

# Homosexuality And The Church

## H.H Pope Shenouda

"I am very glad to have the opportunity to speak to the pastors of the Church of England, I mean, to speak to the angels of the Church and to the ministers of our Lord; those who were mentioned in the Book of Revelation as stars in the right hand of our Lord. I thank God because He has given me a chance to speak to those to whom the Lord said, 'You will be witnesses to Me.' 'Witnesses to Me' means witnesses to the truth, to the Holy Bible, to the commandments of God, to what the Holy Spirit has said to the churches. I want to speak to you about many things, and hope that should you desire to discuss any point, we will have time to do so." believe first matter is the holiness of the Church. In the Holy Creed we say, 'We The apostolic in One, Holy Church.' This Holy Church is Apostolic and Katholik. In of the Bible means a age, all believers were called saints. A believer in the language baptism, sanctified in the holy saint, because we are sanctified with faith, sanctified in Spirit in our hearts." We are not merely Chrism, sanctified by the work of the Holy Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is abiding in us as it human beings, we are temples of the epistle to the Corinthians, chapters three and six. As temples of is written in the first Spirit, we should have communion with the Holy Spirit. The work of any the Holy is not only the work of a human individual, but is actually the work of the believer ".Spirit Holy

are also the image of God and we carry the image of God to the world. They see We" God. If we in our conduct, in our behavior, the proof that we are the real children of for example, he read the beginning of some of the epistles of St. Paul to the Romans apostle, separated to the gospel writes, 'Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an called to be saints.' The Apostle is ,of God" to all who are in Rome, beloved of God another epistle he writes, 'To the church of God writing to the saints of Rome, and in who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints.' which is at Corinth, to those his second epistle, 'To the church of God which is at Corinth, Again he also says in saints who are in all Achaia.' When he writes to Ephesus, he sends his with all the when greetings to all the saints in Ephesus. To the Philippians he says the same, and to the he writes to the Hebrews in chapter three he writes to those who are called must we 'Divine call who are saints also.' If we are supposed to be saints, how of our Lord to behave as saints, charged as we are with carrying the holy iconic image "?the world

the Apostolic age, not everyone was allowed to enter the church; only those who In" of our were worthy to attend ffb the holy Eucharist and partake of the Blood and Body are the children Lord Jesus Christ. This holy life is what we are called to, because we as obedient children, not ' ,of a holy Father. St. Peter speaks about this point and says ignorance; but as He who called conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your conduct, because it is written, Be holy, for I you is holy, you also be holy in all your live in the lust of the flesh, but they walk according to am holy.' Holy persons do not

persons have two characteristics. The first is that his flesh is guided by the Spirit. Holy Spirit, by his human spirit. The second characteristic is that his spirit, his by the the human spirit is guided by the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God then is guiding holy both in whole person, guiding the spirit and the body, and that person should be ".body and in spirit

me remind you of some verses from the eighth chapter of the epistle to the Let" about the body and the spirit. The holy Apostle says, 'There is therefore now Romans the no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.' And again, 'For those who live live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who minded is death, but to be spiritually Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not minded is life and peace. Because the indeed can be.' Then he says, 'if Christ is in you, the subject to the law of God, nor sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.' body is dead because of are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 'Therefore, brethren, we according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death For if you live ,deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God the persons these are sons of God.' St. Paul mentions here that the sons of God are those ".who are led by the Spirit of God

am sorry to have to speak about an issue that has become a topic of popular I" not to be discussion in the church of late. This subject is homosexuality, and it ought ".a matter of discussion of all, homosexuality is against nature. Sexual expression is permitted only First" within marriage, between man and woman, male and female. Anything else is an matter abnormality and is against nature. When our Lord Jesus Christ discussed this Mark chapter .with the scribes and pharisees in St. Matthew chapter nineteen and St man and ',ten, He said 'From the beginning, God made them male and female When people .woman. This is the will of our God from the beginning of creation received severe walked according to the lust of the flesh in the Old Testament, they only eight persons in ,punishment from God. At the time of the Flood, only the pure clean, who walked the Ark of Noah were saved. All the people who were not who were not clean, ,according to the flesh, perished. Also, the people of Sodom the flesh, the lust of the were burned with fire. They walked according to the lust of ".body; they were not clean in their spirit

