

Authoritarianism and fear as components of dysfunction in contemporary Catholicism

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ABSTRACT

Authority is legitimate, constructive, and moral. “For there is no authority except from God” (Rom: 13.10). Authoritarianism, however, is illegitimate, destructive, and immoral, with fear being an insidious inherent component. Any organization which is controlled by a single person tends to become authoritarian. Through its laws and prohibitions an authoritarian regime inflicts psychological abuse on its followers in opposition to the words of Jesus: “Their rulers lord it over them . . . but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant” (Mark: 10.42-43).

To what extent, if any, does the Roman Catholic Church demonstrate authoritarianism? This thesis will explore this possibility by considering secrecy, infallibility, democracy, dissidence, sexuality, homophobia, misogyny, clericalism, the *sensus fidelium*, and pedophilia in the Catholic Church. Finally, this thesis will suggest, also, possible solutions to any observed defects.

KEY WORDS

Authoritarianism, fear, sexuality, misogyny, homophobia

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1.0 Introduction

Any individual, whether in a political, social, educational, or religious organization, should be loyal to that institution but simultaneously must not be afraid to recognize and point out any flaws which become apparent in it. In the context of the Roman Catholic Church this is both true and apparent. This dissertation, while dealing specifically with the institution itself, must refer as well to the nature of the human organization within it. In doing so it does not intend to malign any individual but will point out at least in general terms, the mismanagement, the inefficiency, and the laws and directives which perpetuate the stagnation of this two-thousand-year-old institution. In doing so my motivation is always based on my love for the Church, and it does not preclude recognition for the many benefits and gifts bestowed by the Church on every member of the organization. Should any individual be acknowledged by name, it is merely to identify the problem or error but does not reflect on the morality of the individual. Authoritarianism with its inherent secrecy, fear, and micro-management must be addressed and prescriptions for renewal must be provided. The problem does not lie basically at the grassroots level; rather, it lies at the very pinnacle of power within the Church – in the Vatican, in the Curia, and within the hearts of the ultra-conservative members of the hierarchy who are committed to retaining power and authority and who place laws and restrictions above humility and love.

Individuals throughout the history of the Church have acted in a manner not necessarily according to the teachings of Jesus Christ. Garry Wills, in *Papal Sin*, speaks of Edgardo Mortara, an Italian Jew, who was baptized by a domestic when the boy was seriously ill. After his recovery, because he had been baptized, Pius IX had him taken from his family and raised as a Catholic in the Vatican (Wills, 2000: 40-41, citing Giacomo Martina, [Pio IX, 1851-1866], *Miscellanea historiae ecclesiasticae in Pontificae universitatis Gregoriana* 51 [1986]). James Carroll in *Constantine's Sword* (2001) refers to Pius XII, who failed to condemn publically the Nazi treatment of Jews during World War II. Carroll tells us in *Practicing Catholic* that although his supporters opposed this

view, Pope John XXIII refused to deny what he saw as truth (Carroll, 2001: 44-45). Paul VI issued *Humanae Vitae*, the birth control encyclical, in spite of and contrary to the decision reached by the body he instructed to study the matter (Paul VI, 1968: 2; 5). John Paul II refused to consider the ordination of women (John Paul II, 1994: 2-3), and Benedict XVI instigated the demotion by John Paul II of the theologian, Hans Küng (Carroll, 2009: 247). In each case it is my intention to accept the decisions made by these men as though they acted according to their consciences and for what they considered the welfare of the Church. My disagreement with and disapproval of their actions is limited, then, to the actions taken and does not in any way reflect on their personal morality. Also, it is important to note here that the judgement made on the authoritarian nature of the Church is geared not only to the traditional past but also to the more recent past as well as contemporarily. Serious problems still exist within the Church but with the advent of Pope Francis, the outlook for a John XXIII renewal may well be imminent.

Finally, with regard to the fear factor which may appear to be endemic within the Church, Cayley, in *The Rivers North of the Future*, suggests that Church laws began to control the faithful and “the criminalization of sin opened Christians to new fears ... These fears are easily exploited by politicians” (Cayley, 2005: 92-4). Cayley continues: “One of the deepest horrors of modern man is to recognize to which degree that inner fear, to which he doesn’t know how to relate, makes a sham out of his freedom” (Cayley, 2005: 101).

Robin, in *Fear: The History of a Political Idea*, writes that “fear and terror were [are] instruments of those wielding power from above” (Robin, 2004: 29).

To the extent, then, that fear may be endemic within the Church, this dissertation suggests that fear is a deciding factor in the actions or inactions perceived by individual Church members regardless of their personal pre-eminence.

Faulkner, in *Supreme Authority* writes that “Hans Küng, [was] a controversial Swiss Catholic theologian whose criticism of the Church resulted in his status as a Catholic

theologian being revoked” (Faulkner, 2003: 73). When Fr. Tissa Balasuriya published *Mary and Human Liberation*, he too, was denounced by the Vatican and even excommunicated although this punishment was lifted owing to a prodigious outcry from the Catholic population of Sri Lanka. Balasuriya writes that while going through the pain of excommunication he bore its cross in the spirit of Colossians 1.24 (Balasuriya, 1997: vii).

James Carroll, once a Catholic priest, is perhaps best known for his *Constantine’s Sword*, a book of insightful and respectful analysis of Catholic/Jewish relations while cognisant of the fear of Judaism experienced by Catholicism over the centuries. Carroll writes that in 1242 the public burning in the great square of Paris was a first indication that a living, growing Judaism would not be allowed to survive (Carroll, 2001: 310).

Other sources which lend credence to this topic and which are useful in determining any degree of dysfunction inherent in Catholicism include, among many others, *The Dysfunctional Church* (Michael H. Crosby, 1991:119), *The Silencing of Leonardo Boff*, (Harvey Cox, 1988:156; 173-4), *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, (Michel Foucault, 1978:89), *Supreme Authority*, (Mary Faulkner, 2003:89), and *Homophobia*, (Byrne Fone, 2000:150). The importance of the focus on dysfunction is based on several factors including the refusal of the Church to acknowledge the *sensus fidelium*, the lack of collegiality, and the claim to infallibility. In addition, homophobia, misogyny, and the deplorable action of some of the clergy who have violated the young through criminal activities and the subsequent veil of secrecy and denial of responsibility all add to dysfunction. All of this is relevant in the face of declining membership and scandal which is paradoxical to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

While authority is a legitimate phenomenon, the authoritarian nature of an organization is manifested in situations in which the authority has been corrupted so that the holders of that authority act in such a way that their own best interests become the guiding force of their governance. Thus, the faithful within the organization are seen as vassals in order for the authority figures to remain in power

and so that their power and authority are enhanced. Rather than serving their followers authoritarian figures tend to dominate and control. The statement – often misquoted – by Lord Acton that “power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely” which was intended to challenge the claim to infallibility by Pius IX, is particularly relevant to the governance inherent in contemporary Catholicism. The situation, however, requires clarification. Carroll notes Acton’s words regarding power and corruption noting the less well-known fact that the British aristocrat was a Catholic opposed, in 1870, to the dogma of papal infallibility, and the power he was warning of was the pope’s. (Carroll, 2001: 573)

1.1 Background

John XXIII opened the windows of the Vatican to enlighten the Church, to redefine the meaning of Church, and to eliminate the darkness which had held the Church in the grip of medieval irrationality. Did John Paul II extinguish the spark ignited by his predecessor and did Benedict XVI follow his lead? Indications seem to suggest that Francis will attempt to modernize the Church.

In the mid-nineteenth century, Pius IX proclaimed the concept of infallibility. Küng notes in *Infallibility? An Inquiry* that papal infallibility was defined by the First Vatican Council in 1870 (Küng, 1983:1). When in the twentieth century he published his book *Infallibility? An Inquiry*, he was summoned to the Vatican, as noted above.

1.2 Problem Statement

The research question asks to what extent the Catholic Church is an authoritarian Institution. This evaluative research will be conducted through a study of the literature which pertains to the possibility of authoritarianism in the Catholic Church. Fear is a crucial and debilitating emotion. This is exacerbated by any authoritarian system in which secrecy is intrinsic to the organization. Such an organization, by the very nature of its governance, develops dysfunction within itself. In *Vows of Silence*, Berry and

Renner (2004: 24-25, 233, and 275) describe the nature of the silence, secrecy, and scandal inherent in the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church. It is this consequential fear which compels the leadership to appropriate this silence. The fear of scandal and the fear of loss of control over the Church's communicants are overriding factors which compel hierarchical control. Moreover, the fear of the Lord is a valid and well-studied religious concept. Authoritarian control serves only to further the weaknesses inherent in it. On the other hand, Weigel, in his *The Courage To Be Catholic*, states definitively that "the Catholic Church is not an authoritarian institution" (Weigel 2002:42). At this time no literature has been developed which has recognized fear as a basic and critical flaw in the realm of religion.

Dysfunction in the Catholic Church is exacerbated by a number of unresolved issues. These include, but are not limited to, the failure to adequately address the sexual abuse scandal, the failure to address the priest shortage, the failure to accommodate the *sensus fidelium*, and the failure to extricate women from a tertiary status. For the Church to succeed in its mission to adequately represent Christ to its members and in the world, it may be appropriate to resolve these issues.

