

CHAPTER ONE

“REMEMBER THAT TODAY’S HERESY IS TOMORROW’S SOCIAL DOGMA:”¹ THE DISCRIMINATION OF HOMOSEXUALS BY CATHOLIC IDEOLOGY

“The Desire for God is written in the heart of every man, because man has been created by God and for God.”²

The rapid changes that have occurred during the last two decades, categorized under the term “globalization” have modified the ways groups of different countries and within each country interact and view each other. Globalization started out “with the unification of financial markets”³ as an economic phenomenon that has gradually involved many aspects of the way people live and think. The changes that have occurred are based on “qualitative changes in technology and social relations that fundamentally transform the relationship between space and subjectivity.”⁴ But the term is used to describe other modifications in human conduct “[g]athered under the rubric of globalization are a wide variety of economic, political and cultural processes.”⁵ The term globalization in and of itself is a vague term,⁶ but it is useful to understand the current global context in which this thesis is

¹ Taken from the speech of Sister Joan Chittister at the NCEA annual meeting in Milwaukee. Angela Bonavoglia, *Good Catholic Girls: How Women are Leading the Fight to Change the Church* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2005), 11.

² *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica* (México D.F.: Coeditores Católicos de México, 2000), 19 [my translation].

³ Mauro F. Guillen and Adrian Tschoegl, *Building a Global Bank: The Transformation of Banco Santander* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2008), 52. Also see William L. Leap and Tom Boellstorff, eds., *Speaking in Queer Tongues: Globalization and Gay Language* (Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 6.

⁴ Leap and Boellstorff, *Speaking in Queer Tongues*, 5.

⁵ Leap and Boellstorff, *Speaking in Queer Tongues*, 5.

⁶ “There is no such thing as globalization in an abstract sense.” Leap and Boellstorff, *Speaking in Queer Tongues*, 5. Also see Sheila L. Croucher, *Globalization and Belonging: The politics of Identity in a Changing World* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2004), 10. “Definitions of globalization range from the very general, such as Martin Albrow’s claim that ‘Globalization refers to all those processes by which the

written. This work deals with the expansion of gay and lesbian culture due to globalization and the discrimination it experiences at the hands of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church in a North American context. Globalization can be held responsible for the expansion of an “American”⁷ gay and lesbian way of life,⁸ which has gained acceptance in people who have same-sex preferences throughout the western culture.⁹ Globalization has also brought in its wake a weakening of the state,¹⁰ which in the past –according to historian John Boswell¹¹– was responsible for legislating against and punishing people with same-sex preferences. Using the rubric of globalization, and understanding it in the context of this thesis as a cultural phenomenon, can help us grasp the idea that same-sex preferences have become widely accepted and how this acceptance has shaped homosexuals relationship with the state.¹² An example of what the weakening of the nation-state, the expansion of a secularist society and the phenomenon of cultural globalization has achieved for gay and lesbian

people of the world are incorporated in to a single world society’ or Roland Robertson’s definition of globalization as ‘the crystallization of the entire world as a single place.’”

⁷ I will use the term American to describe the Citizens of the United States, because traditionally that is how they call themselves. This may offend Canadians and Mexicans who also claim that they are Americans as inhabitants of the North American continent. But to my knowledge there is not another word in English which describes a citizen of the United States, like the Spanish word “Estadounidense” would.

⁸ This has been done by exporting its culture Croucher, *Globalization and Belonging*, 15. “For the United States (...) entertainment, specifically films and television programs, has become the largest single export industry.”

⁹ Leap and Boellstorff, *Speaking in Queer Tongues*, 2, 4.

¹⁰ Croucher, *Globalization and Belonging*, 17. “‘post-sovereign governance.’ The various aspects of supraterritoriality promote a situation of multilayered governance where regulation not only is the purview or responsibility of the sovereign nation-state, but is dispersed across various international or suprastate agencies as well as substate agencies.”

¹¹ Ralph Hexter, “John Boswell’s Gay Science,” in *The Boswell Thesis: Essays on Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, ed. Mathew Kuefler (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 44. “Moore’s own theses for the roots of [gay persecution] have to do with the rise of a ‘single regime’ of ‘emerging nation states... and nascent papal monarchy’ as well as ‘households of lay and ecclesiastical nobles.’”

¹² Hogan and Hudson, *Completely Queer*, 221. “Foucault believed that Western Social Sciences had imposed artificial constructions or ‘regimes’ of knowledge by which certain kinds of behavior – and by extension certain types of people- were labeled as ‘sick,’ ‘insane,’ ‘criminal’ or simply ‘abnormal’ so that the rest could by exclusion be considered ‘healthy,’ ‘sane,’ ‘law abiding,’ or ‘normal.’”

rights can be seen in the European countries that want to become members of the EU; they must approve legislation to protect sexual minorities from discrimination.¹³

But the weakening of the nation-state, the expansion of a secularist society and the phenomenon of cultural globalization do not seem to apply to the countries that subscribed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). There are no laws within the legal frame that grant special protection to sexual minorities, as this thesis will contend, mainly because of the ideological influence members of the Christian religion –particularly the Catholic Church– exert over the state. Whereas in Europe scholars speak of a society living in a post-Christian-secularized setting,¹⁴ the North American continent is far more influenced socially and politically by Christian tradition.¹⁵ This is noticeable in the legislation that exists in the three North American countries, particularly in the laws that regulate sexual intercourse in certain North American regions¹⁶ which penalize homosexual actions based on Christian precepts,¹⁷ a remnant of legislation that existed before the enlightenment in the 18th century and Napoleon’s Code in the 19th century.¹⁸ The influence North American Christianity still has on determining the outcome of what laws are approved or not and which determine what is acceptable behavior, is not negligible, “[i]t is

¹³ The European Council Meeting held at Copenhagen in 1993. The members that assisted agreed to safeguard and protect the rights of Minorities. In the EU context gays and lesbians are considered to be minorities. See Joke Swiebel, “Gay and Lesbian Rights and EU enlargement,” *EU Map.org Monitoring Human Rights and the Rule of Law in Europe* ([cited 21 Oct. 2009]): available from <http://www.eumap.org/journal/features/2002/april02/gaylesbeu>

¹⁴ Roberto Blancarte, *Entre la fe y el poder: Política y religión en México* (México D.F.: Random House Mondadori, 2004), 296-299 [my translation].

¹⁵ Juan A. Herrero Brasas, *La sociedad gay* (Madrid: Foca, ediciones y distribuciones generales S.L., 2001), 187 [my translation]. “Aunque en España y en otros países europeos la influencia de la religión en la sociedad ha descendido en últimas décadas, en países como Estados Unidos es extraordinariamente fuerte.”

¹⁶ For an example of this debate read article on the controversial gay marriage in Massachusetts see Roberto Blancarte, *Sexo, religión y democracia* (México: Editorial Planeta Mexicana, 2008), 197-201.

¹⁷ Louis Crompton, *Byron and Greek Love: Homophobia in 19th Century England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 14.

¹⁸ Crompton, *Byron and Greek Love*, 14.

frequently forgotten that religion is an integral component of the culture of the society, including its cultural politics.”¹⁹ The influence the Christian Church, particularly Catholicism and Mormonism,²⁰ has on convincing citizens to align their votes with the Christian beliefs was demonstrated in California on November 2008 when both groups coaxed the majority of the voters in the state to pass proposition 8 –legislation which banned same sex marriage, and defined marriage as an act that could only be done between two members of the opposite sex– is clear proof of how religion can rile up public opinion to oppose laws which give gays and lesbians any rights which are deemed to go against its principles. Catholicism –the largest Christian organization in the North American continent–²¹ is influential in the perception that many heterosexuals have of gays and lesbians. Even though its power may seem limited in the United States when it is compared to the power other Christian organizations wield, it is still strong in Mexico and Quebec as well as in some other geographical locations in the United States²² where it has been

¹⁹ Roderic Ai Camp, *Cruce de espadas: Política y religión en México*, trans. Héctor Acosta Ariza (México D.F.: Siglo veintiuno editores, 1998) ,11 [my translation]. “Frecuentemente se olvida que la religión es un componente integral de la cultura de la sociedad, incluida su política cultural.”

²⁰ Jessica Garison, Cara Mia Di Massa and Richard Paddock, “California Voters Approve Proposition 8 Ban on Same Sex Marriages,” *Los Angeles Times* (Nov. 6, 2008 [cited 30 Nov. 2009]): available from <http://demo.vcssite2.com/.../la-megaymarriage6-2008-nov-06,3,6150175.story> “On the other side were an array of Conservative organizations, including the Knights of Columbus, Focus on the Family and the American Family Asn., along with tens of thousands of small donors, including many who responded to urging from Mormon, Catholic, and Evangelical clergy.”

²¹ See statistics for total of Catholic population in the North American countries in the introduction of this thesis.