persons cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven. They cannot inherit the Carnal" God. We read this in the book of Revelation chapter twenty-one. It kingdom of about the heavenly Jerusalem saying, 'But there shall by no means enter it speaks with anything that defiles, or causes an abomination.' Those who defile themselves abominable acts cannot enter the city of God. In the Old ffb Testament For .homosexuality is described as an abomination worthy of the punishment of death lie with a example, Leviticus chapter eighteen, verse twenty-two reads, 'You shall not verse thirteen, 'If a ,male as with a woman. It is an abomination.' In chapter twenty have committed an man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them ".shall be upon them abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood

course, the New Testament is not less pure than the Old Testament, and we find a Of"

written, proscription of homosexual acts there as well. In Romans chapter one it is and 'For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness Verse 'unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.' How the lusts of twenty-four teaches, 'Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in them up' means that their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves.' 'Gave their uncleanness to the grace of God left them, abandoned them and left them to their bodies. The honor of dishonor their bodies. In such abnormality, they dishonor But if it is abused then it is a dishonor .the body is to be the temple of the Holy Spirit gave them up to vile passions. For even their to the body. 'For this reason God for what is against nature. Like wise also the men, women exchanged the natural use woman, burned in their lust for one another, man with men leaving the natural use of shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error committing what is ". 'due which was

Paul spoke about the debased mind of the homosexual using the phrase .St" the natural use for what is against nature.' We take this to clearly mean 'exchanged homosexuality is clearly against nature. This he avers is uncleanness and that leaving ,dishonor of the body, also receiving penalty. Again, 'Likewise also the men committing what is ' ,the natural use' means that this is abnormal and against nature which is so shameful and shameful.' What I would like to ask is how such a matter discussion in the Church? If against nature have become such an important matter of would be a disaster. If we change there were an attempt to make such acts lawful, it something clearly against nature, to a ,something shameful and worthy of penalty punishment of God both on earth and in the thing accepted and lawful, we deserve the ".world to come

the first epistle to the Corinthians, chapter six, the Apostle says, 'Do not be In" nor ,deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals kingdom sodomites, will inherit the kingdom of God.' None of these will inherit the attempt to of God. How is it then that some employ unimaginable devices in an as to challenge the circumvent a Biblical text so clearly written? Have we come so far is the temple of the Apostle of God who writes, 'do you not know that your body are not your own?' Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you Holy Spirit. The Your body is not your own; your body is the temple of the St. Paul writes, 'Flee .homosexual is sinning against the temple of the Holy Spirit the body, but he who sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside a person sins against commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.' When the Holy Spirit. Light and the Holy Spirit, that means he is separating himself from the beginning God separated light darkness cannot exist together in one place. From '.in such a case from darkness. The Holy Spirit cannot abide

,apostle exhorts, 'glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's The" epistle because the body is for God and the spirit is for God. In chapter three of his of God and that to first Corinthians he adds, 'Do you not know that you are the temple of God, God will the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple are.' Further along in destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you bodies are members of chapter six St. Paul writes, 'Do you not know that your them members of a harlot? Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make because we are His body and His Certainly not!' These are the members of Christ lives in me.' If Christ then lives in me, bones. 'It is no longer I who live, but Christ

members of Christ or the temple of the Holy how can we abuse the body or the dishonor the image of God and lose our holy image and Spirit? How can we abuse or ".flesh? This is against a holy life and against chastity live in the lust of the