1.3 Research Questions

The main research question is:

To what extent, if any, is the Roman Catholic Church an authoritarian institution?

Subsidiary questions arising from the main research question are the following:

- To what extent, if any, does authoritarianism promote secrecy and fear?
- In what sense does institutional fear lead to dysfunction in a Church?
- In what sense are authority by default, misogyny, homophobia, and pedophilia examples of Church dysfunction?

1.4 Aims and Objectives

The main aim of this study is to determine to what extent, if any, the Catholic Church is an authoritarian institution.

The specific objectives of the study are:

- to determine whether or not secrecy is an inherent characteristic of the organization
- to determine to what extent fear is endemic to the organization
- to determine whether the authority of bishops is authentic and demonstrable
- to determine whether misogyny exists in the organization
- to determine whether homophobia is an inherent phenomenon in the organization
- to determine whether the organization tends to promote the development of pedophilia.

1.5 Central theoretical argument

The central theoretical argument of this study is that the governance of the Catholic Church is authoritarian and by virtue of this fact promotes fear and dysfunction associated with secrecy, misogyny, homophobia, and fear of sexuality.

1.6 Methodology

This theological-ethical study is done from the perspective of the Roman Catholic tradition. The qualitative research method is employed.

The following methods are used to answer the various research questions:

- In order to study and evaluate the arguments suggesting an authoritarian character of the Church, a literature analysis is employed to discover instances and established customs. Some of the sources for this study include the following: *Vows of Silence* by Berry, *Liberation of the Laity* by Lakeland, *Toward a New Catholic Church* by Carroll, *The Silencing of Leonardo Boff* by Cox, *The Dysfunctional Church* by Crosby, and *Supreme Authority* by Faulkner.

- In order to study and evaluate the arguments suggesting the opposite view, that is, the view that the Roman Catholic Church is not an authoritarian institution, a literature analysis is employed. This list includes the following: *The Courage To Be Catholic* by Weigel, *Freedom and Its Discontents* by Weigel, , *Heresy: Ten Lies They Spread About Christianity* by Michael Coren, *Why Catholicism Matters* by Wm. Donohue, as well as relevant papal encyclicals.
- In order to locate scriptural evidence in support of the indictment pertaining to authoritarianism as well as the opposing view, relevant scriptural passages are identified and exegesis of them is made.
- In order to determine to what extent secrecy is an integral part of Vatican bureaucracy, existing literature will be consulted and evaluated.
- In order to investigate the existence of fear in the Catholic Church, a literature analysis is conducted.

The apparent reluctance of the Vatican to allow full discretionary authority to the bishops will be investigated through the use of texts, encyclicals, and other documents originating in Rome.

Incidences of misogyny, homophobia and pedophilia will be discovered through appropriate contemporary sources such as books and news accounts.

1.7 Concept Clarification

Fear, when it does not meet the “flee or fight response”, may represent a state wherein the individual has no recourse to justice or moral leadership. When Charles Curran, summoned to the Vatican by Cardinal Ratzinger, indicated that other theologians held positions similar to his own, Ratzinger indicated that such views were not relevant (Curran, 2006: 124). An individual who finds himself or herself subjected to manipulation and exploitation becomes unable to act in a responsible manner. Such fear leads to a position of insecurity and immobility. Curran (2006:139-40) wrote Hickey requesting the due process proceedings. He notes that this was the beginning of a procedure that involved further negotiations and ultimately a lawsuit, a process

which would take two and a half years, and for him, he says, another long and draining experience. It seems possible that fear may have been inherent in this ongoing experience.

Dysfunction in any organization develops in an atmosphere of fear of reprisal. The institution, rather than growing through constructive practice, stagnates under the weight of its own inefficiency. Its adherents become incapable of any positive contribution, affecting the organization negatively. Crosby (1991: 28) writes that addiction can be considered any object or dynamic that controls at any level, behavior, emotions, and thinking in such an obsessive-compulsive way that it leads to increasing powerlessness and unmanageability and ultimately, death. It involves, Crosby (1991: 28) continues, intellectual, emotional, and behavioral conditions which prevent the open expression of thinking, feeling, and activity. Crosby (1991: 28) writes further that an individual's feelings will be frozen or fear-filled and anxious.

“Authority by default” is my reference to the inability of each local bishop to govern his own diocese with an adequate degree of freedom and competence. When micro-management from on high becomes the norm for local governance then the bishop becomes little more than a pawn, a manager for one segment of an organization. Such a situation renders the institution stagnant, immobile and intransigent as if it possessed something similar to the divine right of kings. When independent action is monitored by a supreme power then fear becomes a viable form of control. Faulkner (2003:33-34) refers to collegiality, which means that the churches share with the pope the governance and pastoral mission of the Church. Faulkner continues, stating that the problem is that the pope has gathered unto himself an enormous amount of unquestioned authority. Hence a tension continues between the role played by the pope vis-à-vis the local bishop. Faulkner concludes his argument with the statement that the two popes who reigned most of the years since Vatican II, Paul VI and John

Paul II, have paid lip service to collegiality but in practice exercised a robust form of papal primacy.

Misogyny, which describes the antipathy held by a male power structure over women, is based primarily on fear. When women are kept in a position of servitude no threat to the male power structure is perceived. When women, however, begin to challenge their patriarchal masters then that patriarchy begins to fear the potential for women's ascendancy. Control of power is a fragile component of patriarchal hierarchy and creates an unstable balance between supremacy and freedom. Faulkner (2003:146) notes that a considerable collection of Church documents points to the hierarchy's fixation with sexuality and celibacy. He continues stating that these reflect both hate and fear which are often projected onto women.

Lakeland (2003:142) suggests that in liturgical life there is a struggle for justice. He says that one challenge to the church is that it preaches human freedom but does not extend these freedoms to its own members. In the long misogynistic history of the institutional church, women are excluded from ordained ministry, he continues, and have been held subordinate to men. He concludes by saying that they have been offered the spirituality of *agape* as a hegemonic discourse and have been led to embrace their own oppression.

It is possible that homophobia is based, in part, on a perceived notion of a threat to masculinity, inciting a negative response toward the homosexual person from the one threatened. Although this is not the premise in this thesis, it may be an interesting concept for further study. The Church expresses the constant that we should love the sinner but hate the sin. The bishops of the American Church (1997:1) in their publication of the document entitled *Always Our Children* nevertheless modify the word *always* to mean *sometimes* when the homosexual expresses a desire for same sex relationships. This fundamental failure to accept every individual as made in the image of God succeeds only to diminish their own capacity to love and to magnify the

deep-seated feeling of disgust and fear which the condition arouses in them. The Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in its *Persona Humana* (1975:5) declares on questions concerning sexual ethics that no pastoral method can be employed which would give moral justification to homosexual acts. In Sacred Scripture, the CDF continues, such acts are condemned as a serious depravity and even presented as the sad consequence of rejecting God. This judgment, the CDF concludes, does not permit them to conclude that all those who suffer from this anomaly are personally responsible for it but it does attest to the fact that homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered and can in no case be approved of.

In the Second Vatican Council document entitled *Lumen Gentium* (1964:8), Paul VI indicates that what the entire Church believes regarding faith and morals cannot be in error. However, when the hierarchy of the Church disagrees with what the laity believes, the hierarchy rules and the principle of the *sensus fidelium* is lost. Perhaps the most prominent example lies in the area of birth control. In spite of the fact that the majority report by the commission established by Paul VI to study the matter established that in fact the use of contraceptive techniques could be allowed, Paul VI (1968:2) ruled against the decision in his now infamous *Humanae Vitae* (1968:2). Paul VI declares that the conclusions at which the commission arrived could not, nevertheless, be considered by him as definitive, nor dispense him from a personal examination of this serious question. This pontiff may have feared to contradict a finding that a previous pope had declared official teaching.

Infallibility implies that when the pope speaks *ex cathedra*, that is when he speaks from the throne of Peter as head of the Church in matters of faith and morals, he cannot err. But there is, also, a creeping infallibility where statements made by popes take on a semblance of infallibility. John Paul II, for example, made statements pertaining to the impossibility of ordaining women to the priesthood, and stated that his teaching was to be accepted and believed unconditionally. Although he did not claim the distinction of

infallibility in this instance, he did in fact intimate that his statement was none the less infallible. John Paul II in his *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* (1994:2-3) states that in order that all doubt may be removed regarding this matter in virtue of his ministry of confirming the brethren (cf. Lk 22:32) he declared that the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and that this judgment was to be definitively held by all the Church's faithful. The Church's teaching concerning infallibility was declared by Pius IX at Vatican I in 1869-1870.

Secrecy emanating from the Vatican is confirmed in at least two specific situations. One is where a theologian has been disciplined by the Vatican and sworn to secrecy. One example of this is the silencing of Leonardo Boff. Boff had disagreed with Ratzinger's insistence (Boff, 1988: 99 and 105) that the Church of Christ both is, and can only be, fully present in the Roman Catholic Church. A notification from Rome imposed on Boff a period of obedient silence. Joseph Ratzinger and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith had spoken, and the Brazilian friar was to be silent. Similarly, McNeil (1998: 99 and 129) writes that at the time he received this order from the CDF to silence on the issue of homosexuality, he made the immediate decision to obey it. However, because the CDF eventually issued a letter in which it asserted that homosexual orientation is an objective disorder, he issued a press release in response to that letter breaking his nine year silence.