²² Roderic Ai Camp, *Cruce de espadas*, 12-3. “A lo largo del tiempo México se ha caracterizado por un crecimiento cada vez mayor del laicismo (...) Sin embargo, las influencias seculares, medidas por los niveles de ateísmo, siguen siendo bastante limitadas, ya que afectan a menos de 3% de los mexicanos (...) A medida que se acerca el fin de siglo, a pesar de una mayor competencia religiosa y del crecimiento del laicismo, México sigue siendo un país predominantemente católico, en que nueve de cada diez personas se consideran católicas.” For a brief glimpse on what geographic locations Catholicism has been influential in the US read John Corry, *Golden Clan: The Murrays, The McDonnell’s & the Irish American Aristocracy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1977), 85. “Being a Catholic has never offered much in the way of social prestige in America (...) Baltimore, New Orleans, and St. Louis society have a history of being warm to Catholics, Baltimore because of the Carroll’s and all they stood for, and New Orleans and St. Louis because they had an old Creole aristocracy.”

influential in the past.²³ Catholicism sees itself as a human institution that is divinely inspired,²⁴ which gives it another-worldly dimension on earth and an authority based on the belief that it has a monopoly on what God's message is believed to be.²⁵ It is traditionally believed that it is vested with the salvation of its followers which can be attained by following closely the indications that the hierarchy of the institution emits, because it speaks in the name of God for the benefit of mankind.²⁶ The Catholic Church's belief that it speaks for God and that the words it says and writes are correct because they are sustained on God's message²⁷ make the discrimination of gays and lesbians acceptable to the Church; homosexual conduct is not considered appropriate behavior based on the reading and the interpretation of scripture²⁸ and tradition.²⁹

Though the relationship between Catholicism, gays and lesbians is tense at the moment, this does not necessarily foreshadow that the situation will remain the same in the future. In the past the Church has been able to adapt to changing circumstances in order to survive and stay in tune with the times, which begs the question: if change has occurred in the past, why has it been unable to deal with growing gay and lesbian individuals within the

²³ But the influence of the Catholic Church seems to be stronger in México than in the other two North American countries. See Roderic Ai Camp, *Cruce de espadas*, 11. "La iglesia católica ha solido ser considerada como un agente legitimador del Estado y del orden existente en México, a pesar de periodos de un antagonismo profundo e histórico" [my translation].

²⁴ *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica*, 20 [my translation].

²⁵ *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica*, 31 [my translation]. "The deposit of faith contained in Sacred Tradition and in the Gospel, was entrusted by the Apostles to the Church."

²⁶ *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica*, 31 [my translation]. "The Church's magisterium exercises its authority received from Christ, when it defines dogmas (...) when it proposes that Christians adhere to an irrevocable form of faith."

²⁷ Read *Persona Humana: Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics* at The Holy See's web site ([cited 30 Nov. 2009]): available at http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19751229_persona_humana_en.html "Christ instituted His Church as 'pillar and bulwark of truth.'"

²⁸ For a short study on Scripture and homosexuality see John J. McNeill, *The Church and the Homosexual* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1988), 36-60.

²⁹ For a short study on Homosexuality and Catholic tradition see McNeill, *The Church and the Homosexual*, 89-104.

institution asking to be accepted, when it has adapted so well to changing values and views? To answer this question this chapter intends to analyse two issues: the first will explain what the Catholic Church substantiates its discriminatory discourser of homosexuality on; the second issue which will be explored in this chapter is whether Catholicism has changed its belief system in the past to suit its needs, and based on the demonstration that it has changed an argument will be made to determine whether homosexuality can be accepted or not.

1.1 How Does Homosexuality Contravene central Catholic tenets?

It is interesting but not novel to note that the Catholic Church practices discriminates individuals who have same-sex preferences. Throughout its history Catholicism has looked askance at any type of sexual activity which is not geared toward the reproduction of humanity.³⁰ Traditionally as well it has looked at chastity and virginity as models that its followers should strive for, if they do not marry.³¹ Homosexuality is looked upon with deep seated suspicion if not hate by some members of the Catholic hierarchy who believe that same-sex actions are condemnable and an unacceptable

³⁰ Jean-Louis Bruguès, Guy Bedouelle and Philippe Becquart, *La iglesia y la sexualidad* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 2007), 91. “Cuando el Papa Pablo VI promulgó su encíclica sobre la transmisión de la vida, la *Humanae vitae*, el 25 de Julio de 1968, las reacciones fueron muy polémicas. ‘La iglesia al recordar a los hombres el cumplimiento de la ley natural (...) enseña que todo acto matrimonial debe estar abierto a la transmisión de la vida’” [my translation].

³¹ *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica*, 446. “La alianza matrimonial, por la que *el varón y la mujer* constituyen entre si un consorcio de toda la vida.” [my emphasis]: Marriage is understood by Catholicism as the union of a man and a woman through the sacrament of marriage. For definitions on chastity and virginity see Mathew E. Bunson, *2006 Our Sunday Visitors Catholic Almanac* (Huntington IN: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 2005), 135, 160. The definition of “Chastity: Properly ordered behavior with respect to sex. In marriage, the exercise of the procreative power is integrated with the norms and purposes of marriage. Outside of marriage the rule is self denial of the voluntary exercise and enjoyment of the procreative faculty in thought, word or action.” The definition of “Virginity: Observance of perpetual sexual abstinence.”

conduct.³² Homosexuality is defined by Catholicism as, “[t]he condition of a person whose sexual orientation is towards persons of the same rather than the opposite sex. The condition is not sinful in itself. Homosexual acts are seriously sinful in themselves.”³³ Homosexual acts are relevant to the Catholic Church because they are considered a sin, which break the bonds that unite the faithful with God.³⁴ The stance that the Catholic Church has assumed is called heterosexism which can be defined as

[t]he belief that only sexual desire between men and women (i.e. heterosexual orientation) is normal, healthy truly intimate, mutual, rewarding and to be publicly acknowledged. Under this cultural ideology, sexual relations between people of the same sex are viewed as inherently abnormal and unhealthy. Even at their best, same sex relations can only be a debased imitation of the true intimacy and mutuality available to opposite sex relationships.³⁵

The heterosexist view held by the Church is not something that it should be condemned for, in their own purview of the situation, even though lesbians and gay might beg to differ alleging that it is biased and discriminatory.

The role of the Church has always been to save humanity and preserve the bond between God and the people.³⁶ This belief has implied that the Catholic Church has supported some political decisions or has been involved in certain past actions that have been judged harshly through the centuries. An example of one of the institutions in which it

³² Bunson, *2006 Catholic Almanac*, 144. “Homosexual acts are seriously sinful in themselves.” Also see John Paul II, *Exhortacion Apostolica Post Sinodal “Reconciliatio et Penitentia”: La Reconciliación y la penitencia* (Mexico: Ediciones Paulinas, 2004) ,49. “Sin is considered to be “God’s exclusion [from our life], a rupture with God, disobedience to God” [my translation].

³³ Bunson, *2006 Catholic Almanac*, 144. Also see *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica*, 625. “La homosexualidad designa las relaciones entre hombres o mujeres que experimentan una atracción sexual exclusiva o predominante, hacia personas del mismo sexo.”

³⁴ Bunson, *2006 Catholic Almanac*, 144.

³⁵ Mary A. Tolbert, “Where Have All The Young Girls Gone?,” originally Published in *Clergy Sexual Misconduct: Perspectives Located at the Center for Lesbians and Gay Studies in Religion and Ministries* (June 2002 [cited 4 Nov. 2009]) : available from <http://clgs.org/where-have-all-the-young-girls-gone>

³⁶ John Paul II, *La Reconciliación y la penitencia*, 32-34.

was involved which has been questioned is its former support for the Inquisition.³⁷ Catholicism's distancing from science because it flew against literal interpretations of the Bible or tradition also caused rifts from the 17th century to the present between the Scientific community³⁸ and the Catholic Church.³⁹ This gradual distancing between the Catholic Church and the scientific community has placed it at odds with certain groups and individuals in the Contemporary period and has allowed for groups outside and within it to question whether many of its beliefs and statements are based on the truth, whether God's message as the Church interprets is in accord with what science is demonstrating about the natural world at the beginning of the 21st century. The questioning of the direct relation between the natural world and theology is relevant because the Church bases its discrimination of homosexuality on the concept of Natural Law,⁴⁰ inspired by the observation of nature's functioning.⁴¹ Science is demonstrating that the Church's belief on what is natural can be questionable at times particularly with respect to sexuality.⁴²

³⁷ Anthony Gill, *Rendering Unto Caesar : The Catholic Church and the State in Latin America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 23. "The Clergy were granted the power of the inquisition. While the institution was meant to address spiritual heresy, in theory, in practice the inquisition came to be used more and more for political ends."

³⁸ Janet R. Jakobsen, "Can Homosexuals End Western Civilization As We Know It?," in *Queer Globalizations: Citizenship and the Afterlife of Colonialism*, eds., Arnaldo Cruz-Malavé and Martin F. Manalansan IV (New York: New York University press, 2002), 53. "Enlightenment, in which reason, later termed rationalization, emancipates humanity from the bonds of dogma."

³⁹ Although this statement can be viewed as a generalization which is not entirely true. The Catholic Church opposed certain scientific innovations but Catholics were involved in some of the great discoveries of science during from the 17th through the 20th century. Two examples of Catholics helping scientific discoveries advance are Pierre Theilard de Chardin and Gregory Mendel.

⁴⁰ Bruguès, Bedouelle and Becquart, *La iglesia y la sexualidad*, 188-9.

⁴¹ John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality. Gay people in Western Europe From the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 11.