his epistle, St. Jude writes, 'as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them In" and in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality vengeance of gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the reminds, 'knowing this: eternal fire.' And in his first epistle to St. Timothy, St. Paul the lawless and insubordinate, that the law is not make for a righteous person, but for and profane, for murderers of fathers for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy for fornicators, for sodomites.' St. Paul ,and murderers of mothers, for manslayers homosexuals among the murderers, among the includes this word 'sodomites' or then was condemned in the Old Testament and lawless, among the ungodly. This sin disobey God in order to please some sinful in the New Testament. So can we "?them persons? Is it not better to correct

our present day I believe that our Lord has given all of us something quite In" places remarkable to consider. AIDS has come to many that persist in a lifestyle that consequence of them in both temporal and eternal risk. Death, as a predictable have been infected may infection, usually comes slowly. It is possible that those who what they have willed for reflect upon what God has willed for them, rather than rather the holy life to which they themselves. I do not mean the disease itself, but even fear such a warning, even though have been called. Unfortunately, many do not ".body they suffer a defilement of the

may be said of Christianity in its supreme ideology? Christianity teaches the What" sublime ideas of spirituality. How can other religions have any idea about this the spiritual life if they know that there is homosexuality in the Church and that should be a Church is discussing whether it is wrong or right? The life of the Church unholy one is not life of holiness. A holy person is a member of the Church, but the it is mentioned that considered a member of the Church at all. In Acts chapter two saved.' To add to the 'the Lord added to the church daily those who were being impure forms of living for Church those who were being saved, means exclusion from against the good name of the Church is a group of saints. Homosexuality is ".Christianity

believe that homosexuality is against the Mysteries of the Church. What can we I" defilement say about the renewal of life, the transfigured life in Christianity if such into a new life in exists within the Church? How can we claim to have been received font, and carrying the stain Christ, clothin ffb g ourselves in Christ from the baptismal we have received includes defilement of a defiled, fallen life? If the new birth that salvation itself? Baptism is called into amongst its members, what can be said of question. Marriage is called into question. And question. Chrismation is called into Orders is called into question. Persons who suffer from a further as we will see, Holy orientation should be ashamed. If they truly know the meaning of homosexual ".life, they cannot confess or otherwise advocate a deviant lifestyle spiritual

To .rights are there for homosexuals? The only right is to be led to repentance What" while all ,live in such defilement of the body, in such dishonor, in such abomination

unbelievable. But what is the time asking for liberties the Church cannot grant, is are being encouraged by even more unbelievable is that these purported rights emboldened by such misguided members of the Church. For their part, and advocates have even misplaced demonstrations of allegiance, homosexual rights ".called for ordination to the priesthood

nature and character of a homosexual priesthood as icon is against everything The" Tradition, that holy Tradition has handed down to us as Orthodox. Members of this worthiness of the candidate the laity, charged with the responsibility of confessing the could hardly preserve the centuries, for ordination by replying Axios, Axios, Axios could an individual incapable of entrusted them by admitting such a one. How repentance? If he cannot control himself, how can repentance himself, lead another to control? If he finds no peace or beauty in the holy life, how he guide others to such confidence to others about the holy life? Will he rely upon the can he speak with others, speak of it as theory, or what's even worse, as fantasy, a thing experience of Moreover, ?childish? If he is carnal, how will he guide others to the spiritual for the "?the Church what will people say about Christianity if such abomination happens in is claimed that homosexuality is a kind of love between man and man. No, my It" purity. brothers. Love should be spiritual; love should be pure. We love others in our love of God, We love others in the Spirit. And loving others should not be against son, wife, sister, or, because our Lord Jesus Christ has said, 'He who loves father to be My disciple.' We brother, more than Me, is not worthy of Me, is not worthy Christ. Every love which we cannot love any other person more than our Lord Jesus Lord, not against. The homosexual have, should be love in the Lord. We love in the great difference between love and lust, lust of love is not love, but lust, and there is a suitable for such a relation, because in the Gospel we the flesh. The word love is not can we say, 'Homosexuality is love?' It is not love; it is a say, 'God is love.' How deviated lust of the flesh, a lust that should be corrected. If a man loves bodily lust, a If a ?another man, can he abuse the man whom he loves? Is this love or destruction punished in the person loves a man, can he lead this man to lose his eternity and be "?image of God next life? Is this a kind of love, to lose ones image, the