Another instance of imposed silence to ensure secrecy is the situation in which parents of a child who had been sexually assaulted by a priest were bribed with a monetary offering and sworn to silence concerning the entire matter. Podles (2008:131) writes that after Father Peebles sexually assaulted a boy, the diocese got Peebles off by promising he would receive treatment. The boy, Podles continues, received in compensation \$5,000,000 from the archdiocese and the parents were convinced to retain silence concerning the issue because they were told that if they prosecuted it would bring great scandal to the Church. Podles' statement shows that neither the

welfare of the child nor the interests of the parents were considered. The only purpose in this matter seems to have been the avoidance of scandal. This has proved to be counterproductive, however. When the evidence of pedophilia and the subsequent cover-up became common knowledge the Church was hit with arguably the worst scandal in its 2000-year history, and the scandal persists.

The research questions will include the following considerations to determine to what extent, if any, they are accurate manifestations of contemporary Catholicism.

- Authoritarian governance is dysfunctional in that it arouses fear.
- Secondary instruments of power are controlled through fear.
- The development of fear in an organization inhibits constructive thought and authentic democracy and leads to dysfunction.
- The development of secrecy in an organization tends to stagnate progress through fear.
- Misogyny is a direct result of inherent patriarchal fear.
- Fear of sexuality is manifested, in part, as a result of misogyny.
- Some homophobia results from a fear of sexuality.

2.0 The Nature of Authoritarianism

2.1 Authoritarianism

Authoritarianism, according to Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, suggests that authoritarianism favors blind submission to authority. Further, it states that it relates to a concentration of power in a leader or elite not constitutionally responsible to the people (Webster 2001:77). Inherent within this entity are secrecy and fear. Secrecy as noted in Chapter One of this thesis, is apparent in at least two situations: the secrecy demanded of prelates who are summoned to Rome for actual or imagined infractions and chastised or punished, and the secrecy demanded of parents of a child sexually violated by a priest, bribed with a monetary offering, and sworn to secrecy.

Fear seems to be endemic within the institution at all levels. Popes seem reluctant to contradict statements made by their predecessors, perhaps fearing that they themselves may suffer the same fate. Paul VI, in *Humanae Vitae*, acted directly in opposition to the majority report of the commission he himself had named to study the birth control issue. He indicated that he could not consider their findings definitive and that he would make a personal examination of the question.

Further, he condemned the use of artificial means of birth control as always being illicit. This was in agreement with the encyclical entitled *Casti Connubi* proclaimed by one of Paul's predecessors, Pius XI, an encyclical which based its decree on a hypothesis formulated by Augustine. This topic will be explored more fully in Chapter Five on sexuality.

Bishops, in turn, may fear to make statements contrary to papal edicts lest they meet the fate of Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen of Seattle who, according to John Cornwell in *Breaking Faith* (2001: 56), was encumbered with a monitor because of his comments on marriage annulments and his affinity with the local homosexual community. Priests, too, seem wary of speaking out against conditions within the

Church which they feel are unjust or excessive perhaps fearing that they themselves might become victims of papal sanctions.

Cox, in *The Silencing of Leonardo Boff* (1988:3), discusses the penalties imposed on Boff who had been critical of the manner in which members of the hierarchy exercised authority. Boff was ordered to observe an “obedient silence”, to terminate his duties as editor of an “influential theological journal”, and to cease his writing and lecturing. The laity seems to fear acting in ways contrary to the laws of the Church not only because of the threat of hellfire which is always present but as Hugh Barber in *A Crisis of Conscience* (1993: XI), notes, because many Catholics are denied the right to enter into a dialogue with the male hierarchy. Theologians, too, apparently fear to publicize new interpretations of century-old beliefs, as Carroll notes in *Practicing Catholic* (2009: 243). Hans Küng suffered the ignominy of losing his right to teach as a Catholic theologian by publishing *Infallible? An Inquiry*. In an authoritarian institution it appears dangerous at times even to ask questions! Catholicism, however, is not unique in this behaviour as fundamentalist Islam suffers from the same malady.

When fear is used as an encouragement to avoid disastrous repercussions it may be acceptable. But when fear is used as a means of control, a means to ensure that the subject in question is coerced into believing or thinking or acting in such a way that the controller gains or retains control of the subject, then that use of fear loses its legitimacy. This use of fear is incompatible with the teachings of Jesus Christ. St. Paul writes, “For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption” (Rom 8: 15).

Fear, used to coerce, to enforce conformity, to threaten punishment, seems to be a tool used to protect the use of power and control. When any member of the Church feels compelled to follow laws imposed by authority figures, then those laws become tools of authoritarian dictatorship. To use the threat of Purgatory and Hell in the next life and the fear of condemnation in this life for failure to abide by the commandments imposed by others, seems to be un-Christ-like and destructive of conscience. Ayaan

Hirsi Ali in *Nomad*, suggests (and I paraphrase her here), that an adverse reaction to “asking questions” is a violent attitude worthy of the mentality extant in the Middle Ages. She adds,

It is hard for Westerners today ... to comprehend the phenomenon of group thinking, the claims and constraints that groups lay on their members' conscience, time, money, sexuality, loyalty, and even life.... If individuals are free to seek answers to any question, they may come up with answers that are unacceptable to some of the members of the society to which they belong (Ali, 2010: 211).

The comparison between Islam and the Roman Catholic Church may be considered a *locus classicus* of authoritarianism. Takim (2014: 1, 3) indicates that a Muslim is required to accept the authority of religious, moral, legal, and political leaders. Takim (2014: 3) states further that from the time of Constantine state power was invoked to deal with internal religious dissent. Contemporary power and authority in Islamic Sharia law reflects that of Roman Catholicism's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, in which laws, regulations, and edicts are supported and given assent. This is not to suggest, however, that the punishments inflicted on Catholics are ever as severe as those punishments inflicted on Muslims by Sharia law. It is merely to emphasize that rule by the threat of punishment is unjust no matter the institutional source.

Takim in *Shiism in America* suggests that Romans 13: 1-7 “is the *locus classicus* for the New Testament doctrine of the state” (Takim, 2014:3). He suggests, further, that the letter of Pope Gelasius I to the Byzantine Emperor Anastasius could be the *locus classicus* of power. The letter reads in part, “Two there are by whom this world is chiefly ruled, the sacred authority of the priests, and the royal power” (Takim, 2014:3); in the mind of Gelasius the authority of the priests superseded the temporal power. This belief seems to be functional today in Roman Catholicism, notwithstanding the clear statement of Jesus when he said, “Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's” (Mk 12:17).

Ali, above, is speaking of her experience living in an Islamic society, but her views are equally applicable to the conduct of the Roman Catholic Church. Decisions made as a

result of collaboration appear to be anathema to the leaders of the Church, and independent thinking is discouraged. Those who are ostracized by their Church such as active homosexuals, for example, suffer a lack of support. Pope Francis, in convening a conference for bishops of the Church, has established a method by which controversial topics are encouraged and debated.

At least in the extreme fundamentalist Muslim society, anyone who transgresses the laws written in the Koran is liable to suffer imprisonment, physical torture, or even death, as well as condemnation to eternal punishment. Ali, in *Nomad* (2010:186), illustrates further how, from an early age, children are compelled to obey, unquestioningly. She notes that “The Quaran was used, also, as punishment” (Ali, 2010: 186). A disobedient child would be placed in an elevated hammock and then forced to endure a flogging by the other students. Catholicism, however, although refraining from such dire forms of physical sanction, is quite capable of causing psychological trauma. To be threatened with excommunication, the deprivation of the sacraments, or, in the case of dissident clerics relieved of their official status, is hardly less intimidating than the purging fires of purgatory or the unending fires of hell.

The Church throughout its history has used threats to command obedience. The resulting fear implanted in the minds of those who would advocate personal responsibility may inflict psychic and spiritual harm on the individual but simultaneously negates any possibility of Church renewal. At the same time, the victim of this fear is incapable of discerning the fact that the Church has substituted its own agenda for that of the victim. Further, the victim is unable to appreciate the fact that the Church uses fear as an agent of control.

The proper use of authority, I believe, should ensure that those in positions of power utilize those powers first to ensure the freedom of those to whom they minister. Clerical authority used for the advancement of personal status, while those who support them languish in the depths of uncertainty, fear, and guilt, seems to be authority misused, misguided, and misappropriated. The refusal of the hierarchy to

heed the concern of Catholics who feel burdened by unrelenting edicts, suggests that they have nothing more helpful to offer. For example, the Church authority offers jurisdictional law with regard to the “intrinsic disorder” classification of homosexual acts.