⁴² Other issues also have to do with questions of sexuality like abortion, the use of birth control, and divorce. These topics are heatedly debated within the Catholic Church with arguments either for or against each one of these tenets. For an exploration of these topics see Philip S. Kaufman, *Why You Can Disagree and Remain a Faithful Catholic* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Co., 1999).

What seems to be divisive in the argument of whether homosexuality is natural or not revolves around the question of whether it is sinful. Traditionally the Catholic Church sustained that there are two types of sin: the mortal sin and the venial sin.⁴³ The mortal sin is defined as follows: “Mortal sin –involving serious matter, sufficient reflection and full consent– results in the loss of sanctifying grace and alienation from God, and renders a person incapable of performing meritorious supernatural acts and subject to everlasting punishment.”⁴⁴ Venial sins are defined as “[v]enial sin – involving less serious matter, reflection and consent– does not have such serious consequences.”⁴⁵ Homosexual acts would fall within the category of venial sin, though it can become a mortal sin if the action is done repeatedly.⁴⁶ The consequences of sin –that is breaking the rules God has instituted– have generally meant that the sinner will be punished in the afterlife with eternal hell.⁴⁷ If the sins are venial and not mortal there is still hope for the sinner for they will receive a temporary form of punishment called purgatory,⁴⁸ which will help the individual enter heaven after a purification process. The Church believes that one of its missions is to fight against the forces of darkness which intend to separate mankind from God,⁴⁹ and this means guiding people to try and avoid temptations that may distance them from God.⁵⁰

⁴³ Kueffler, *The Boswell Thesis*, 157.

⁴⁴ Kueffler, *The Boswell Thesis*, 157.

⁴⁵ Kueffler, *The Boswell Thesis*, 157.

⁴⁶ Kevin Orlin Johnson, *Why Do Catholics Do That? A Guide to the Teachings and Practices of the Catholic Church* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1995), 52-53.

⁴⁷ Johnson, *Why Do Catholics Do That?*, 53. “The Church has never condemned anybody, never said solemnly that so- and –so is in hell. She [The Catholic Church] can’t because that would be contrary to her mission.”

⁴⁸ Johnson, *Why Do Catholics Do That?*, 53.

⁴⁹ Malachi Martin, *The Jesuits: The Society of Jesus and the Betrayal of the Roman Catholic Church* (New York et al.: Simon & Schuster, 1987), 37.

⁵⁰ The Catholic Church’s mission is to suggest conducts, but it cannot impose them unless the state condones Church law or makes it a part of the legal code. See Max Weber, *Ética Protestante* (Argentina: Ediciones Libertador, 2004), 19. “[The Catholic Church] punishes the heretic, but is indulgent with the sinner” [my translation].

There is another consequence for homosexual sex according to scripture which explains how two cities –Sodom and Gomorrah– were destroyed due to the homosexual conduct of *some* or most of the men who inhabited them. The sin that they committed or attempted to commit with two angels of the Lord has been known since the Middle Ages as sodomy and it entailed homosexual sex and rape.⁵¹ The Bible in this instance does not speak of punishment on an individual basis once the offending person is dead: it reinforces the concept that the sins of many individuals or of just a few –particularly those sins that have to do with same sex actions– can be held accountable for the destruction of a whole community. God punished those who offended him while they were alive, not when they died.⁵²

The belief that a same-sex act could bring on the destruction of a city was enshrined in to legislation by Byzantine Emperor Justinian, who legally condemned homosexual acts for the first time in recorded history, based on his belief in the scriptures that Sodomy could bring forth the destruction of civilization. “All homosexual acts (were) declared illegal and punishable by death. Civil authority had only rarely focused attention upon homosexual acts in the centuries between the Church Councils of Elvira and Ancyra in 305 and 314 and Justinian’s time, but the novella of 544 introduced in to civil law both the story of Sodom and Paul’s abhorrence.”⁵³ Justinian’s legal punishment for sodomy would set the precedent for the legislation of several European and North American

⁵¹ (Genesis 19:1-22)

⁵² See Thomas Cahill, *Desire of the Ever Lasting Hills: The World Before and after Jesus* (New York: Random House, 1999), 44. “The idea of continued life for human beings after physical death is unknown in the earliest- and most important- documents of Judaism, the Torah and the Prophets.”

⁵³ Byrne Fone, *Homophobia: A History* (New York: Picador USA, 2000), 117. Roman Law incidentally is the antecedent of the legal systems of Mexico and Quebec and it had a great deal of importance on the way sodomy was punished by the state.

countries which would punish and condemn men and women involved in same sex based on the belief that sodomy could bring forth the destruction of their civilizations.⁵⁴ Though the Catholic Church originally condemned same sex sexual intercourse based on scripture and the belief in natural law,⁵⁵ which will be explained in section 1.3 of this thesis, there are current documents which “have confined contemporary discussions of Catholic homosexuality”⁵⁶ which have been written fairly recently and that explain the Church’s current position toward same sex activities and the people the Church defines as homosexuals. The documents will be explained in the next paragraphs.

1.1.1 Persona Humana: Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics⁵⁷

The letter was issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith⁵⁸ on December 29, 1975 and it deals with the Catholic Church’s role in defining what sexual actions are good and which are not. The encyclical seeks to enlighten the reader on the finality of sexual relations,⁵⁹ which should always be conducive to reproduction.⁶⁰ The document was issued shortly after homosexuality was removed as an illness from the psychiatric list of mental illnesses and it addresses this fact by stating that even though

⁵⁴ Jakobsen, “Can Homosexuals End Western Civilization As We Know It?,” 49. Members of what is termed as Protestant Christianity still believe that homosexuals can destroy civilization: “Christian Ministers [not Catholic priests] stand up and say ‘Homosexuality can end Western Civilization as we know it.’”

⁵⁵ Jakobsen, “Can Homosexuals End Western Civilization As We Know It?,” 34. Also see Bruguès, Bedouelle and Becquart, *La iglesia y la sexualidad*, 188. “La declaración sobre algunas cuestiones de ética sexual, Persona Humana, se sitúa en la perspectiva de la moral fundamental, cuyo eje es el concepto de naturaleza humana como principio de comprensión de la función sexual.”

⁵⁶ Mark D. Jordan, *The Silence of Sodom: Homosexuality in Modern Catholicism* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 24.

⁵⁷ Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, “Persona Humana,” *The Vatican* ([cited 28 Oct. 2009]): available from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19751229_persona_humana_en.html

⁵⁸ Bruguès, Bedouelle and Becquart, *La iglesia y la sexualidad*, 24.

⁵⁹ Bruguès, Bedouelle and Becquart, *La iglesia y la sexualidad*, 188.

⁶⁰ Bruguès, Bedouelle and Becquart, *La iglesia y la sexualidad*, 188.

some people may view homosexuality as normal it most certainly is not; homosexual acts are “intrinsically disordered”⁶¹ and they “went against the teachings of the Magisterium and (...) the moral sense of the Christian people.”⁶² The letter, which is directed to the clergy not the laity, encourages the reader to “sustain them [the homosexual] in the hope of helping them overcome their personal difficulties and their inability to fit in to society.”⁶³ The letter clearly states that the conduct of a homosexual cannot be excused or be considered favourably.

Their culpability will be judged with prudence. But no pastoral method can be employed which would give moral justification to these acts on the grounds that they would be consonant with the condition of such people. For according to the objective moral order, homosexual relations are acts which lack an essential and indispensable finality. In Sacred Scripture they are condemned as a serious depravity and even presented as the sad consequence of rejecting God. This judgment of Scripture does not of course permit us to conclude that all those who suffer from this anomaly are personally responsible for it, but it does attest to the fact that homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered and can in no case be approved of.⁶⁴

It is interesting to note that the document presents homosexuality as an act which has no finality; it probably means that they are incapable of having children, and thus devalues their importance to society. Many gays and lesbians would see their personal relations as a finality in itself, and apart of God’s plan, but in Catholicism it seems that this argument is irrelevant. *Persona Humana* would be used in future documents to justify that homosexual acts where a disordered conduct by the Catholic Church.

⁶¹ Bruguès, Bedouelle and Becquart, *La iglesia y la sexualidad*, 188.

⁶² Bruguès, Bedouelle and Becquart, *La iglesia y la sexualidad*, 188.

⁶³ Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, “*Persona Humana*,” *New Advent* transcribed by Paul Halsall (Dec. 29, 1976 [cited 25 Jan. 2009]): available from http://www.newadvent.org/library/docs_df75se.htm_VIII

⁶⁴ Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, “*Persona Humana*.”

1.1.2 Letter to all Catholic Bishops on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons

Though the reader may perceive the preceding document as negative toward the homosexual person another letter issued on October 1, 1986 leaves one with the impression that the 1975 document was kinder in its language towards homosexuals than the document entitled *Letter to all Catholic Bishops on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons*. The letter was also issued by the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, a new name for an old institution that was once called the Inquisition.⁶⁵ What makes this document particularly interesting is the fact that the head of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the faith in 1986 was none other than Cardinal Ratzinger, the current Pope Benedict XVI. The letter helps one to understand what the current Pop's views are:⁶⁶ it "is pastoral in character and it is directed to the Bishops, not homosexuals."⁶⁷ This document insists that not only are homosexual acts disordered, but also the orientation that leads to these actions can be considered to be disordered as well. The letter insists on the freedom homosexuals have to follow Christ and to avoid homosexual activities, thus implying that gays and lesbians, only chance at being saved by the Church is that they embrace chastity as a lifestyle.⁶⁸ Both documents never explained how homosexuals should conduct themselves, aside from being chaste,⁶⁹ but address how the Church hierarchy should view and treat their condition.

