



ELEPHANTS IN THE LIVING ROOM

DISCUSSING WHAT NEEDS TO BE DISCUSSED

Website: elephantsinthelivingroom.com



June 20, 2006

Cardinal Adam Maida
Archdiocese of Detroit
1234 Washington Blvd.
Detroit, MI 48226

Dear Cardinal Maida,

At the request of the Education Committee of the Elephants in the Living Room, I am writing to share with you two issues raised by our recent forum on the Vatican Decree on Homosexuality and Admission to Seminaries and Holy Orders.

As you know, the Instruction repeats the Magisterium's teaching on homosexual "tendencies" as "objectively disordered." The teaching does not fit well with the increasingly prevailing scientific theory that homosexuality is genetic in nature; more basic than even a "deep-seated tendency" and more God-given than the words "objectively disordered" imply. As we examine this discrepancy between Church teaching and present scientific understanding, we cannot help but feel this is one of those instances, present from the Church's beginnings (Acts 10), where the Holy Spirit is using those outside its official teaching voice to guide it to the Truth.

The other issue is pastoral and local in nature: our archdiocesan interpretation of the Instruction's statement that those who "practice homosexuality, present deep-seated homosexual tendencies or support the so-called 'gay culture'" can not be admitted to the seminary or holy orders. It is our understanding that we allow homosexual men to enter the seminary and become priests as long as they don't publicly acknowledge their sexual orientation. If this is correct, it makes us question how we address the serious issue of mature sexual development in our seminary formation. Are we encouraging men born gay who feel called to the priesthood to not acknowledge and/or repress their sexual orientation? If so, then we fear we are returning to an unhealthy past practice (where one's sexuality was to all extent and purposes ignored in formation) that will cause us more harm in the future.

I close by expressing our belief that the theological understanding of "reception" in the process of development of doctrine bears on this particular issue. It is not simply the sexual promiscuity of the culture that is causing many people to ignore or reject the magisterial teaching on homosexuality. Dedicated and theologically educated people who love the Church are also finding it to be a very inadequate expression of the Spirit of Truth.

Sincerely yours,

Fr. Tom Lumpkin

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cc: Rev. Stephen Boguslawski, OP
Rector, Sacred Heart Major Seminary