In a discussion of Nazi war crimes against the Jews during WW II, Robin tells how the regime blamed the victims in an attempt to exonerate themselves for the atrocities. Robin, in *Fear*, writes, “Our enemies have for years been engaged in a campaign of whitewashing the culprits and blaming the victims” (Robin, 2004: 123). How does this differ from the way in which the Vatican treated victims of sexual abuse? When Pope John Paul II spoke about these atrocities he complained that the Church was under attack, but failed adequately to address the actual issue: it is the children who are under attack! His cursory announcement that the Church had erred in not confronting the abuse in a timely fashion was followed by the deafening silence inherent in his failure to admit that he had forbidden the bishops to acknowledge the crimes and that he had commanded them to observe silence and secrecy.

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, then Prefect for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, issued a confidential letter to the bishops concerning, among other issues, any delicts against morals by a cleric with a minor. The letter reads in part:

Conclusions on the determination of more grave delicts and the manner of proceeding to declare or impose sanctions, with the exclusive competence in this of the apostolic tribunal of this congregation remaining firm.... A delict against morals, namely: the delict committed by a cleric against the Sixth Commandment of the Decalogue with a minor below the age of 18 years.... These delicts ... are reserved to the apostolic tribunal of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.... In tribunals established by ordinaries or hierarchs ... [these] can validly be performed for these cases only by priests.... Cases of this kind are subject to the pontifical secret (Ratzinger, 2001: 1-2).

It becomes clear from this letter that Ratzinger in his capacity of Prefect declares emphatically that any accusation of pedophilia against priests must be investigated only by priests; it must be referred to the CDF without information being provided for the local civil authority, and is subject to the pontifical secret. Rome seems to be more

interested in saving face through secrecy than in rectifying the conditions within the Church which sponsor the victimization of innocent children. The bishops, in turn, apparently fearing reprisals from Rome, acquiesce to the demands of their superiors, remain silent, and relocate the offending pedophile priests to other parishes where once more they are able to repeat their crimes. Although Benedict XVI is the first pope to meet with the victims of clerical sexual abuse, he has not acknowledged his error in requiring silence from the victims and all those involved in the situation. Cory Robin in *Fear* writes:

The “difference” between “the weak and the powerful” often “invites” the “abuse of power and intimidation,” and those differences are “built into the system of coercion upon which all governments have to rely to fulfill their essential functions” (Robin, 2004: 149).

This statement by Corey Robin in *Fear* is a particularly representative example of governance within the Roman Catholic Church. Owing to the intrinsic inequality between Church authority and the individual Catholic, the Church authority seems empowered in its attempt to control others. Since the more powerful is able to exert his authority in order to proclaim his views, he is free to do so in such a manner that the oppressed is made to fear the potential consequences of his or her reluctance to obey. Robin explains that with the inequality built into the system, the “social distance” between the powerful and the weak increases, thus facilitating the control necessary for the hierarchy to pursue its goals. Permeating this entire form of governance seems to be the fear engendered by the upper echelons of power on those who fear to resist. Perhaps even anarchy would be a lesser evil than the coercion and control inflicted on those who are subjected to totalitarianism. The Catholic Church’s use of excommunication as a means of control seems to be a misuse of authority and power. Harpur, in *For Christ’s Sake*, refers to the thirteenth chapter of Revelation in stating that “The state (read here the Catholic Church) can very easily become demonic in its abuse of power” (Harpur, 1986: 44).

Michael Crosby in *The Paradox of Power* suggests that to have power is to be capable of influencing another (Crosby, 2009:9). It is interesting to note in this regard that

power can be used or misused, but power can also be under-used, as it has been suggested with Pius XII with respect to the Jews in Germany during the time of the Holocaust. He has been accused of failing to speak out forcefully against the Nazi policy of Jewish extermination. Pius was reluctant to involve himself in politics and this excuse was used as a defence against his failure to use his power in an effort to save Jewish lives. Wolf, in *Pope and Devil* writes, regarding the Catholic Church and its leader, Pope Pius XII:

Instead of protesting publicly and defending without reservation the human rights of the persecuted, the Church had been concerned solely with its survival as an institution and with the salvation of its members (Wolf, 2010: 81).

It has been suggested, also, that Pius interceded mainly for Catholic converts from Judaism, tending to ignore those who remained Jews. Carroll, in *Constantine's Sword*, writes:

The only beneficiaries of ... interventions were the "fortunate" minority among the arrested who had converted to Christianity, or were married to Jews who had. This one effect of the Vatican strategy seems clear: about two hundred baptized Jews and Jews married to Catholics were set free before the rest of the Jews were transported north (Carroll, 2001: 527).

The question must be asked concerning the reason for the reluctance of Pius to speak out against the colossal massacre of millions of Jews. Was it anti-Semitism which precluded a strong intervention by Pius, or was it fear which kept him silent? One cannot speak to his interior motives regarding any possible anti-Semitism, but it seems possible that his fear of reprisals against Catholics and the fear of loss of retention of a strong Catholic base in Germany influenced his decision to remain silent on the subject in the public sphere. It has been suggested, also, that had Pius spoken out strongly against Nazi treatment of the Jews, Hitler would have levied even worse atrocities against the Jewish and Catholic population. But this argument fades against common sense. What could be worse than what actually did occur in the absence of a strong denunciation of the Hitler regime? Pius XII's reluctance to speak out publicly denouncing the Nazi atrocities against the Jews may, at least in part, be owing to his fear of Nazi retaliation against Catholics in Germany. But it appears that his fear of

Communism exceeded any sympathy he may have had for the Jews. Carroll, in *Constantine's Sword*, observes in this regard:

Why could he not have responded to the Nazis with the uncompromising ferocity of his responses to Communism? ... Pius XII "did not show the slightest inhibitions after the war, in 1949, about excommunicating all Communist members throughout the world at a stroke." That decisive act, taken as a matter of moral absolutism, without regard for the consequences to the privileges of the Church, or even to the safety of Catholics behind the Iron Curtain, remains an unrefuted measure of what Pius XII could have done in 1943 (Carroll, 2001: 437).

What could be worse than the annihilation of six million people, regardless of their religious or ethnic origins? Although Pius did not speak out publicly against the Nazi regime, he did act clandestinely in order to save multitudes of Jews. But his fear of greater repercussions had he spoken publicly is contraposed by the voice of the Catholic archbishop of Münster, von Galen. "Exactly three weeks after von Galen's sermon, Hitler ordered a halt to the euthanasia program" (Carroll, 2001: 30). If the influence of an archbishop could persuade Hitler to stop these atrocities, then the influence of Pius XII could have been even greater and would have resulted in the redemption of countless Jews.

Michael Crosby, in *The Paradox of Power*, maintains that when power is used in a positive manner the influence which would follow becomes persuasive and helpful (Crosby, 2008: 41). In such a case the power broker becomes servant to the other, not in a menial sense, but in a helpful one. On the other hand when power is used negatively, Crosby explains, it overpowers those whom it hopes to influence (Crosby, 2008: 42). It does this by coercion through laws and restrictions. Failing to see others as equals, it places them in categories which it attempts to control. Scripture tells us not to "lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock" (1 Peter 5:3). Positive power, on the other hand, moves from a tendency to control to one of compassion. Crosby goes on to explain that in the time of Jesus the religious leaders, much as they do in contemporary society, jealously maintained their own power by which they were able to control the lives of others, a position to which Jesus

strenuously objected. He explains, further, that power is represented by any means by which authority figures allocate to others certain responsibilities which, if enacted conscientiously by the people, would guarantee the acknowledgement and security of their own positions.

Crosby, in *The Dysfunctional Church*, suggests that elements of the sociopathic personality seem to pervert the functioning of the hierarchical patriarchal Vatican leadership (Crosby, 1991: 143). Sociopathic personalities, he continues, are reluctant to change. They fear that any deviation from established norms would tend to eliminate or at least reduce prestige. They would become vulnerable and exposed, forfeiting that secret identity which clothes them in anonymity and freedom from imperfection. Contrarily, however, anonymity is far from the attention for which such a person truly strives. Such an individual requires the attention to which he or she has become accustomed, together with its corollary, the absence of any need to change. The hierarchical Church structure, with its addiction to power and control, ensures freedom from serious self-examination, thereby binding itself to any imperfections which it may have. If free of imperfections, there is no need to change, no need to relinquish power and authority and control. Crosby states that “Addicts dare not examine themselves critically if that examination will indicate the need to change” (Crosby, 1991: 143). In applying this concept to the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, if it seriously considered introspection, the resulting self-knowledge would present a distinct challenge.

2.2 Dissidence

If the Roman Catholic Church governed to the advantage of every member of the Church, opportunity would be available for discussion of concepts which have risen in the contemporary life of the Church. As noted above, Pope Francis seems to be moving in that direction. In the recent Synod on the family, Pope Francis allowed lay persons and minor clerics to attend the general meetings as observers although only the bishops had an opportunity to vote.

The requirement that every law made in antiquity should retain its legitimacy today seems unrealistic. Authority within the Church has become authoritarianism. Some disagree with this statement as does George Weigel who writes, in *The Courage to Be Catholic*, “The Catholic Church is not an authoritarian institution, nor are its leaders authoritarians” (Weigel, 2002: 42). (This position will be discussed later.) Those who govern the Church are responsible for the assurance that love and justice take precedence over legality and inequality. As long as insistence on unity and strict conformity is maintained, a fully open and democratic Church is unlikely.