⁶⁵ David Gibson, "The Coming Catholic Church," 102. The "Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (the successor to the Holy Office and the Inquisition)."

⁶⁶ Jordan, *The Silence of Sodom*, 31-2. "In a series of interviews published in 1985, the cardinal [Ratzinger] scoffed at the view of homosexuality as an inalienable right.' This view was, he said, a prime instance of moral 'permissivism,' of an uprooting of the human person in the depth of his nature."

⁶⁷ Bruguès, Bedouelle and Becquart, *La iglesia y la sexualidad*, 191 [my translation].

⁶⁸ Bruguès, Bedouelle and Becquart, *La iglesia y la sexualidad*, 191 [my translation].

⁶⁹ Bruguès, Bedouelle and Becquart, *La iglesia y la sexualidad*, 189 [my translation].

The Catholic Church believes that to combat homosexuality and sin, the people with same-sex attraction must embrace chastity which “is not only intended to stop sin, but (...) through chastity one can achieve goodness and can tend towards perfection in love.”⁷⁰ A Catholic group inspired by this belief seeks to help homosexuals achieve chastity. The group is called “Courage” and its role will be analyzed in Chapter three.⁷¹ Even though the Church offers chastity as a solution to the perceived problem homosexuality entails, many Catholic gays and lesbians do not follow or intend to embrace chastity and argue that “[t]he Catholic Church believes that chastity is a special grace to which only a few are summoned.”⁷² Some of them want the Church to sanction marriage between members of the same sex to avoid temptation and falling in to sin and support their argument by quoting St. Paul who advised marriage to satisfy sexual desire, before sinning.⁷³ This is not likely to occur; the Church does not countenance marriage for members of the same-sex as was demonstrated in their support of Proposition 8 in the California 2008 elections. The debate on homosexuality and Catholicism continued in 1992 when the Vatican sent a document to the United States that demonstrated its attempts to discriminate politically against gay and lesbian activists.

1.1.3 1992 Considerations

In 1992 the Vatican’s diplomatic representative in the United States (...) distributed an unsigned document to the American Bishops. The Document in English was titled *Some Considerations Concerning the Response to Legislative proposals on the Non-*

⁷⁰ Bruguès, Bedouelle and Becquart, *La iglesia y la sexualidad*, 203 [my translation].

⁷¹ Tanya Erzen, *Straight to Jesus: Sexual and Christian Conversions in the Ex-Gay Movement* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006), 46-7. “Courage adheres to the Catholic idea that the solution to homosexuality is chastity and community. The Catholic ex-gay movement emphasizes celibacy over heterosexual marriage because celibacy signifies a spiritual and sacrificial path that is in line with Catholic theology.”

⁷² Herrero Brasas, *La sociedad gay*, 203 [my translation].

⁷³ (1 Corinthians: 7:29 and 36-38).

Discrimination of Homosexual Persons. The document was distributed with the purpose of ‘making itself useful to legislators, voters or Church authorities.’⁷⁴

1992 Considerations was to be kept a secret but was leaked out to the New Way Ministry—a group that does its apostolate in favor of the gay and lesbian community in Washington D.C.⁷⁵ – and subsequently to the press. The document condones discrimination of homosexuals.

Considerations used the 1986 Letter as a basis for calling homosexuality an ‘objective disorder.’ The document insists that there ‘are a number of situations in which legislation should discriminate against homosexuals.’ There are no areas in which it is not unjust discrimination to take sexual orientation into account (...) the rights of homosexuals ‘can be legitimately limited for objectively disordered external conduct.’⁷⁶

The document, accepted by the Vatican as emanating from its offices thanks to a Vatican press office endorsement,⁷⁷ also claimed that in order to be a good homosexual within the Catholic Church one had to remain an invisible homosexual.⁷⁸ They stated that it is permissible to discriminate against homosexuals who are open and who want to modify the state and the Church’s policy regarding their status. The blatant promotion of discrimination towards homosexuals seemed to be confirmed by the Church’s documents, but there are two documents worth mentioning issued by members of the Catholic hierarchy which look at certain aspects of homosexuality more favorably. One of the documents would seem to have no bearing on a North American context as a whole, but it is important to remember that the authority of the Bishops and the Archbishops is recognized worldwide by all Catholics, not just by the laity and clergy of the Diocese or

⁷⁴ Jordan, *The Silence of Sodom*, 40.

⁷⁵ “New Ways Ministry” ([cited 11 Nov. 2009]): available from www.newwaysministry.org It defines itself as “a gay positive ministry of advocacy and justice for lesbian and gay Catholics.”

⁷⁶ Jordan, *The Silence of Sodom*, 41.

⁷⁷ Jordan, *The Silence of Sodom*, 40.

⁷⁸ Jordan, *The Silence of Sodom*, 41. “As a rule, the majority of homosexually oriented persons who seek to lead chaste lives do not want or see no reason for their sexual orientation to become public knowledge. Hence the problem of discrimination... does not arise.”

Archdiocese to which they belong; their statements can modify a policy considered to be official Church teaching, by either contradicting it or softening the wording used,⁷⁹ therein lays the importance of the documents.

1.1.4 Always Our Children

The wording of this letter is softer than the preceding ones in regards to homosexuality;

[I]t is the voice of two committees of American Bishops. The letter was drafted by the National Conference of Catholic Bishop's Committee on Marriage and Family (...) it carries the subtitle Pastoral Message to Parents of Homosexual Children and Suggestions for Pastoral Ministers. It supposes a Catholic parent will need consolation after discovering that his or her child is homosexual. The letter's rhetoric urges parents not to abandon their children who come out, on the other hand, the letter feels constrained to reiterate the Church's condemnation of all homosexual activity.⁸⁰

Though the letter may seem harsh to a gay or lesbian reader who wants acceptance from the institution, its finality encourages the union between parents and children of Catholic families, despite its description of homosexuality.

1.1.5 An Introduction to the Pastoral Care of Homosexual People

This document is the most liberal that the Catholic Church has issued regarding homosexuality to date.

⁷⁹ *Catecismo de la iglesia Católica*, 433. "Por el ministerio ordenado, especialmente por el de los obispos y los presbíteros, la presencia de Cristo como cabeza de la iglesia se hace visible en medio de la comunidad de los creyentes. Según la bella expresión de san Ignacio de Antioquía, el obispo es *týpos tou Patrós*, es imagen viva de Dios Padre" [my translation]. *Catecismo de la iglesia Católica*, 256-257. "Los obispos como vicarios y legados de Cristo, gobiernan las iglesias particulares que se les han confiado (...) con su autoridad y potestad sagrada. (...) Esta potestad (...) es propia, ordinaria e inmediata. Su ejercicio, sin embargo, está regulado en último término por la suprema autoridad de la Iglesia. *Pero no se debe considerar a los obispos como vicarios del Romano Pontífice, cuya autoridad ordinaria e inmediata sobre toda la Iglesia no anula la de ellos, sino que al contrario, la confirma y tutela*" [my emphasis].

⁸⁰ Jordan, *The Silence of Sodom*, 43-44.

The letter begins by stating that homosexuality is neither good nor bad morally speaking; Homosexuality, like heterosexuality is a condition or a state. The document also states that the homosexual is not responsible for his or her tendencies. Although the document states that gay and lesbian relationships could never be put on a par with a heterosexual marriage they state that the priest must distinguish between an irresponsible and indiscriminate sexual activity and what constitutes a permanent association between two homosexuals who are incapable of leading a solitary life bereft of sexual expression. The priest should not attempt to apply rules indiscriminately against homosexuals but should take in to account their personal circumstances to try and understand the situations the homosexual goes through.⁸¹

A document emitted by the Spanish Bishops in 1994 seems to reinforce this idea. “The Bishops of Spain explain that even though homosexuality is objectively disordered it is important to remember that due to the complexity of these personal situations, judgment on the culpability of these people should be made prudently.” These two documents seem to demonstrate a stance of the Church which is more humane toward homosexuals than the other documents which seem to promote discrimination. They are an important tool to discern that the relations between the gay and lesbian community (homosexuals as the Catholic Church calls them) and the Catholic Church are complex and have not been defined in their entirety, and need further clarification. For example the documents are not directed towards homosexuals, but to the pastors who could take care of them. The Church could issue documents which clarify how the homosexual can lead a life more in tune with Catholic teachings, even if it only offers chastity as the only ideal life style. It also needs to reevaluate whether its stance and defense of natural law to sustain Catholic doctrine can be

⁸¹ Catholic Social Welfare Commission, Catholic Bishops of England and Wales, “An Introduction to the Pastoral Care of Homosexual People,” quoted and trans. by Juan A. Herrero Brasas (New Ways Ministry, Mt. Rainier, 1987), 8-9. In, *La sociedad gay*, Juan A. Herrero 193-194. “El cuidado pastoral de las personas homosexuales no puede pasar por alto la moralidad objetiva de los actos homosexuales, pero es importante interpretarlos, entender el patrón de vida dentro del que se produce, apreciar el significado que estos actos tienen para diferentes personas (...) Es imposible calcular con precisión el grado de responsabilidad pero hay que aplicar el principio habitual de responsabilidad disminuida. Para muchos homosexuales la soledad de sus vidas constituye una carga. Sienten la necesidad de la vida en pareja tanto como los heterosexuales, pero no lo pueden encontrar en el matrimonio. Es este deseo de intimidad lo que les lleva a formar parejas estables, y en dichas uniones hay frecuentemente relación genital.”

corroborated by what scientists are discovering about the so called natural world. There is a conceptual distinction proposed by the “Cultural Anthropological tradition that had set forth the difference between biological sex and social sex.”⁸² This thesis argues that the conception that the Catholic Church uses to discriminate against homosexuality is based on a constructed concept of “social sex,” instead of biological sex, even if the institution will argue that its views on sex are based on principles of “biological sex.” This belief that Catholicism’s view on sex is changing as globalization introduces a different way of interpreting sex. Even though the Church uses a language that seeks to exclude homosexuals from their community at the present time, this can change, because the message of the Church has been modified in the past in order to adapt itself to diverse circumstances. To demonstrate this point it is important to analyze how the Church has changed in the past on some issues that were considered at one time to be unchangeable and unmovable.