people try to provide an excuse for the homosexual saying that he was born in Some" should not this manner, that there was no express choice, and so unfairly burdened, he described, we need be held accountable. I tell you that if he was born in the manner him, to guide him to to heal him, to pu ffb rge him, to correct him, to pray for may not say to him, all repentance, to treat him medically and spiritually. But we you the Body and Blood of right, we accept you as a member of the Church and give abomination. I personally do not our Lord. While he remains in such a state, he is an certainly not in the way that is claimed by, believe that one is homosexual by nature many saints throughout the history of the Church social theorists. We have had too repentance, and they were corrected. They may not have who were fornicators before they were fornicators, essentially the same sin, but without the been homosexuals, but Augustine is a good example, St. Moses the black another, and St. .deviation. St another. Through the grace of God, through the work of pastoral care, Pelagia still corrected. But we cannot say to the homosexual, your case is exceptional, they were case is lawful. This cannot be accepted at all. Because if we give him this your ".lawful status, that means we permit him to remain in sin and not to repent

must keep in mind, my beloved, that we cannot flatter persons at the expense of We" to the commandment of God. May I read you one or two verses from the first epistle men? For the Galatians, 'For do I now persuade men, of God? Or do I seek to please on pleasing men in if I still pleased men, I would not be a servant of Christ.' If I go the servant of Christ. contradiction with the commandment of God, then I will not be guide them to repentance. This If I want to please men in a correct way, then I should should persuade them so that they do not is the spiritual way of pleasing others. We way to reconcile the pleasure of man, if it comes remain in sin and perish. There is no What then is the benefit of pleasing men? In the kingdom .at the displeasure of God who lives in defilement is allowed to enter. No fornicator can of heaven no person kingdom of God. No sodomite can enter the kingdom of God. Or can we enter the "?the words of St. Paul and St. Jude, and St. Peter, and all the others cancel all

I read a book written by one of the clergy, I am ashamed to say, a Bishop, who Once" that was defending homosexuals. He began to attack the doctrine of St. Paul, to say have sunk so ,St. Paul was abnormal. Can it be that we, in our desire to please men by God Himself in a low as to speak against the Apostle, against those elect, elected Gentiles, to be our miraculous apparition and chosen to be the Apostle for the than God? Is this Apostle, in order to please homosexuals? To please men more you. I said I am happy, I acceptable? Let me now return to the first words I said to witness to the Lord. Our Lord am glad to be among the persons who are chosen to Spirit has come upon you; and you said, 'But you shall receive power when the Holy He said, without repentance, you will shall be witnesses to Me.' Of the homosexual repeated twice in the thirteenth chapter of the perish. This judgment of our Lord was three and five. He said, 'I tell you, no; but unless you gospel of St. Luke in verses likewise perish.' Can we find excuses for the homosexual in spite repent you will all the Lord has said? Is this love? No. It is not within the power of the of all that sinners, or to Church. It is not within the power of the Church to justify the case of ".please sinners. We must guide them to repentance ,clergy is bound with this responsibility. In St. Matthew chapter eighteen, God The" saying, 'I our Lord Jesus Christ, gave His servants the Apostles, the priests, authority and whatever you ,say to ffb you whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven authority to bind or loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.' Now we know that the the commandment of to loose must be in harmony with the Bible, in obedience to it will most certainly not God. But if one should bind or loose in disobedience, then epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians, be accepted by God. This is known to us from the even if we (the Apostles), or an angel from chapter one, verses eight and nine. 'But you than what we have preached to you, let him be heaven, preach any other gospel to anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you accursed.' And again, 'If accursed.' We are pastors to guide people through the have received, let him be have not any power, nor any, to give any law contrary to commandments of God. We did our Lord give this authority, of how can this authority to the law of God. Why explained? I think we may put beside it what was written in the bind and loose be Malachi, chapter two, verse seven. 'For the lips of a priest should keep prophecy of messenger of knowledge, and people should seek the law from his mouth; for he is the lips, from his mouth, the Lord of hosts.' The people take the law of the Lord from his God, more than any because he is the person who knows quite well the law of guide. So he binds member of the congregation. He is the teacher. He is the according to the law of according to the law of God which he knows, and he looses