It is expedient to consider Scripture as it pertains to authority. In the Catechism of the Catholic Church, Pope John Paul II (1995:516) draws on Scripture to establish the normative relationship between any government and legitimate authority.

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore, he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment (Rom 13:1-2).

Further, John Paul quotes the author of 1 Peter who writes, “For the Lord’s sake accept the authority of every human institution” (1 Peter 2:13).

Notwithstanding the above, Sacred Scripture also warns against the use of authority which compels obedience:

I exhort the elders among you to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it – not for sordid gain but eagerly. Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock (1 Peter 5:1-3).

It seems to follow from this that although authority comes from God manifested through Scripture, authority practised by the hierarchy must be practiced with prudence, avoiding any attempt to restrict the freedom inherent in each individual. On this issue Carroll writes in *Constantine’s Sword*:

Internal Church policies have relevance here because the use of anathemas, bandings, and excommunications to enforce a rigidly controlled intellectual

discipline in the Church reveals an institution that has yet to come to terms with basic ideas like freedom of conscience and the dialectical nature of rational inquiry (Carroll, 2001: 590).

Some branches of Christianity including Roman Catholicism which have developed from a faith-centred theology seem to have hampered the autonomy of the individual by restrictions. Such overpowering control tends to replace personal responsibility for spiritual development with legalistic rule. In the Catechism of the Catholic Church, John Paul II writes:

Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act.... Man is obliged to follow faithfully what he knows to be just and right; it is by the judgement of his conscience that man perceives and recognizes the prescriptions of the divine law (John Paul II, 1995: 490, # 1778).

This article from the Catechism seems, however, to be in contrast to and in contradiction of John Paul's other, apparently infallible statements, one of which appears in *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* with relation to his ban on women's ordination, a topic to be dealt with in Chapter Four on misogyny.

By the use of fear, it seems apparent, the Church maintains control over its subjects as did medieval kings over their subjects. In contemporary Catholicism, however, many adherents of the faith have become educated and have begun to question the unilateral authority of the pope. But the potential for change seems almost imminent. In *The Future of Faith*, Cox writes, "Christianity understood as a system of beliefs guarded and transmitted through a privileged religious institution by a clerical class is dying" (Cox, 2009: 196).

Crosby was not the only voice concerned with the misuse of power, but was one of many both in contemporary and earlier epochs. Lord Acton, a Catholic statesman, university professor and historian, who lived in nineteenth century England, on hearing of the claim to infallibility by the pope, coined a phrase which has become arguably the most explicit statement on the subject. As noted in Chapter One above, and as Garry Wills points out in *Papal Sin*, Lord Acton wrote in a letter to the Archbishop of

Canterbury, “Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely” (Wills, 2000: 2). This now famous maxim was appropriate for the description of the then pope, Pius IX, who denounced such concepts as modernism and Liberalism. His *Syllabus of Errors*, published in 1864, in particular, is filled with statements which have been subsequently contradicted by later papal encyclicals such as *Gaudium et Spes*, a document promulgated by the Second Vatican Council in 1965. Some of the concepts which Pius condemned and anathematized are outlined later in this chapter. It is noteworthy that although previous teachings have been changed by subsequent popes, no mention of error by previous popes is ever acknowledged. Such an admission would, perhaps, challenge the claim to infallibility.

2.3 Church as Disciplinarian

The institutional Catholic Church, its hierarchy, its particular governance, and its curial base seem to utilize both commandments and prohibitions in order to maintain its own stability while employing the fear factor in order to undermine the independent thought of its constituents. During the time of the Inquisition the Church intimidated anyone who dared to broach an original idea. Carroll, in *Constantine’s Sword*, quoting from the *Tablet* writes:

The recent *moto proprio Ad Tuendam Fidem*, and above all the commentary on it from Cardinal Ratzinger, are clearly designed to shut down debate on matters about which there was much more to be said ... Rome’s desire to silence theological dissent contradicts the deeply felt commitment to the importance of freedom of speech and intellectual integrity that is characteristic of modern democracies. In the secular world, only dictators silence their opponents and demand unquestioning obedience (Carroll, 2001: 320).

Cardinal Ratzinger, however, was not the only source of constraint against any attempt within the Church to promote democracy. In *Ad Tuendam Fidem*, from which Canon 750 of the Code of Canon Law is taken, John Paul II writes:

To protect the faith of the Catholic Church against errors arising from certain members of the Christian faithful ... we consider it absolutely necessary to add to the existing texts of the *Code of Canon Law* ... new norms which expressly

impose the obligation of upholding truths proposed in a definitive way by the Magisterium of the Church (John Paul II, 1998: 1).

Further to this statement John Paul II writes his alteration to Canon 750 by adding an additional direction:

Canon 750

1. Those things are to be believed by divine and catholic faith ... which are proposed as divinely revealed ... by the solemn Magisterium of the Church... All are bound to avoid any contrary doctrines.
2. Furthermore, each and everything set forth definitively by the Magisterium of the Church regarding teaching on faith and morals must be firmly accepted and held; ... therefore, anyone who rejects propositions which are to be held definitively sets himself against the teaching of the Catholic Church. (John Paul II, 1998: 2)

This disciplinarian attitude is indicative of the insistence by the Roman Magisterium that what it proclaims is not in any way a matter for discussion and interpretation but seems to be, rather, an indication of its unwavering belief in its own authority and infallibility. Possible fear of the reprisals that could be inflicted on instigators of original thought serves not only to minimize or eliminate virtually every seminal hypothesis, but also, it seems, would ensure the retention of the status quo.

Cory Robin, in *Fear*, discusses the presumed need of enforced discipline. The general population in pre-revolutionary France, generally uneducated and ignorant of the very concept of democracy within the Church, became addicted to the need for a strict disciplinarian. Fearing to make decisions for themselves and fearing to take responsibility for their own lives, the people craved higher authority to conceive laws for them and to enforce decisions on them. This mindset seems to be evident as well in the minds of some contemporary Catholics. Robin quotes a post-French Revolution writer, Tocqueville, who sums up a similar situation. Robin writes:

The mass longed for a firm disciplinarian who might bring some coherence and order to society. From that longing, a new kind of despotism would emerge – a state dictating each and every detail of daily life, a state more powerful, more invasive and intrusive than its predecessors (Robin, 2004: 29).

In the education discipline, Robin refers to the need for universities to be “better disciplined” until they began to teach the philosophy of fearful obedience (Robin, 2004: 290). In the case of Catholic institutions of advanced learning, Vatican control is such that the fear of allowing theologians to express their thoughts in the search for truth has resulted in the deprivation of their university positions and their right to teach as Catholic theologians. Cox, in *The Silencing of Leonardo Boff*, notes some differences in the manner in which some chastised prelates respond to Vatican directives. While Leonardo Boff, facing an imposed silence, chose to accept, at least temporarily, the “direction” acknowledging the authority of Rome, Hans Küng, on the other hand, uncordially admonished the Vatican with what he considered its own malfeasance. He said, according to Cox:

The Vatican is, unfortunately, very similar to a lot of totalitarian states that are always demanding human rights abroad but refuse to give them to their own people (Cox, 1988: 104).

University professors who fail to support Catholic orthodoxy may find themselves chastised by the Vatican. Charles Curran is one such professor.

Curran, in *Loyal Dissent*, writes:

The Vatican’s condemnation dealt directly with the role of theologians and the need to control them... When one affirms that non-infallible doctrines, even though they make up part of the teaching of the Church, can be legitimately contested, one ends up by destroying the practice of the Christian life and reducing the faith to a collection of doctrines (Curran, 2006: 132).

But most university professors have been willing to abide by the precepts demanded by the hierarchy and have been as guilty as the Vatican in the destruction of free speech, autonomy, and freedom. Such actions by the Vatican and its accomplices within the university community have ensured a return to medieval rationalization and practice. The apparently willing acquiescence by university officials in these travesties of justice may be based on the fear of losing accreditation as a Catholic institution.

Barber, in *A Crisis of Conscience*, notes that:

John Paul II sought to authorize American bishops to make sure the Catholic character of [universities] is preserved and Catholic doctrinal principles served...

The presidents of [these universities feared the] loss of federal funding ... and the loss of academic freedom.... The proposals would be disastrous... The very life of our colleges and universities is one of academic freedom and self-regulation.... A university is a place for an intellectual journey towards truth, not a place where one receives the truth already packaged (Barber, 1993: 75-76).

This has amounted to little more than the crushing of independent thinking and enlightenment, and control of the individual conscience. Curran, in *Loyal Dissent*, responding to the support he has received from his colleagues in his battle with Vatican authoritarianism, writes:

I continue to have tremendous respect and appreciation for the faculty at Auburn. They took a courageous stand for me and, more important, for the principle of academic freedom that is so central to the enterprise of higher education (Curran, 2006: 175).

Any university which refuses to allow a free exchange of ideas has failed in its primary purpose: the provision of an environment wherein the individual is enabled to express his or her ideas in an atmosphere of safety.