1.2 The Catholic Church’s Power of Adaptation

The Catholic Church has faced many challenges throughout its history, and it demonstrated resilience and a power of adaptation that allowed it to survive and thrive in to the 21st century. This power of adaptation is (and was) born of a certain degree of flexibility that the Catholic Church demonstrated throughout time. This flexibility is still visible in the current world scene. As recently as October of 2009, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith of Catholic Church released an invitation in the press inviting Anglicans that did not agree with the ordination of women or gays within the Anglican Church and were

⁸² Rommel Mendès- Leite and Pierre-Olivier de Busscher, eds., *Gay Studies from the French Cultures: Voices from France, Belgium, Brazil, Canada and the Netherlands* (New York: Harrington Park Press, 1993), 19.

invited to consider the proposition because they would be able to retain many of their traditions.⁸³ There is an ongoing debate on whether it can accept married Anglican Ministers to become Catholic priests, and there are rumours that the debate focuses on the celibacy of the candidates.⁸⁴ The ongoing debate demonstrated that the Catholic Church is willing to accept change, but that the acceptance of change is not characterized by its speed; it has taken many years for modifications both good and bad—depending on who is being asked—to occur within the Catholic Church and most of the time the people that instigated change did not live to witness it, and may in fact have died considered quasi heretics and dangerous to the current beliefs of the Church in that time period.⁸⁵ The people who instigated the changes were sometimes viewed as heretics,⁸⁶ enemies of Catholicism no less, until at sometime in a later period they were rehabilitated and their messages accepted and even celebrated as truths, glimpses that revealed a part of God’s divine plan to humanity. What has brought the Catholic Church in to conflict with many individuals or groups of people resides on the concept that the institutional Church believes it possesses a creed which is divinely inspired truth.⁸⁷ The Catholic Church likes to pride itself on

⁸³ Rachel Donadio and Laurie Goodstein, “Vatican Bidding Anglicans to Join Its Fold,” *New York Times* (Oct. 20, 2009 [cited 23 Nov. 2009]): available from <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/21/world/europe/21pope.html>

⁸⁴ John Tavis, “Clarification on Anglicans and Married Priests,” *Catholic News Service* (Oct. 31, 2009 [cited 11 Nov. 2009]): available from <http://cnsblog.worldpress.com/2009/10/31/clarification-on-anglicans-and-married-priests/>

⁸⁵ An example of this is Meister Eckhart’s teachings which were declared heresy in 1329 but influenced Franciscan spirituality during the Middle Ages. Richard Woods O.P., *Mysticism and Prophecy: The Dominican Tradition* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd., 1998), 80.

⁸⁶ Bunson, *2006 Catholic Almanac*, 143. “Heresy: The obstinate post-baptismal denial or doubt by a Catholic of any truth which must be believed as a matter of divine and Catholic faith.”

⁸⁷ *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica*, 20 [my translation]. Truth understood by the Catholic Church is defined in Kevin Knight, “Truth,” *New Advent* (2009 [cited 12 Oct. 2009]): available from www.newadvent.org/cathen/15073a.htm “Every existing thing is true, in that it is the expression of an idea which exists in the mind of God, and is as it were, the exemplar according to which the thing has been created or fashioned.”

‘knowing the truth’⁸⁸ and it claims that the truth remained and remains the same: truth is unchangeable and immutable, for God does not change His mind; through the ages He has stood outside of time as the creator of time itself,⁸⁹ and thus the truth like God has remained the same throughout the ages.⁹⁰ The Church, as the repository of God’s message and His bride⁹¹, is the mouthpiece of the truth and its followers must act according to the views the Church has on any given subject deemed important.⁹² However appealing this belief may be to many members of the hierarchy and some of the lay members within the Catholic Church, there is a problem with its inception. First, the Catholic Church is a heterogeneous worldwide organization conformed by many individuals who have differing views on what the roles of the Church is within their societies; the Catholic Church is conformed not only by Priests, Nuns, Sisters, Cardinals, Bishops, and other members of the Church bureaucracy. The laity⁹³ (the name assigned to the followers of the Catholic Church) is also part of the Church and as a group they may think and act differently from

⁸⁸ “Pillar of Fire, Pillar of Truth,” *Catholic Answers* (1996 [cited 5 Oct. 2009]): available from <http://www.catholic.com/library/pillar.asp> “The Bible, sacred Tradition and the writings of the earliest Christians testify that the Church teaches with Jesus’s authority. In this age of countless competing for religions, each clamoring for attention, one voice rises above the din: the Catholic Church, which the Bible calls ‘the pillar and foundation of truth’ (1 Tim. 3:15).

⁸⁹ (Genesis 1:14-19).

⁹⁰ God created time so he stands outside of it read: Elsa Cecilia Frost, *La historia de Dios en las Indias: Visión franciscana del Nuevo Mundo* (México D.F.: Tusquets Editores, 2002), 26. “Al principio creó Dios los cielos y la tierra,” (Gen 1: 1) postula sin mas no sólo que el mundo tuvo un principio- que es también, en consecuencia, el principio del tiempo- sino que Dios es trascendente a su creación.”

⁹¹ A claim that it boasts come from the moment when Christ told Peter that he was the rock on which his message would go on (John 21:15-17). *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica*, 20 [my translation].

⁹² Robert McClory, *Faithful Dissenters: Stories of Men and Women who Loved and Changed the Church* (New York: Orbis Books, 2000), 2. “Since Catholics see the Church as founded by God’s will on the authority of Jesus Christ, dissent of any kind carries certain ominous, troubling overtones.”

⁹³ *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica*, 257 [my translation]. “Por laicos se entiende aquí a todos los cristianos, excepto los miembros del orden sagrado y del estado religioso reconocido en la Iglesia. Son, pues, los cristianos que están incorporados a Cristo por el Bautismo, que forman el pueblo de Dios y que participan a su manera de las funciones de Cristo, Sacerdote, Profeta y Rey. Ellos realizan, según su condición, la misión de todo el pueblo cristiano en la Iglesia y en el mundo.”

the people that actually run the Church.⁹⁴ The second problem is that some members of self-identified right wing of the Catholic Church – particularly since the 1980s⁹⁵– claim that things have not changed within the Catholic Church, and that they have remained static from its inception.⁹⁶ This section intends to demonstrate that this argument is not true.⁹⁷ The Church has, through the processes of trial and error, adapted itself to the situations that arose in the past to test its mettle and it has changed to conform to new social or political realities throughout the ages.⁹⁸ The importance of historical change is relevant because it shows a degree of flexibility which could allow the Catholic ideology to change in regard to homosexuals.⁹⁹ Historian John Boswell in *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality* tried to surmise that if the Church had accepted gays¹⁰⁰ in the past, then it

⁹⁴ Avery Dulles, “Vatican II: Substantive Teaching,” *America Magazine: The National Catholic Weekly* (March 31, 2003 [cited 25 Jan. 2009]): available from http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=2890

⁹⁵ Terrence J. Fay, *A History of Canadian Catholics* (Montreal and Kingston, London and Ithaca: McGill-Queens University Press, 2002), 315.

⁹⁶ Avery Dulles, “Vatican II: Substantive Teaching.”

⁹⁷ John Boswell argued as much in his work, demonstrating that the Church had modified its stance on issues like marriage between relatives. See Bernard Schlager “Reading CSH as a Call to Action,” in *The Boswell Thesis: Essays on Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* Mathew Kuefler ed. (Chicago & London: University of Chicago press 2006), 81-2.

⁹⁸ Robert McClory, *Faithful Dissenters: Stories of Men and Women who Loved and Changed the Church* (New York: Orbis Books, 2000), 4. “Throughout history, Church authority in countless instances has followed a course that was wise and prudent, leading to outcomes that can only be considered providential.” In the North American context particularly in areas where there is a heavy protestant concentration the way the Catholic Church acts is heavily influenced by its protestant neighbors read: Fay, *A History of Canadian Catholics*, 297-301. Also see Harold Bloom, *La religion Americana*, trans. Damián Alou (México D.F.: Santillana ediciones generales, 2009), 210.

