

Russian Orthodox Church

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"THE CHURCH CANNOT APPROVE OF THE PERVERSION OF HUMAN NATURE CREATED BY THE CREATOR HIMSELF"



In connection with the episcopal consecration of an openly gay priest V. Gene Robinson, the Department for External Church Relations is empowered to make a special statement.

The Church has always regarded homosexual contacts as a grave sin.

There are clear and indisputable testimonies in the Bible about the inadmissibility of such relations between people for Christians: *'You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination', 'If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed abomination; they shall be put to death' (Lev 18:22; 20:13).* St. Paul definitely said about *'dishonourable passions'* of people who *'exchanged the truth about God for a lie': 'their women exchanged natural relations to unnatural, and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another'* The apostle pointed at the inevitable *'God's decree'* not only about those whose conduct was improper and who *'were filled with all manner of wickedness, :covetousness'* but also about those who *'approve'* (cf. Rom 18-32).

Such people separate themselves from the unity of faith. According to the Apostle, they will not inherit the eternal life: *'Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolaters: nor homosexuals: will inherit the kingdom of God'* (cf. 1 Cor 6:9-10).

The advocates of the ordination of homosexuals maintain that there is no direct condemnation of these kind of sexual contacts in the Holy Scriptures and that the above-cited texts from the Bible should not be understood literally, as, according to them, only the fundamentalists and conservatives do. Yet in this case any Biblical text can be interpreted in any sense, depending on the instant desires of a particular group of people.

The Biblical texts about the condemnation of homosexuality are clear and unequivocal. They have formed Christian morals, educated many generations of people and created modern culture. The negation of the direct meaning of the words of St. Paul contradicts the centuries long Christian tradition of the comprehension of these texts and is contrary to common sense.

Homosexuality is a sin, which separates man from God. At the same time the Church does not deny help to those unfortunate people, who are possessed with this ailment. God is love, and Christians should pray for all sinners and wish them salvation. However, the Church cannot approve of the perversion of human nature created by the Creator Himself. The Church cannot bless the distortion of the image of God, Who is the most profound foundation of human dignity. The Church teaches about the original differences of both sexes, about chastity and predestination of man for sanctity. The Church safeguards the tradition of Christian marriage between man and wife blessed by God Himself at Cana in Galilee. The Church will cease witnessing about holiness, purity and the truth of God, if she gives up the teaching revealed to her by God.

We see a great danger to a modern man in the processes, which are going on in the Episcopal Church in the USA and in some other Christian communities of Western world. People are becoming accustomed to the notion that homosexuality is not a deviation, neither a perversion, but just a kind

of 'love', which even the Church blesses. For instance, the leadership of the Episcopalian Church in the USA at the General Convention in Minnesota last summer approved of a possibility of blessing the unisexual marriages. The document adopted by the Convention gives the 'local communities' and parishes the right to elaborate the rituals for the blessing of unisexual couples.

The consequences are terrible, as even people with normal sexual orientation are joining in homosexuality.

Our faith is built upon the Word of God, which has preserved the immutable Truth of God. The liberal view on the attitude of the Church to homosexuality is the way to the destruction of the very foundations of the Church and to its likening to secular public institutes.

The Russian Orthodox Church has maintained good relations with the Episcopal Church in the USA for almost two hundred years. Our relations remained warm and friendly even in the period of the 'cold war', when Christians had mutual understanding and supported one another in the world divided into the confronting military blocks. The Episcopal Church in the USA supported Orthodox Christians in our country at the time of persecution for the faith in Christ. Particularly friendly relations between our two Churches have been established in the early 1990s, when a Joint Coordinating Committee for Cooperation between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Episcopal Church in the USA was set up. The Committee prepared and carried out three theological conversations, successfully implemented common social and educational projects and arranged visits to one another.

However, the 'consecration' of a gay priest has made any communications with him and with those who consecrated him impossible. We shall not be able to cooperate with these people not only in the theological dialogue, but also in the humanitarian and religious and public spheres. We have no right to allow even a particle of agreement with their position, which we consider to be profoundly antiChristian and blasphemous.

Because of this situation the Russian Orthodox Church is forced to suspend the work of the Joint Coordinating Committee and to freeze her contacts with the Episcopalian Church in the USA.

We want to maintain contacts and cooperation with those members of the Episcopal Church in the USA who clearly declared their loyalty to the moral teaching of the Holy Gospel and the Ancient Undivided Church.

We pray our God, God of love and reconciliation, to put sense into the members of the Episcopal Church in the USA and help them return to the way of the *Truth*, which is our Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Jn 14:6).

ВНИМАНИЕ!

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