When authority becomes authoritarian, any degree of freedom which may have been enjoyed to even a limited extent previously is now destroyed. When papal pronouncements are made binding on all adherents to the faith, then both freedom of intellectual exchange and freedom of conscience are jeopardised. Papal edicts are carried out by those who follow papal leadership unquestioningly, such as members of the Curia and the bishops of the Church who dare not protest; this issue will be developed further in Chapter Three of this thesis.

Robin, in *Fear*, writes, "Where originality was the emblem of freedom, imitation was the harbinger of submission" (Robin, 2004: 90). Galileo, for example, attempted to express his original thought, but such originality was denounced by the Church. Unless he abdicated his responsibility to determine truth, and unless he revoked what he knew to be true, and unless he submitted to the errors sustained by the Vatican, he would be denounced. The freedom which he attempted to achieve would be lost at the moment he acquiesced to the dictates of Rome. But, in spite of Rome's criticism,

denouncement, and attempted control, Galileo refused to submit and maintained his belief in the truth, thus retaining his integrity and freedom. Carroll, in *Constantine's Sword*, writes:

Pope Paul V ... presided over the start of the Inquisition's move against Galileo... Pope Urban VIII ... condemned him ... Pope John Paul II apologized for that condemnation – the earth does indeed revolve around the sun (Carroll, 2001: 384).

In relatively recent times, similar denouncements are made by Rome whenever a theologian or cleric dares to express what he believes if that belief should prove controversial in the eyes of Rome. In 1986 Charles Curran, in *Loyal Dissent*, noted above, received a letter from the then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger which stated that:

“one who dissents from the Magisterium as you do is not suitable nor eligible to teach Catholic theology.” The decision had been approved by the pope on July 10 (Curran, 2006: 131).

But Charles Curran was far from being a unique example of Vatican censure. Cornwell, in *Breaking Faith*, notes how Hans Küng, mentioned above, was banned from teaching as a Catholic theologian in 1978 (Cornwell, 2001: 22-23). Cornwell also notes how Father Tisa Balasuriya recalls his experience with Vatican autocracy in his book entitled *Mary and Human Liberation* (Balasuriya, 1997:5). Cornwell, in *Breaking Faith*, quoting from *The Tablet*, notes further that:

The heart of the unease which many Catholics will feel lies in the CDF procedures ... there has been no trial about the facts, no open investigation of them, no discussion of doctrinal points with Fr. Balasuriya ... What sort of justice is this, which finds a man guilty before he has had a chance to prove his innocence, and denies him his freedom and rights? Where is the due process of law? Without this process there is tyranny (Cornwell, 2001: 123-4).

When authority becomes authoritarian, it seems, it requires submission and decries autonomy and freedom.

The fear imposed by authority figures on university faculty is paralleled by the fear experienced by the authority figures themselves: fear of losing control over staff,

curriculum, and the entire university itself. This situation implies that in most instances, many priests, bishops, professors, and theologians will abrogate their conscientious responsibility notwithstanding the exceptional support provided for Fr. Curran noted above. Because of their fear, they will do nothing which might jeopardise the integrity of their superiors, integrity here being a word of doubtful accuracy. As Robin notes in *Fear*:

But that hardly means that they (tyrants) seek to create an impotent society. What they seek is a politically repressed society, in which men and women perform only those tasks acceptable to the regime or not prohibited by it, and avoid all others (Robin, 2004:210).

Robin notes further that, "If employees in the private sector are afraid of their employers they are not likely to blow the whistle on employer malfeasance" (Robin, 2004: 230).

When the Catholic Church lives according to such laws of governance then it becomes little more than a voice of control, and any hope for the development of a progressive body of thinkers becomes moot. Robin (2004: 230) writes, "If political fear is to be sustained over time, men and women must be hired and paid, supervised and promoted" (Robin, 2004: 230). It is this fear of displeasing those in authority which serves to make those in inferior positions dependent on and subject to the authority figure. "Fear in the workplace", Robin continues, "begins and ends in hierarchy" (Robin, 2004:230). The workplace here encompasses all Catholic institutions.

Crosby believes that the authority appropriated by the religious leadership at the time of Christ differs very little from the same misuse of authority today. He notes, as well, that those under the influence of such authority tend to accept that authority over and above the only authentic authority, that of God. Crosby in *The Paradox of Power* states:

The temptation of every disciple, then and now, is to be seduced by or succumb to the kind of abusive authority found in the reigns claiming imperial and infallible power around them, rather than to come under God's kingdom or power (Crosby, 2008:33).

The authority claimed by the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church to ensure compliance by the laity seems to be a form of abusive control. Michael Crosby explains this phenomenon by noting the “two faces” of power extant within the Church. In quoting Sally Purvis, Crosby writes:

Sally Purvis ... finds two “faces” of power: negatively it is manifest as “power as control”; positively, it enlivens individuals, communities, and indeed the whole ecclesial body. As such it becomes “power as life” (Crosby, 2008: 35).

Power can be used in a negative way whenever one individual attempts to control another. Crosby, while referring to Genesis, notes that “negative expressions of power are universally found in the presence of serpentine forms of exploitation and coercion, manipulation and domination” (Crosby, 2008: 42). Such a person, Crosby suggests, probably suffers from an inferiority complex to the degree that if that person fails to control the object of its intent it will revert to virtually any means in order to gain that illegitimate control. Such a person will attempt to do so first by direct means, and then, when this fails, to resort to indirect means such as manipulation. In an attempt to influence others to conform to his or her personal will, the controller, on the pretext of offering aid to the “poor” individual whom one purports to help, will suggest that the person being manipulated act in some way toward the subject of the attempted control which will in fact provide at least an indirect control of the subject (Crosby, 2008: 42-43). In a similar manner the hierarchy of the Church, fearing to lose power and control over its subjects uses laws and restrictions and edicts to ensure that such control is maintained.

In describing the various modes of negative power, Crosby refers to several of its aspects. Each of these references is visible and extensively utilized by Church officials in an attempt to ensure obedience and the acceptance of their injunctions. The following examples of the use of negative power inherent within the Church substantiate the conclusions reached by Crosby, who refers to a number of attitudes which hamper the spiritual development of members of the Church and tend to advance the

disciplinarian spirit of the Church. These attitudes include exploitation, coercion, manipulation, and domination (Crosby, 2008: 42-43).

2.4 Exploitation

Perhaps the most heinous act of exploitation perpetrated by a few members of the clergy is sexual molestation of children. This gravely sinful act, grievous enough because of the sexually explicit contravention of decency, is even more wicked because it has been executed by those who have been held in high esteem and who have betrayed that trust, persecuting the vulnerable to whom they had an obligation to protect. Podles, in *Sacrilege*, describes how Shanley, a priest in the diocese of Boston, took sexual advantage of young boys by arranging clandestine sleeping arrangements and even by exploiting their vulnerability in the confessional (Podles, 2008: 156-7). By pressuring their subjects to allow their sinful acts, or by rendering them unable to resist by the use of alcohol or drugs, or by effortless assault based on their superior strength or considered authority, they have not only violated their vows but have violated the very essence of decency which should have been inherent in their humanity.

2.5 Coercion

However, as Podles explains, although such activity by certain priests caused severe trauma, suffering and long-lasting psychic consequences to the children whom they molested, others, too, suffered the results of the malfeasances (Podles, 2008: 156). These were the parents of the children – the parents who had placed their trust in these men – the parents who should have been able to expect nothing less than virtual perfection in these men – the parents who believed in the righteous claims made by the Church. In order to preserve the Church from scandal, the bishops under whose jurisdiction these atrocities were committed, magnified the already incomprehensible evil perpetrated on the children by coercing the parents into blind acceptance through bribery legislated by higher authorities. Doyle, in *Sex, Priests, and Secret Codes*, writes:

The custom throughout the country is to settle victims' claims before they come to a court trial. Trials generate a good deal of publicity – often national – and most of it reflects badly on the Catholic Church.... The Church is always eager to contain these negative images as much as it possibly can (Doyle, 2006:177).

The avoidance of scandal for the Church seemed to be more important than either the welfare of the children or that of the parents. In *Crimen Solicitationis*, Pius XI wrote:

All these official communications shall always be made under the secret of the Holy Office; and, since they concern the common good of the church to the greatest degree, the precept of doing these things obliges under serious sin (Pius XI, 1922:14).

Doyle, commenting on the veil of secrecy within the Vatican, wrote:

The secrecy and cover-up of the sexual predation on children by clerics has made it extremely difficult for the Church to address these issues in a responsible and expedient manner (Doyle, 2006:5).

The claim that the Vatican was not aware of the sexual abuse perpetrated by priests throughout the world may be implausible but George Weigel, nevertheless, does make that claim. In *Vows of Silence*, Berry refutes Weigel's take on the matter. Weigel stated that the Vatican was unaware of the American Catholic situation owing to the inadequate information it received from Washington (Weigel, 2002:124-5). Berry notes, however, in *Vows of Silence*, that the Vatican received definitive information as early as 1985 and that in 1989 canonists from the United States met with those from the Vatican where such matters were discussed. Throughout the 1990s considerable information flowed from all parts of the world to the Vatican, well before the Boston Globe's exposé of the ongoing subterfuge in the Vatican (Berry, 2004: 98-99).