⁹⁹ H.D. Gardeil, *Iniciación a la filosofía de Santo Tomas de Aquino: Introducción- Lógica*, trans. Salvador Abascal Carranza (México D.F.: Editorial Tradición, 1973), 9-10. One of the underlying assumptions of this thesis is that the Catholic Church might be better suited to accept change than some of the mainstream Protestant groups, due to the fact that as an institution it is not a Bible literalist. As such it relies on other arguments to support or enforce its doctrine. Because it is not a Bible literalist, and because it incorporates elements of Philosophy, particularly Thomism and Aristotelinism it gives grounds for a discussion about whether or not homosexuality can be incorporated in to Christian religion or not.

¹⁰⁰ Kuefler, ed., *The Boswell Thesis*, 9. There is controversy over John Boswell’s use of the term gay, particularly because Historians or other academics, particularly of the Constructionist school argue that using the word gay to describe a Roman Emperor is not entirely correct, for though they may have shared a similarity in having same sex relationships, they did not share in the what is now understood as the gay culture. This will be further discussed in Chapter three.

could currently accept homosexuals once more. His work laid the foundations for serious dialogue within the many Christian denominations as to setting a historical precedent for the acceptance of a homosexual laity within their structures, in the particular case of the Catholic Church for making salvation available to all, “and if the Church is to be comprehensive in its ministries, it must include all people.”¹⁰¹

There are many historical cases which demonstrate how the Church has modified its stance to be in sync with the new times.¹⁰² Due to the lack of space a few cases pertinent to this thesis have been chosen to analyse in which periods and why the Catholic Church transformed dogmas or teachings to accommodate itself to the new problems that were arising and that put its power in jeopardy. The first incident which is pertinent to mention here (and which I want to make clear was not the first incident in which the Catholic Church made changes to adapt to new social and political realities) occurred during the 12th century.¹⁰³ Many historically changing events occurred in Western Europe which has a bearing on the modifications that I describe but will not be discussed here for they are not pertinent for this thesis;¹⁰⁴ what is interesting to point out is the consequence of the

¹⁰¹ Fay, *A History of Canadian Catholics*, 311.

¹⁰² Schlager “Reading CSTH as a Call to Action,” in *The Boswell Thesis: Essays on Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* ed. Kuefler, 81-2. John “Boswell detailed several instances from church history in which ecclesiastical officials had altered well- established and seemingly unalterable positions on important moral matters. Using examples such as incest, slavery, and the lending of money at interest, Boswell argued that in each of these cases, centuries- old church policies had been changed significantly even though it had long seemed impossible, that such change could ever take place.”

¹⁰³ Gary Wills, *Why I am a Catholic* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002), 132.

¹⁰⁴ For a summary of these changes see Gilbert K. Chesterton, *San Francisco de Asís* (Barcelona: Editorial Juventud, 1978), 30-32.

emergence of the Cathar heresy, the Albigensian Crusade and the emergence of the Mendicant Orders.¹⁰⁵

During the 12th century, new ways of viewing God emerged, outside of the traditions that the Catholic Church believed in until that moment, due to the decline of feudalism which began to modify how people viewed the world. Belief systems began emerging that were seeking a new understanding of what being a Catholic or being a Christian meant: these groups were called the Waldensians¹⁰⁶ and the Albigensians or Cathars.¹⁰⁷ The consequences of this search for Christ provoked a public confrontation between the Kingdoms of France and Aragon, the County of Provence, and The Holy See.¹⁰⁸ In the private sphere it created tensions between the Albigensians and Catholics in general. In order to stamp out the heresies in the southern region of France the Pope, Innocent III (1198-1216)¹⁰⁹ a distinguished man who, to make the papacy more powerful, was willing to play a political game as long as it favoured his cause, invited the King of France to invade the lands of Provence,¹¹⁰ where most of the Cathars lived, and encouraged a Crusade against the heretics to stamp out their beliefs and deliver the “correct” dogma dictated from Rome.

¹⁰⁵ Stephen O’Shea, *The Perfect Heresy: The Revolutionary Life and Death of the Medieval Cathars* (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2000), 62-65.

¹⁰⁶ Kevin Knight, “Waldenses,” *New Advent* (2009 [cited 25 Jan. 2009]): available from <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15527b.htm>

¹⁰⁷ The term Albigensian and Cathars will be used indistinctly in this thesis. Stephen O’Shea’s *The Perfect Heresy: The Revolutionary Life and Spectacular Death of The Medieval Cathars* (USA: Walker and Company, 2001), 7-8. “The Cathar heresy, a pacifist brand of Christianity embracing tolerance and poverty, rose to prominence in the middle of the so-called renaissance of the twelfth century.(...) The great awakening of the twelfth century ushered in an era of spiritual longing that searched and often found the sublime outside the fortress of orthodoxy.”

¹⁰⁸ For a detailed account of this historical epoch I base my knowledge on O’Shea’s *The Perfect Heresy*.

¹⁰⁹ For a biography in Spanish on Inocent III see Gerardo Laveaga, *El sueño de Inocencio: Ascenso y caída del Papa más poderoso de la historia* (México, D.F.: Editorial Planeta, 2006). Considered the “most powerful Pope of the Middle Ages.” O’Shea, *The Perfect Heresy*, 6.

¹¹⁰ Also known as Occitan.

What is important for this thesis is the outcome of the conflict, because it changed the way Catholicism was practiced up until that moment. The Holy See was forced to modify the way religion had been understood to that point and a different “lifestyle” was incorporated in to Catholicism. In response to the criticism of the Waldensians that the hierarchy of the Catholic Church lived like princes, far removed from the poverty¹¹¹ they believed Christ had espoused, the Church allowed for the creation of the Mendicant Orders— like the Franciscans,¹¹² Dominicans,¹¹³ Carmelites,¹¹⁴ Augustinians,¹¹⁵ and others.¹¹⁶ These orders embraced poverty, influenced by the Waldensians beliefs that it made them Christ-like.¹¹⁷ The Mendicant Order lifestyle was a radical departure from how the Catholic clergy could lived and how they related to its congregants; it became an accepted and necessary feature of Catholicism that brought it in touch with a new social class the poverty stricken people of the cities which began growing during the 12th and 13th centuries.¹¹⁸

Before the creation of these new orders, the laity was excluded to a large measure from being involved in what happened within the Catholic Church. The clergy did not

¹¹¹ María Humbert Vicaire, O.P., *Los orígenes de la pobreza mendicante de los predicadores* (Querétaro, México: Instituto Dominicano de Investigaciones Históricas, 1989), 17.

¹¹² Chesterton, *San Francisco de Asís*, 66.

¹¹³ Vicaire, O.P., *Los orígenes de la pobreza mendicante de los predicadores*, 17.

¹¹⁴ For history of Carmelites see Manuel Ramos Medina, *El Carmelo Novohispano* (México: Centro de Estudios de Historia de México CARSO, no date).

¹¹⁵ For history of Augustinians see Thomas F. Martin O.S.A., *Our Restless Hearts: The Augustinian Tradition* (New York: Orbis Books, 2003).

¹¹⁶ Bunson, *2006 Catholic Almanac*, 148. “The original mendicants were Franciscans and Dominicans in the early 13th century; later, the Carmelites, Augustinians, Servites and others were given the mendicant title and privileges.”

¹¹⁷ O’Shea, *The Perfect Heresy*, 62. “The Waldensians, went around as dirt poor preachers and implored other churchmen to do likewise. (Reformers at heart, the Waldensians had been rashly anathematized as heretics in 1184.)”

¹¹⁸ Norman Davies, *Europe, A History: A Panorama of Europe, East and West, From the Ice Age to the Cold War, From the Urals to Gibraltar* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 336.

necessarily incorporate individuals into the Church structure and according to the chronicles lived removed from the people.¹¹⁹ Establishing a relationship with God meant excluding oneself from the rest of humanity and becoming a hermit or a nun, joining a community which effectively removed oneself from civilization (an example of an order that required this removal was the Cistercians).¹²⁰ Once orders like the Dominicans and the Franciscans emerged, a new way of viewing humanity and the way God interacts with all people emerged. Lay people were allowed to join within the Community of the newly formed orders as tertiaries¹²¹ and become involved with the Church in a way that brought them closer as members of the Church. The laity became an important part of the Church during this period to the extent that an illiterate woman, Catherine Benicasa, known more commonly as St. Catherine of Sienna,¹²² who belonged to the Order of Preachers¹²³ as a tertiary was able to influence papal politics during her short lifetime.¹²⁴

The Church was forced to adapt to the new belief systems that had threatened to destroy it, in part thanks to laity which supported it, and a hierarchy that was conscious that change was necessary and even good in order to survive the new ways of thinking that had emerged and had changed the way Christianity was viewed. It is interesting to note that

¹¹⁹ Though there was a tradition of incorporating the laity in to Monasteries that followed St. Benedict's rule by making them *Oblates*. Kathleen Norris, *The Cloister Walk* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1996), xviii. "The word Oblate is from Latin 'to offer,' and Jesus himself is often referred to as a 'oblation' in the literature of the early Church."

