

Response to Tony Blair's Antics

by Fr Linus Clovis PhD

Tony Blair tells the Pope: you're wrong on homosexuality

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The Pope greets Tony Blair during a private audience with him and his wife Cherie at the Vatican

Ruth Gledhill, Religion Correspondent

Tony Blair has challenged the "entrenched" attitudes of the Pope on homosexuality, and argued that it is time for him to "rethink" his views.



Speaking to the gay magazine

Attitude, the former Prime Minister, himself now a Roman Catholic, said that he wanted to urge religious figures everywhere to reinterpret their religious texts to see them as metaphorical, not literal, and suggested that in time this would make all religious groups accept gay people as equals.

The Response to Tony Blair's interview with the gay magazine

By Fr Linus Clovis PhD

Several newspapers have reported on Tony Blair's interview with the gay magazine Attitude in which he urges "religious figures everywhere to reinterpret their religious texts ... to make all religious groups accept gay people as equals."

I wish to highlight just a few of the many inconsistencies in Mr. Blair's reported position, especially concerning his injudicious comments about Pope Benedict XVI.

First, it is claimed that Mr. Blair converted to Catholicism, but with his open and public dissent from the Church's moral teaching, it is evident that he merely entered the Catholic Church without actually becoming a Catholic. As the Vatican II document, Lumen Gentium §14 warns a person may indeed be in the bosom of the Church but "in body" not "in heart". In other words, Mr. Blair has merely become a Roman Protestant.

Second, presumably when he entered the Catholic Church, having married a catholic woman, he would have been fully aware of the Church's principled teaching on marriage in general and homosexuality in particular. Since he has not repudiated his affinity for homosexuality, why did he leave the Anglican Church, the first Christian church to sanction divorce, to approve the use of contraception, and to ordain openly practising homosexuals as bishops, (dogmas strongly held by Mr. Blair), and join the Catholic Church, which explicitly, consistently and authoritatively repudiates all of these? Did he not make a profession of faith when he entered the Catholic Church? If yes, he is being

hypocritical in judging the Pope wrong for teaching that homosexuality is a “tendency towards an intrinsic moral evil”.

Third, why did he choose to refer to the Levitical condemnation of homosexuality over the Pauline, which is so much more relevant and explicit? St. Paul enumerates some of the sins that endanger our salvation: “Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God.” 1Cor.6:9-10. Fornication, stealing and lying are just as evil as homosexual acts.

Fourth, he claims that the Pope is out of step with the public. I agree with him and thank God, the Pope is out of step. The Catholic Church was not founded to rubber stamp public opinion or to canonize worldly wisdom, but to teach what God requires of us: Jesus said to His apostles, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." Mt.28:18-20. Catholics believe that the Pope, as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful, has Divine assistance when he proclaims by a definitive act a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals and that this doctrine is unalterable, whether accepted or not. In short, Pope Benedict XVI and his successors, like their predecessors but unlike most modern politicians, can never teach that homosexual acts are anything but immoral, that is, the Popes can never “call evil good and good evil, put darkness for light and light for darkness, put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter” Is.5:20. Further, I do not recall Mr. Blair giving much credence to the millions of Britons who thought he was out of step and expressed the view that his war with Iraq was wrong.

Fifth, the Church does not reject homosexual people but openly and warmly welcomes, accepts and embraces them as equals. She condemns their behaviour, just as she welcomes, accepts and embraces fornicators, liars and even hypocrites into her fold while condemning their behaviour.

Sixth, I am surprised that a man of Mr. Blair’s experience can aspire, with his views, to be an “unofficial ambassador for the Catholic Church”. He should know that an ambassador is one who speaks on behalf of the authority he represents. What would have been his reaction had the British ambassador to the UN said that he thought that Prime Minister Blair was both out of touch with public opinion and wrong on the invasion of Iraq?

I could go on but will end here with the thought that as Mr. Blair “travels the world on behalf of the Tony Blair Faith Foundation” does he claim to have a different Gospel from St Paul who wrote “Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonouring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever! Amen. For this reason, God gave them up to dishonourable passions. Their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural, and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in their own persons the due penalty for their error”. Rom.1:24-27

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