2.6 Manipulation

The individual guilt assumed by the priests has been assumed as well by bishops who have been manipulated by Rome into ensuring the avoidance of scandal at any cost. This cost was high. Rather than reporting the offending priests to civil authorities and ensuring that such priests were laicized, after pressuring the families of the victims to

accept their bribes, they reassigned the priests to other parishes or jurisdictions where they were unknown and where they could continue their exploitation of the vulnerable children who would become their latest victims. The edict from Roman authority, mentioned above, which demands the silence of their bishops in these matters, made those in Rome who were responsible for the edict liable to share in the responsibility of the bishops and priests. This is true even more so since absolute power and authority rest in Rome and only those who dare to demand better of them are free of guilt. Leon Podles relates a discussion between the pedophile, Fr. Shanley, and his bishop, Bishop McCormack. Shanley fears detection from civil authorities and the two discuss the possibility of Shanley entering a “safe house”. “What were they hoping to keep abusive priests safe from: irate parents, publicity, subpoenas, arrests?” (Podles, 2008:167).

2.7 Domination

This top-down authority maintained by the Vatican is an adjunct to the manipulation of the bishops, a theme which will be discussed further in Chapter Three. Clericalism is at its apex when a pope and his Curia can demand quiet, uncompromising obedience from those under their authority. This domination is born in Rome and activated in the dioceses, ensuring the compliance of the bishops, who in turn demand obedience from their priests. Finally this domination reaches the members of the laity. In the Early Church the priestly caste was non-existent and the laity assumed responsibility for the continuation of the Church. In the words of Michael Crosby, in *The Paradox of Power*:

When the obsession to preserve the male, celibate model of “Church” defines the dynamics in Roman Catholicism ... natural groupings of people will be overthrown to protect the Church’s patriarchal, clerical power structure.... Control ... is maintained primarily through fear and intimidation.... No matter what the culture or the religion (but especially Catholicism and Islam), fear and intimidation are the two main methods of exercising control (Crosby, 2008: 47).

Crosby quotes Bob Herbert of the New York Times when Herbert discusses the link between manipulation, fear, and totalitarianism. Herbert makes reference to the second President Bush, whose unilateral invasion of Iraq has been condemned by many political powers and numerous individuals. The Roman Catholic Church is one

viable example of this misuse of power and the creation of fear induced in the general Catholic population. Perhaps the majority of Catholics will not admit that fear does have a powerful effect on their subordination to the papacy but this failure to acknowledge this fear is indicative of the fact that the fear does exist. Crosby writes:

Hallmarks of totalitarian regimes have always included an excessive reliance on secrecy, the deliberate stoking of fear in the general population ... the promotion of blind patriotism (Crosby, 2008: 50).

The use of secrecy to promote fear to enforce blind adherence to authority takes precedence over the use of individual conscience. Crosby writes, "I recognized intimidating behaviour ... in the dynamics of the Roman Catholic Church at its institutional level" (Crosby, 2008: 52). This profound if disconcerting statement made by Crosby begins a brief section in this thesis which places the Catholic Church in an extremely malignant position, incompatible with Christian ethics. Besides noting the intimidation inherent at the institutional level of the Catholic Church, he notes the inability of the hierarchy to admit error of any kind. He notes that the Church leadership substitutes ideology for rational thought, insisting that their ideology is equivalent to truth. He sees, further, the development of two distinct groups within the Church: the faithful on the one hand and heretics on the other. Their reluctance to change behaviour, Crosby notes, is tantamount to maintaining erroneous positions in spite of scientific and sociological insights to which they have become immune. It took centuries for the Church leadership to admit that Galileo was right; they still fail to see that the use of condoms to combat AIDS is more humane than expressing the concern over the immorality they see in the use of contraceptives, a topic which will be discussed at greater length in Chapter Five on sexuality. The hierarchy believes that whatever it teaches is the unsullied truth, no matter that science may prove otherwise. Notwithstanding these norms established by Church leaders, their reluctance to change is such that even a minute alteration of their thinking requires centuries to effect. The Galileo incident noted above is one definitive example.

Father John McNeil, a psychotherapist and author of *The Church and the Homosexual*, first printed in 1976, has seen his book retain its marked interest and become an important statement of genuine homosexual orientation. He writes:

In all the case histories I have dealt with there was only one case of pseudo-homosexuality, i.e., someone who feared they were homosexual whose true sexual orientation was heterosexual (McNeil, 1993: 202).

This seems to suggest that, based on McNeil's study of case histories, homosexual orientation is inherent to the individual concerned.

In his book *Liquid Fear*, Bauman refers to the fear of death, and in quoting Freud, he says, "The suffering which comes from relations to other men is perhaps more painful than any other" (Bauman, 2006: 52). This becomes self-evident in the manner by which the Church hierarchy threatens hell as the final and extreme vehicle whereby those whom they consider evil, those who die in what they refer to as mortal sin, are doomed to a fiery hell for all eternity. Indeed, what manipulation of fear could be more extreme for those who accept this threat by the Church as the manner in which God punishes his erring subjects? Even the theologian who had contravened the teachings of the Church and who is thereby rendered impotent in so far as teaching as a Catholic theologian is concerned is not threatened with such diabolical punishment. But perhaps, anyway, as has been suggested by others, God does not necessarily follow the dictates of his bishops.

When Bauman in *Liquid Fear* discusses totalitarian regimes he makes reference to the usual methods of control which are inherent in such regimes. In quoting Mikhail Bakhtin he writes, "The constitutive movement of all earthly powers is violence, suppression, falsehood and the trepidation and fear of the subjected" (Bauman, 2006: 155). Although visible fear may not be apparent in the psyches of individual Church members, nonetheless, the threat of punishment by the Church to those who dare to contravene its precepts is real. For those whose trust in the Fathers of the Church is unfaltering, the prospect of eternal damnation is far removed from their consciousness, knowing that they, at least, are immune to the wrath of God. These are

the fundamentalists who still believe in the perfection of the Church and regard allegiance to its leaders as paramount and necessary for salvation. Such persons seem to fear even to contemplate the notion that their leaders may themselves be misled, and believe that every edict emanating from Roman jurisdiction is tantamount to belief in God. Such is the misconception of those who will not or cannot superimpose their own consciences over the dictates from Rome. Once again it seems, fear, augmented by blind obedience, is the dominant agent of control.

The Church has been culpable over the centuries for inflicting pain and suffering on the faithful, whether that suffering has been of a physical nature or a psychological one, including the development of paranoia and scrupulosity. Bourke in *Fear: A Cultural History* writes:

Theologians (and other Church leaders) ... counselled people to “fear not” while simultaneously inciting anxiety and terror ... by threatening sinners with everlasting punishment in the hereafter (Bourke, 2005: 5).

This so-called love for the faithful could not have been further from the true love taught by Jesus Christ. Jesus merely forgave sinners and cautioned them to go and sin no more. But never did he threaten them with hell fire, excommunication, or penance. (It is notable that the only time he warned of dire punishment was when he chastised those who would harm children.)

If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea (Mk 9:42).

Jesus merely expressed his love for them (sinners excluding child molesters) and allowed them their freedom to react to that love as they would. Catholics have been trained and coerced by the establishment so that they believe the authority inherent in the leadership is sacrosanct, and to object to that authority is in essence a rejection of God. Bourke notes that “human beings needed to be afraid of the afterlife precisely because they were not the product of evolution but were created in the image of God” (Bourke, 2005: 46). This became standard fare for believers in spite of the fact that the Church does, finally, appreciate the truth, the actuality of evolution. But we do not

hear the Church apologize for the misconceptions to which the faithful have been subjected over the centuries. Nor do we hear a valid and sincere statement of intention to throw out any erroneous and medieval notion which has permeated and imprisoned the Church since the time of Constantine.

2.8 Infallible Truth

Fear seems to be the motivation used by the Catholic Church to produce a population ready to accept discrimination against homosexuals and the banning of both a married priesthood and the ordination of women. The fear pertaining to the bigotry directed against homosexuals is the fear of recognizing and admitting the injustice perpetrated on them; the fear of speaking in favour of a married priesthood is the equivalent of resigning oneself to the conditions resulting from the lack of sufficient priests; and the fear of advocating the ordination of women is to accept as an infallible statement one which has not been declared so by the Church. But even the use of the concept of infallibility itself is yet another point of contention within the Church. It can lead to Vatican retribution. Wolf, in his *Pope and Devil* writes:

Whenever the pope speaks as supreme shepherd and teacher of the Church, his decision in matters of faith and morals are “of themselves, and not by the consent of the Church, irreformable” (Wolf, 2010: 7).

It becomes obvious, then, that an infallible statement can never be changed, and therefore any aspect which may affect the statement adversely is unacceptable to Rome. Thus when Küng, arguably the greatest theologian in our time, dared to question the very nature of infallibility, he met with disapprobation and was castigated by the Holy See. He had merely utilized what he believed and what may have been his right to think and to question what he deemed a questionable affirmation by the Vatican. But for this he found himself summoned to Rome and denounced as unsuitable to present himself as a Catholic theologian. Whether or not Küng was correct in his determination regarding infallibility is not the question here. The question involves the right to question anything which assaults human intelligence,

human dignity, or human justice. Anything less is to forfeit both individual rights and responsibilities.