¹²⁰ O'Shea, *The Perfect Heresy*, 60-64.

¹²¹ Though the Mendicant Orders still have followers who are historically a continuation of these tertiary communities they choose to name them as secular followers, for example a Dominican tertiary is now known as a lay Dominican. The Church since the Vatican II Council has attempted to incorporate the laity and not exclude them by making them feel like they are third class citizens. See Fay, *A History of Canadian Catholics*, 295.

¹²² McClory, *Faithful Dissenters*, 78-89.

¹²³ Another name of the Dominicans.

¹²⁴ For a relation of St. Catherine of Sienna relationship to the papacy see Alice Curtayne, *Saint Catherine of Siena* (Rockford, Illinois: Tan Books and Publishers Inc., 1980), 140-156.

historically this time period heralded a heavy persecution of people who engaged in same-sex relationships. In the English language the word ‘buggery’ emerged to describe a male who had sexual relations with other males. The Albigensians were described as being willing participants in this rite.¹²⁵ Sodomy was then associated with heresy and was used as further proof that people who engaged in this type of conduct were un-Godly. The state became stronger and ideologically influenced by Christianity began creating laws which curtailed homoerotic activities and punished them by death.¹²⁶

During the 11th century¹²⁷ a novel concept that would modify the way death was viewed emerged, and changed the way people viewed and interacted with the Church. This concept was¹²⁸ called “Purgatory”¹²⁹ which was instituted to satiate the people’s need to believe that their loved ones, even though they were not saints, were able to enter God’s kingdom in heaven.¹³⁰ During the Crusades Pope Urban offered special indulgences¹³¹ for those going to the Crusade.

¹²⁵ O’Shea, *The Perfect Heresy*, 13. “Also common was the epithet *bougre*, a corruption of Bulgar- a reference to a sister church of heretical dualists in Eastern Europe. *Bougre* eventually gave English *bugger*, which is yet another proclivity once ascribed to Cathar enthusiasts.”

¹²⁶ Kuefler ed., *The Boswell Thesis*, 44.

¹²⁷ Jacques Le Goff, *La Bolsa y la vida, economía y religión en la Edad Media* (España: Gedisa, 1987), 107. Also quoted in Luis Daniel Tovar Ruiz & Martin Chávez Lora, *Documento de la Fundación de un aniversario y memoria de misas para costear la reconstrucción de la iglesia de San Pablo de los Frailes, 1678* (Provincia de Santiago México: Instituto Dominicano de Investigaciones Históricas, 2009), 369.

¹²⁸ And still is.

¹²⁹ *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica*, 289-90. “Los que mueren en la gracia y en la amistad de Dios, pero imperfectamente purificados, aunque están seguros de su eterna salvación, sufren después de su muerte una purificación, a fin de obtener la santidad necesaria para entrar a la alegría del cielo. La iglesia llama purgatorio a esta purificación final de los elegidos que es completamente distinta del castigo de los condenados.”

¹³⁰ Tovar Ruiz and Chávez Lora, *Documentos de la fundación de un aniversario y memoria de misas*, 369.

¹³¹ *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica*, 413. “La indulgencia es la remisión ante Dios de la pena temporal por los pecados, ya perdonados, en cuanto a la culpa, que un fiel dispuesto y cumpliendo determinadas condiciones consigue por mediación de la Iglesia, la cual, como administradora de la redención, distribuye y aplica con autoridad el Tesoro de las satisfacciones de Cristo y los santos.”

What Urban had in mind was a remission of penitential acts imposed by the Church in this life. But preachers of the Crusade extended this to severe penalties to be performed in the afterlife (in purgatory). Once people acted on this understanding, it became impossible to back off from it, and theologians had to come up for a justification for this new papal power.¹³²

This desire to have a place where sinners would be able to pay for their sins and eventually enter heaven was so strong that it surprised the Church. The belief and the creation of the idea of purgatory were accepted faster by the laity than by the Catholic hierarchy.¹³³ The Institution accepted purgatory and shaped it a century after its inception, thanks to Hugh de Saint Cher who “came up with the notion that became the official rationale- that the Church has a ‘treasury of merit earned by Christ and by the Saints, which can be drawn on to pay out to the others.’”¹³⁴ Even the *New Catholic Encyclopaedia* admits the theory of indulgences lagged more than a century behind the practice. It was not until the teachings of Hugh de Saint Cher (c.1230) that the source of the grant was related to the Church treasury of merits.¹³⁵

The cultural importance of purgatory during the Middle Ages became such that it became expected that after death people would leave some material good to the Church so they would pray for the repose of the souls. Even if someone was sceptical of this doctrine or of the Catholic Church in general the individual only had to “show external submission to the Church to guarantee his salvation.”¹³⁶ During the Reformation, purgatory was one of the first things that was “thrown out” by the Protestants and was suppressed from their

¹³² Wills, *Why I am a Catholic*, 134.

¹³³ Wills, *Why I am a Catholic*, 134.

¹³⁴ Wills, *Why I am a Catholic*, 134.

¹³⁵ Wills, *Why I am a Catholic*, 134.

¹³⁶ Weber, *Ética Protestante*, 56 [my translation].

belief system¹³⁷ though the Catholic Church continues to believe in purgatory which was reiterated in the “Council of Trent (1545-1563), in the last session which took effect.”¹³⁸ These historical occurrences aside from being interesting are relevant to this thesis, particularly in regards to gays and lesbians because they demonstrate that the Catholic Church has modified its beliefs in the past to stay current and in order not to lose its hold on the laity, and at the same time became enriched by these traditions. As has been mentioned in the prior pages the modifications occurred gradually and they demonstrate that doctrinal modifications can occur and can change the way people view the Catholic religion in a positive light. The two cases analysed before demonstrate that when it has suited the Church it has adapted to the spiritual needs and wants of the faithful, and thus gives hope to homosexuals in regards to a possible modification of the Church’s stance on homosexuality.

There is another symbol which characterizes any Catholic Church and that is the image of the Virgin.¹³⁹ Her presence is felt throughout the Catholic community,¹⁴⁰ and her devotion has been endorsed by Popes, Bishops, Archbishops, men and women of the

¹³⁷ Tovar Ruiz and Chávez Lora, *Documentos de la fundación de un aniversario y memoria de misas*, 369.

¹³⁸ Tovar Ruiz and Chávez Lora, *Documentos de la fundación de un aniversario y memoria de misas*, 369.

¹³⁹ *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica*, 142. “María es verdaderamente ‘Madre de Dios’ porque es la madre del Hijo eterno de Dios hecho hombre, que es Dios mismo. María fue virgen al concebir a su hijo, Virgen en el parto, Virgen después del parto, Virgen siempre.”

¹⁴⁰ Harold Bloom, *Jesus and Yahweh: The Names Divine* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2005), 92. “The Hebrew Sages were outraged by the flamboyance of later evolutions in Christian doctrine, as four gods emerged into a new pantheon: Jesus Christ, God the Father, and the wholly original Blessed Virgin Mother and non-Judaic Holy Ghost.” The Catholic Church does not agree with Harold Bloom’s assertion, *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica*” 274. “La piedad de la Iglesia hacia la Santísima Virgen es un elemento intrínseco del culto cristiano. La Santísima Virgen es ‘honrada con razón por la Iglesia con un culoto especial. Y, en efecto desde los tiempos más antiguos, se venera a la Virgen con el título de ‘Madre de Dios’, bajo cuyas protecciones se acogen los fieles suplicantes en todos sus peligros y necesidades (...) este culto (...) aunque del todo singular, es esencialmente diferente del culto de adoración que se da al Verbo Encarando, lo mismo que al Padre y al Espíritu Santo.”

laity¹⁴¹ but it was not always so. The devotion to the Virgin emerged centuries after the death of her son, and the process which seemed to deify her brought with it disagreements within the bosom of the Church. It is interesting to note the history of how this devotion became popularized in the Church and became one of its most important emblems. It had been common in the ancient and Classical world to believe that the mother of any God of importance was herself closer to divinity than the rest of humanity and deities born to virgin mothers were a common feature of antiquity¹⁴² yet the Catholic Church had initially refused to give the Virgin Mary any special role within the Church. Catholicism was, after all, a religion inspired by Judaism, a religion that glorified God's maleness¹⁴³ but certain segments of the Christian laity refused to accept the idea that the mother of Christ was anything but a semi-divine being herself. According to tradition the movement to elevate the Virgin Mary's status occurred in Constantinople during the 5th century.¹⁴⁴ The inhabitants of the city began calling the Virgin Mary— *Theotókos*— the One who begot God,¹⁴⁵ to the chagrin of Nestorius the patriarch of Constantinople who conceded that in fact she was the Mother of Christ, but was not the mother of the other two components of

¹⁴¹ Ruth Harris, *Lourdes: Body and Spirit in the Secular Age* (New York: Penguin Books, 1999), 15. Since the 19th century there has been a greater devotion to Mary. "The 19th century was the 'age of Mary', a cult that brought together both clerical and popular religion and built on traditions that belonged as much to the landscape and to local pride as to Christianity." See Louis Grignion de Montfort, St., *The Secret of the Rosary* (New Jersey: Catholic Book Publishing Corp., 2004).