reminds us that the holy Apostle St. Basil. But again, not in contradiction. St. Basil ".another, or contrary gospel were preached Paul dared to anathematize angels if

the responsibility of the clergy to the people is grave. It is repeated twice in The " of man, I prophecy of Ezekiel, in chapter three and also in chapter thirty-three. 'Son from My have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefor hear a word shall surely mouth, and give them warning from Me: When I say to the wicked, You his wicked die, and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from iniquity; but his blood I way, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his we suffer that the blood of these will require at your hand.' We are pastors. How can from us? We should warn them and say wicked persons who will perish be required lead to destruction. And at the same time God to them that their present course will wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, not says, 'Yet, if you warn the shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.' from his wicked way, he are again mentioned by our Lord in chapter thirty-three emphasizing The same words ;So you, son of man: I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel' .this point to therefor you shall hear a word from My mouth and warn them for Me. When I say the the wicked, O wicked man, you shall surely die! and you do not speak to warn blood I will wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his should warn wicked require at your hand.' We should fear such condemnation. We you continue to walk in the persons and say to them that their path leads to death. If ".commandment of God way of flesh you will die. You should obey the

some lecture of H.H. Shenouda III concludes, and at this point he begins to field The discussion questions. These questions were polite and did not bring any aspect of the now address more clarity, so we will depart from the format we have been using to focus. Another voice some issues that the intervening years have brought into sharper should know that we in the will be heard, consonant not dissonant, but the reader Cathedra' declaration. Our Coptic Orthodox Church have no provision for an 'Ex things in the Church. He is our most Patr ccf iarch obviously is at the center of all you that dogmatic positions of faith must have able theologian, but even he would tell At this time, there has not been any official .their genesis in the Holy Synod the subject of homosexuality. Additionally, it pronouncement from that body on continually talking only to itself. There is a growing distance seems that the West is perception of some as to what is demonstrably real when societies look at one in the another. In the Church this same problem develops because of a lack of a common of a hermeneutic. Virtually everything may be called into question, and the defense part will single issue requires a reasoned agreement on what the least constituent control the contain. We need to begin with a new lexicon, because whoever will .vocabulary will control the debate

and use of the word love is central to any discussion. We learn about love, wholly The through His completely, from God. All of the meaning of love is contained in and any Christian relationship with us. Love defines us and is the common currency in in biblical text. We exchange. The type and nature of God's love is clearly outlined sort. We experience the care are taught to distinguish God's love from every other exploitation There are numerous cautionary and the protection of God's love, never of abandoning, or being abandoned. To be tales that speak to the consequence the essence of Hell. Given that this is true, any separated from God's love is in fact

that love is not an innocuous, or alternative or subjective distortion of the image of  
rather an attack on the revealed identity of God Himself. Orthodoxy experience, but  
has ,eastern or oriental expression, divided since the middle of the fifth century in its  
We stand .developed a parallel theology surrounding the use of icons in the Church  
They have .before them and they confess to us both a history and living presence  
is the bishop's their own language and are written with utmost care and precision. It  
diocese; it is for him to responsibility to oversee the placement of each icon in his  
no equivalent anywhere else. judge the written truth of each holy image. There is  
personal taste, and when this is Sacred art seems to have degraded to a matter of  
.matters is the consequence allowed to occur, a general laxity in other