceptually deliver as much as we who use them think. They are readily available. They have come to suit psy-

chology, and (as in “sexual revolution”) will make a political point. But they are not part of the lexicon for classic theology, moral or ascetical.¹³ And when moralists use the categories of behavioral sciences, they risk elaborating what Servais Pinckaers, O.P, professor in the University of Fribourg, calls “*morales de la derive*.”¹⁴

Ordered and *disordered* affections and friendships-actions and thoughts-conveyed, on the contrary, unambiguous understandings and boundaries to our ancestors, and if they were again given the opportunity, would serve well in our times too. *Ordered* and *disordered* will still show up in documents from the Holy See,¹⁵ but they have been rather on the periphery in discussions on “sexual ethics” for years.

Yet the moral expectation has perdured for children, adolescents, youth, and adults progressively to order attractions and affections *in God* according to principles-such as personal and conjugal purity - which have been operative all along. The terms *ordered* and *disordered* have generally implied that the human reality is under the aegis of reason, and that our nature and identity do not grow out of our emotions and inclinations. These terms, moreover, respect self-control, which provides meaning and purpose - and correction too - to our friendships.



NOTES

1 See Michael Ford, *Wounded Prophet* (New York, 1999), 211.

2 “La vie affective du celibataire consacre,” in *Le Supplement de la Vie Spirituelle*, No 89 (Mai, 1969), 225.

3 Adolphe Tanquerey, *The Spiritual Life: A Treatise on Ascetical and Mystical Theology*, trans. Herman Branderis (Tournai, 1930; 2d ed. rev). See paragraphs 595-607 (285-291). All future references will be cited parenthetically according to page number.

4 See Leonce de Grandmaison, “Le detachment affectif” in *Ecrits Spirituels*, I (Paris, 1933), 232-236, for a brief exposition, in the great French tradition, on the purification of affections. “Lappel a la perfection,” the author advances, “est justement l’appel a cette purete d’ affection, de coeur et de conscience” (235). His preferred modifiers for ordered or disordered relationships are, respectively, reglees and dereglees, as in “toute affection dereglee” (234) or “la charite bien reglee” (235).

5 “Lhomosexualite: Approches morales et pastorales,” in *Le Supplement*, No 102 (Sep. 1972), 340.

6 D.A. Rhymes, “The Church’s Responsibility towards the Homosexual,” *Dublin Review*, No. 512 (Summer, 1967), 88.

7 “On Patience as the Perfecter of our Daily Duties,” in *Christian Patience* (London, 1886), 128. The remedy of anxiety proposed by Bishop Ullathorne is “classic”: using the force of patience to keep the objects of our solicitude in the proper place, that place being outside of the feelings and before the mind. “For it is not the feelings but the mind and will that are the true judges of things. When the feelings get mixed up with any subject of solicitude, they turn into passions, and become eager, excited, and restless; they confuse the mind and blind the judgment” (129).

8 See Tanqueray, *The Spiritual Life*, paragraph 95 (50-51).

9 Bishop Ullathorne, *Christian Patience*, 134. Ullathorne continues, in the grand style of the period, ultimately evoking, in yet another dimension, the cherished notion of order: “Much and solicitous occupation with one’s self produces much consciousness of one’s self, and this breeds a sense of self that greatly interferes with the sense of God. It gives not the true but a fictitious sense of one’s self through means of the imagination, so that we alternately hug our self-complacency and our miseries, instead of looking with cheerful confidence to God for their remedy...Moreover, this incessant self-introspection and consciousness of self greatly impedes the spirit of duty as well as of devotion...Rolled up into one’s self like the snail in its slimy shell, the soul can neither open herself to God nor to her neighbour...And that soul suffers: suffers from internal corrosion, suffers from depression and sadness, suffers from irritation and impatience, suffers from the wants of a diviner air to breathe in...But the cheerfulness of patient charity...would keep away temptations and evil, purge the fancy of its megrims. The irritability which in idle and self-conscious persons produces so much disorder would find its legitimate escape in useful words and services” (134-135).

10 Louis Lallemand, S. J., (1588-1635) has left an “article” on “the harm that results from particular friendships and the conversation of the imperfect”: “Particular friendships and frequent and familiar conversation generally tend to detraction, petty intrigues and cabals, complainings, ridicule of each other, infringement of the rules, waste of time, and other like faults. We ought to cultivate a universal charity, converse with all indifferently in time of recreation; we must neither avoid nor seek out individuals, nor form a particular intimacy with anyone, without having first so far tried him as to have reason to hope we may profit by his good example to make progress in virtue...” From *The Spiritual Doctrine of Father Louis Lallemand*, ed. Alan G. McDougall (Westminster, Md., 1946), 104-105. The italics are mine, giving emphasis to a point: it would seem that some would have the prohibition against “particular intimacy” conclude with “with anyone.” Effectively, Lallemand and classic commentators on the subject did not advance such discipline (see Chapter V, Art. I). They were, however, most careful about dissipations and curiosities and distractions as dangers to the focus of the interior life (Art II-III): upon an unalloyed friendship with the God who alone beatifies (see “First Principle,” 27).

11 From Tamanrasset (25 Dec. 1950) in *Lettres aux Fraterrcites*, II (Paris, 1960), 39. Writing in the same vein, he offers other correctives to hardened and unhealthy observations regarding friendships in community: “Il est rare qu’ une amitie dite ‘particuliere’ soit entierement malsaine, comme il peut arriver qu’ une amitie virile, saine, comporte cependant quelques reactions de sensibilite plus ou moins controlees et qu’il faudra surveiller...En tout cas, la crainte de tomber dans les dangers qui peut presenter une amitie sensible ou trop sentimentale n’est pas une raison suffisante pour nous detourner de nous ouvrir a l’amitie, tant celle-la, quand elle est veritable, est un grand bien humain, moral et spirituel.” *Lettres*, I (Paris, 1960), 107. It is rare, Voillaume suggests, that a so-called “particular friendship” is entirely unhealthy; and even healthy friendships are not without dangers. Yet friendship remains a great human good, not just the potential for a problem.

12 Trans. *Fathers of the English Dominican Province*, Vol. II (New York, 1947). Q. 44, Art. 7 has been condensed.

13 The language in II-II, Q. 154, Arts. I 1 and 12, is remarkably explicit.

14 *Les sources de la morale chretienne: Sa methode, son contenu, son histoire* (Fribourg, 1985), 84. Part of the context of what is called (losing its French *elan* in translation) “shifting morality” follows from the English edition: “The principle task of ethics is to affirm profound, unshakable human values that will be the measure of contemporary currents, and to oppose those currents when necessary, heading them off in better directions. Ethics can certainly profit, for example, from the Freudian theory of psychic evolution, narcissism [etc.] ... But this analysis does not take into consideration the decisive moral question posed in the conscience of every human being from childhood: what is my personal stand with regard to truth and goodness? This question emerges differently at different stages of life. This is a strictly moral factor, present at all stages of human life, exercising its influence interiorly and going beyond phenomena observable to the psychologist. Our moral life has its own evolution and progress, and these are linked to our psychic life, but they cannot be reduced to the limitations of the latter.” From *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, trans. Sr. Mary Thomas Noble, O.P (Washington, D.C., 1995), 75.

15 *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (No. 2357) retains an earlier teaching of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith (Dec. 29, 1975): “Homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered” (*Persona humana*, 8).