¹⁴² Chimo Fernández de Castro y de Trinchera, *El cristianismo desmitificado: Estudio de la sexualidad en tiempos de Jesucristo* (Barcelona: Editorial Kairós, 2006), 202-3 [my translation]. "Buda (...) fue hijo de Maya, mujer que permaneció virgen a perpetuidad habiendo sido inseminada por el Espíritu Santo del hinduismo. Toda la historia está llena de fecundaciones milagrosas."

¹⁴³ (Genesis 2:27). "God created man in his image: in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them."

¹⁴⁴ Antonio Orozco, *Madre de Dios y Madre Nuestra: Introducción a la Mariología* (México: Nostra Ediciones, S.A. de C.V., 2001), 17.

¹⁴⁵ Orozco, *Madre de Dios y Madre Nuestra*, 17. "Theotókos: Aquella que había engendrado a Dios" [my translation].

the Trinity—God the Father and the Holy Spirit.¹⁴⁶ The title they were claiming, that of mother of God, was an ontological mistake. Eventually, however, though the Catholic Church came to accept the figure of Christ's mother, notwithstanding the bad usage of the word, of Mary as the "Mother of God."¹⁴⁷ The process took many years though. Regarding the theology which stated that she was no ordinary human being that in fact she was born without the stain of the original sin the doctrine took centuries to be developed.

From the III century, Saint Irineus, Saint Ambrosius and Saint Jerome had the conviction that Mary had been born without the stain of the original sin. In 1401, John Gerson the then Chancellor of the University of Paris, proclaimed for the first time that this belief [in the Immaculate Conception] was dogmatic. In 1439 the Council of Basilea voted in favour of it and proclaimed it an article of faith, and in 1469, the Sorbonne imposed the obligation on its Doctors to believe it as a truth.¹⁴⁸

During the 12th and 13th centuries, the devotions to Mary grew. Three orders that emerged during or shortly after the Waldensian Crusade —The Carmelites, The Servites and the Mercedarians— encouraged the devotion to Mary, not only as the Mother of Christ at this point but as the Mother of God.¹⁴⁹ Her importance grew with the development of purgatory, for she became the emblematic figure that would succour the souls in purgatory.¹⁵⁰ The

¹⁴⁶ Orozco, *Madre de Dios y Madre Nuestra*, 18.

¹⁴⁷ The Virgin's relationship to the Trinity composed of God the Father, Christ and the Holy Spirit is complex: The Virgin is in fact the mother of the child, but she is also the bride of the Holy Spirit and the daughter of God.

¹⁴⁸ Javier Sicilia, *Félix de Jesús Rougier: La seducción de la virgen* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2008), 51.

¹⁴⁹ Not all orders agreed on giving the Virgin Mary a special status. The Dominicans, influenced by the Italian Saint, Thomas Aquinas, questioned the validity of giving the Virgin and her parents a status of gods. The questions revolved around the Virgin's immaculate conception and the debate of whether or not she was free of the stain left by the original sin. The Dominicans believed that she was in fact a human that was also polluted by the stain of the Original Sin, believing otherwise according to Dominicans would give the Virgin's family a status akin to gods. For the debate in Europe read Barbara W. Tuchman *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous 14th Century* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), 484-5. For the debate it created in Mexico when it was the Viceroyalty of the New Spain see Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpuru, *Historia de la educación en la época colonial*, 299-300.

¹⁵⁰ Maria Faustina Kowalska, St., *Diario* (Stockbridge, Massachusetts: Marian Press, 2008), 34.

Popes have used their faculty to state Catholic beliefs through the Dogma of Papal Infallibility twice since its inception in 1870,¹⁵¹ both times related to the devotion that the Virgin inspired. The Catholic Church recognized two occurrences that had to do with the Virgin Mary's biography which are not mentioned in the Bible, but that cement her semi-divine status: the Immaculate Conception¹⁵² and the fact that when Christ's mother died her body and soul went to heaven.¹⁵³

The image of the Mother of Christ is one of the most important images within the Catholic Church, but it is interesting to note that over a period of a thousand years, the image of the Virgin was not as venerated or as widespread as it is now. True, there were pockets of devotion in certain parts of Europe, particularly in France and Aragon,¹⁵⁴ but the devotion was not as wide spread as it would later become. The Catholic Church was once more able to modify its belief system in order to incorporate the image of the Virgin into its creed and to create a theology that justified the importance of the Mother of Christ within the Catholic cosmivision. The importance of these modifications cannot be lost to homosexuals who seek to be accepted incorporated or tolerated within the Catholic Church: if the institution has been able in the past to make modifications to justify its hold on the

¹⁵¹ *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica*, 255. "El Romano Pontífice, cabeza del colegio Episcopal, goza de esta infalibilidad en virtud de su ministerio cuando, como Pastor y Maestro supremo de todos los fieles que confirma en la fe a sus hermanos, proclama por un acto definitivo la doctrina en cuestiones de fe y moral." Kenneth L. Woodwarth, *Making Saints: How the Catholic Church Determines Who Becomes a Saint, Who Doesn't and Why* (New York: Touchstone Books, 1996), 313.

¹⁵² Woodwarth, *Making Saints*, 313. "In 1869, Pius IX convoked the Vatican Council I." He "felt the times called for a Council to define- explicitly and solemnly- the Doctrine of papal infallibility as a dogma of the Church. Already in 1854 he had, after consulting with members of the episcopate, invoked papal infallibility by declaring the Immaculate Conception of Mary a dogma of faith."

¹⁵³ Orozco, *Madre de Dios y Madre Nuestra*, 54. "El día 1 de noviembre de 1950, Pio XII definía como dogma de fe la Asunción de María en cuerpo y alma a la Gloria celeste."

¹⁵⁴ In Aragon the Mother of Christ was venerated as Mary Our Lady of the Seas as can be attested by the Church done in that advocation. For a fictionalized account of the building of the Church. See Ildefonso Falcones, *The Cathedral of the Sea* (New York: Penguin Group, 2008).

people, it could be able to do so in the future to accommodate other groups of people that are not currently accepted.

Although these examples are unfortunately oversimplified, they do provide abundant evidence that the Catholic Church has modified its stance on issues which were considered important in the past; it adapted to change at different times for practical, contextual and rationally self-interested reasons as well as for doctrinal¹⁵⁵ ones. The “truth” which, theoretically, is immutable and unchangeable,¹⁵⁶ has in fact been “changed” many times to suit the interests and sometimes even to help the institution survive. For an organization that in the 21st century refuses to compromise certain beliefs and which has been considered at different times since the papacy of Pius IX¹⁵⁷ as a bulwark of conservatism, it is edifying to realize that the Catholic Church has effected modifications in the past that have, of course, enabled it to survive. This has allowed different ideologies and different groups of people feel that they are a part of the institution, although the processes to change have been slow, taking a century or many more to evolve. The modifications seemed to occur first, and the theology that justified the actions was instituted afterwards as has been explained in the novel idea of purgatory and how the indulgences that supported

¹⁵⁵ And even here some changes were invented to avoid glaring inconsistencies in doctrinal argument rather than from some pious wish to divulge and recapitulate a spiritual truth. See, e.g., Augustine’s famous invention of the doctrine of predestination, which he, in fact, designed to explain the existence of evil in the world. Predestination was a theoretical tool used to escape the problem that, if God is all good, and God is all powerful, and God made the entire world, then if evil exists, it must have come from God. Hence he cannot be at once all powerful and all good. See Clarke and Norman, “Amor Dei, Amor Mundi: Augustine and Dante on Will, World and the Possibility of Democracy,” *Essex Papers in Politic* (Colchester, Essex: Department of Government, University of Essex, 1998). Augustine was also responsible for persuading an entire civilization to believe that the *Genesis* story was, in fact, a literal truth, rather than the allegorical myth that pre-Augustinian Christians believed. See Augustine, *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*. For an excellent account, see Elaine Pagels, *Adam, Eve and the Serpent*.

¹⁵⁶ Kevin Knight, “Truth.”

¹⁵⁷ Sicilia, *Félix de Jesús Rougier*, 72.

the notion worked, were crafted a century after. The upshot of this argument is that if the Church has in the past been able to adapt to the new realities of the laity, it may be able to do so in the future.

Conclusion

This chapter explained why the Catholic Church discriminates against homosexual conduct, what it bases its discrimination of homosexuals on and how it has been possible for the Catholic Church to change on key issues in the past. The belief that homosexuality is sinful, and thus unacceptable, is based on two strands of belief which make up the Catholic Church's ideological stance, one is its reliance on scripture, the other is its belief in the concept of natural law. The documents which the Church has issued and which seek to promote the discrimination of homosexual acts are based on the belief that homosexuality is unnatural for it does not take place in the animal kingdom an assumption based on the writings of St. Augustine of Hippo and St. Tomas Aquinas. The belief that homosexual acts do not occur in the natural world is being challenged by science and the discoveries it has made and which question traditional Catholic belief. If the authority of the Church can be questioned in this area then there may be room for homosexuals within the Church, but this can only be achieved by changing the way Catholicism views homosexuality. The next point to consider, then, is whether the Catholic Church can change its long held position on this particular issue. This thesis believes that it can and in order to demonstrate this possibility it reflects on how it has changed in the past to best conform itself to the way the laity is thinking, making the acceptance of homosexuality a possibility for the future.

