

## **The evidence for the views of the Pope which we challenge**

### **Gays tend “towards intrinsic moral evil”:**

In 1986 the Congregation for the Declaration of the Faith, of which Benedict XVI was Prefect, circulated a letter entitled “On the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons” to all Bishops.

[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_19861001\\_homosexual-persons\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19861001_homosexual-persons_en.html)

Clarifying the position of the Church to homosexuality, and criticising a more liberal interpretation in a previous letter from the Congregation for the Declaration of the Faith, the letter said that “although the particular inclination of the homosexual person is not a sin, it is a more or less strong tendency ordered toward an intrinsic moral evil; and thus the inclination itself must be seen as an objective disorder.” (See paragraph 3 of the letter).

So far as is known, this document is still current and must therefore be assumed to represent the current views of the Vatican and Pope Benedict XVI.

In his end of year address to the Curia (the Central Administration Department of the Vatican) in December 2008, Pope Benedict XVI emphasised the importance of dealing with homosexuality by equating it with the importance of dealing with Climate Change. This tends to suggest that his 1986 views have not softened.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/dec/23/pope-gender-sexuality>

### **Discrimination against LGBT people is “not unjust”:**

In 1992, he again approved a document from the Congregation for the Declaration of the Faith, this time entitled “Some considerations concerning the

response to legislative proposals on the non-discrimination of homosexual persons”.

<http://www.ewtn.com/library/CURIA/CDFHOMOL.HTM>

As the name of the document suggests, this document set out an approach to the issue of dealing with discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. The document argues that “there are areas in which it is not unjust discrimination to take sexual orientation into account”, citing the selection of adoptive or foster parents, the employment of teachers or athletic coaches and military recruitment as examples of areas in which such discrimination would be “just” and should be permitted. (See paragraph 11).

The document specifically states that sexual orientation is **not** equivalent to race or ethnicity in relation to freedom from discrimination because it is an “objective disorder” and it evokes “moral concern”. (See paragraph 10).

Again, so far as is known, this document is still current and must therefore be assumed to represent the current views of the Vatican and Pope Benedict XVI.

**Same-sex marriage is “insidious and dangerous”:**

In May 2010, on a visit to Portugal, Pope Benedict XVI called for initiatives to protect “the family based on the indissoluble marriage between a man and a woman, help to respond to some of today’s most insidious and dangerous threats to the common good.”. His speech was made in the context of the Portuguese Parliament approving a bill permitting same-sex marriage.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/14/world/europe/14pope.html>

### **Ordaining women is a “grave crime” as they are unfit to preach the gospel:**

In July 2010 The Vatican condemned the ordination of women as priests as a “grave crime”, confirming a long-standing view that only men are fit to preach the gospel. The description “grave crime” was also used in relation to child abuse. Although they said they were not intending to equate the two, the use of the same phraseology is telling.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-10658162>

### **The use of condoms could make the HIV epidemic worse:**

In March 2009, on a trip to Cameroon, Pope Benedict XVI argued that the use of condoms, which the Catholic Church has long considered a sin along with other forms of artificial contraception, could be responsible for making the HIV epidemic in many African and other countries worse.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/mar/17/pope-africa-condoms-aids>

This time he appears to have been arguing that the availability of condoms encourages sexual activity and that abstinence from sex outside marriage would be far more effective in addressing the HIV epidemic. However, back in 2003 The Vatican were arguing that condoms were permeable to the HIV virus and thus were simply ineffective as a protection. It is not clear whether they still subscribe to this view.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/panorama/3180236.stm>

### **OTHER ISSUES:**

In the sections above, we have concentrated on providing the basis for our specific claims about the present views of Pope Benedict XVI and the present

Vatican. There are many more issues with which different groups of people take issue, including their response to the child abuse which has happened within the Catholic Church for many years, their views on abortion and the use of embryonic stem cells for research and the fact that the Pope has rescinded the excommunication of a holocaust-denier Bishop.

Many of these were covered by Peter Tatchell and other speakers at the Public Meeting held in Richmond upon Thames on 12 August 2010 organised by the Richmond upon Thames LGBT Forum to allow discussion of the issues surrounding the visit of the Pope by local people. The text of Peter Tatchell's speech, and a summary of the points raised by the other speakers, can be found elsewhere on [www.richmondlgbtforum.org.uk](http://www.richmondlgbtforum.org.uk).

In short, the Pope, and his Vatican, presently appear to hold a whole range of hard-line, intolerant views which have no place in a major world religion in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and which are increasingly out of step with more and more members of the Catholic Church. They should be challenged at every opportunity.