Blind capitulation to Vatican decrees enables the Vatican in its development of ordinances which the entire Church is bound to accept on pain of excommunication. Such an example is the proclamation of infallibility, followed by the two infallible statements concerning Mary, the mother of Jesus, proclamations to which every Catholic must assent. Wolf notes that Cardinal Pacelli, later Pope Pius XII:

... firmly believed that all correct interpretation of reality (and not only of faith) could be based only in the Roman Magisterium. Academic learning had no place in this worldview (Wolf, 2010: 75).

Faith in the saving grace of Jesus Christ has given way to Vatican decrees while simple faith has been subverted into belief in doctrinal edicts.

An authority which works toward the advancement of those without it allows them both freedom and independence. They are able to utilize their own internal forces, fearing no one and free from restrictions arbitrarily imposed by the leadership. There is no place in a democracy for coercion, (the Church hierarchy reminds us that the Church is not a democracy), the imposition of guilt, or the demand for silence in the face of threats. This situation succeeds when there are no counter forces to neutralize it. As this is true in the political sphere, it is true, also, in the halls of the Catholic Church. Where cardinals and bishops could provide counter-insurgency against Curial and papal decrees, too often they act to reinforce the edicts which emanate from the Vatican. To ensure that this authoritarianism continues in its denouncement of democracy and preservation of the unjust and unrestrained control of individuals, the Church demands silence. This silence is often paid for in monetary funds, funds which have been collected from Catholics who still follow the ancient edict which demands of the faithful, the “pay, pray, and obey” mentality. Corey Robin in *Fear* makes these points emphatically clear when he says that:

A system of countervailing elites to check central authority is a necessary component of any democracy.... Reforms ... (should provide) freedom as

personal security, the calm and untroubled assurance that one is protected from the predations of state power.... It was a freedom defined wholly by the absence of fear.... Terror's most telling sign was silence (Robin, 2004:61).

If, within the Catholic Church, members were free to think for themselves, to act according to their consciences, to speak the truth as they see it, a plausible communication between laity and theologians on the one hand and presbyteral authority figures on the other would ensue. But within the Catholic Church, members are not allowed that singular privilege. In society in general and in the Roman Catholic Church in particular, as Robin states, "A de-individualizing experience, despotic terror ... (makes) no room for pluralism, difference, and individuality" (Robin, 2004: 63).

When a pope, John Paul II for example, feels free to forbid his followers to discuss certain issues such as the ordination of women to the priesthood, then he has unilaterally usurped their freedom. John Paul has woven into the very fabric of the Church his own ideals, thus eliminating any possibility of a healthy debate.

Unfortunately, Benedict XVI picked up the reins where John Paul left them and has ensured that the restrictive measures imbued by his predecessor are safeguarded with no consideration of the cost to the individual Catholic. John Paul was masterful in his involvement in the emancipation of the Polish people. Could he not have been such a champion in the procurement of the rights of his own world-wide Catholic people?

Yet Robin points out that "Rule by fear was not natural: it had to be created by giving one man an artificial monopoly of power" (Robin, 2004:67). This can nowhere be found more explicitly than within the confines of the Vatican and the Roman Catholic Church. By secret deliberations a few selected members of the Church – the cardinals in conclave – select the man who will become leader of the Church, a man who will take upon himself the full responsibility for the Church, calling himself the Vicar of Christ and legislating a kind of unity which includes conformity to his views. But Jesus Christ is the only true law within the Church. The very nature of this organization gives it a certain power which often affects the Church membership adversely.

Although the hierarchy of the Church maintains that the laws made by the Church are in fact made in accordance with the will of Jesus Christ, they have been made, on the contrary, by the will of those in power within the Church. These man-made declarations of law are, according to the Fathers of the Church, based on the will of God. Where Jesus Christ condemned the laws by which the priests of his day ruled the people, and where he condemned the laws by which the people had become slaves to the whims of the priestly caste, the rulers of the Catholic Church, throughout the centuries and even today, have made and continue to make laws by which to control the general population of the Church.

Pope John Paul II promulgated the revised version of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1992: 1-756), a document consisting of 2865 codes which governs virtually every aspect of church governance and daily proceedings. These laws are reinforced by the fact that the bishops of the Church abide by them virtually in totality, and, as Robin suggests, “the fear-ridden society follows their lead” (Robin, 2004: 68). Pope John Paul reformed the *Code of Canon Law* (1983:1-310) which alone comprises 1752 laws by which the leaders of the Church govern virtually every aspect of Church governance and daily proceedings. The number of laws in the *Code* alone exceeds by 1750 the two laws given to us by Christ! “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself” (Lk 10: 27).

In his discussion of the loss of individualism within a given society, Robin, in his discussion of “The Age of Democratic Revolution”, says, “So complete was each person’s assimilation to the mass, it simply did not make sense to speak anymore of individuals” (Robin, 2004:75). This is the situation extant within the contemporary Catholic Church. Any individual who contradicts the teachings of the Church is considered a poor Catholic. Every member of the Church must follow the decrees promulgated by Rome. The individual has lost his or her status as a unique being with God-given right to think, to publish his views, and to act upon his or her beliefs. Any

attempt to do so results in the unilateral assault by Church officials. In such a situation, Robin quotes John Stuart Mill, who stated that, “By dint of not following their own nature ... men and women no longer had a ‘nature to follow’” (Robin, 2004: 75).

Robin continues, “Religion bound men and women to one another through a chain of obligations” (Robin, 2004: 84). This statement is eminently descriptive of the Roman Catholic Church. The obligations inherent within Catholicism are such that all Catholics, if they are to remain in good standing with papal decrees, must adhere to the laws of the Church. Robin indicates the apparent need for a social hierarchy, suggesting that:

This absence of structure translated into an absence of authority.... When there is no authority in religion or in politics, men are soon frightened by the limitless independence with which they are faced.... (A) fear of freedom (results) (Robin, 2004: 85).

Although clerics formerly were trusted by the laity, that trust has been to a considerable degree eroded by the scandal perpetrated by a number of the clergy in the sexual abuse of minors. On the local level, in the majority of cases, the pastors are good men, holy, and devoted to the welfare of their parishioners. But notwithstanding that as well as the sexual abuse scandal, the laity continues to align itself with those members of the clergy who persist in absolute subservience to those in authority, whose edicts emanate from Rome. Such edicts are based on the belief on the part of the hierarchy that it alone possesses the fullness of truth. As John Allen, in *The Future Church*, states in quoting the bishops of Malawi as a challenge to Banda’s belief in his own infallibility, “No one person can claim to have a monopoly on truth or wisdom” (Allen, 2009: 31). Unfortunately, the bishops have failed to apply this same sentiment to the pope. Pope Francis, however, seems to have abandoned the historical view that only Catholicism holds the fullness of truth.

Frank Furedi in *Politics of Fear* points out the once-held view that “autocracy, hierarchy, and elitism were once considered natural and vested with divine authority” (Furedi, 2005: 98). This anachronistic view is a relatively rare phenomenon in contemporary society except in three specific contexts: totalitarian governments, Islam

and the Roman Catholic Church. Modernity, that term which has been anathema to the Church, particularly evident since the time of Pius IX, recognizes the necessity of a democratic society where all are free to express their views with the understanding that others have the right to disagree. In the case of the Church, however, the “Divine Right of Kings” mentality remains as a constant reminder that at the pinnacle of the clerical pyramid the pope represents God, is immune to prosecution, and in any event, is infallible and therefore unable to fall into error. (It is necessary here to remind the reader that the Church does not normally evoke the concept of infallibility, although John Paul II seemed to expect that his every word was infallible.) In his description of the concept of the Atonement, *For Christ’s Sake*, Harpur notes that by allocating anthropomorphic characteristics to God, God sees the concept as one

well suited to a priestly hierarchy dedicated to perpetuating its own power as the sole agency capable of repeating this sacrifice (Calvary) on behalf of mankind (Harpur, 1986: 75).

The Church claims that it has pronounced only two infallible statements, but even this is open to question, and this goes beyond the “creeping infallibility” which has infected the Church especially during the two pontificates preceding that of Pope Francis. The fact that the Church claimed under the auspices of Pius IX, that under certain circumstances, the pope could speak infallibly leaves open the question of the authoritativeness of that proclamation.

The Code of Canon Law expresses the Doctrine of Infallibility which was originally defined by Pius IX during the Fourth Session of the First Vatican Council. It reads as follows:

Therefore ... with approval of the sacred council, we teach and define as a divinely revealed dogma that when the Roman pontiff speaks EX CATHEDRA, that is, when, in the exercise of his office as shepherd and teacher of all Christians, in virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine concerning faith or morals to be held by the whole church, he possesses, by the divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter, that infallibility which the divine Redeemer willed his church to enjoy in defining doctrine concerning faith or morals (Pius IX, 1868: 3).

Pius IX (1854:5) in defining the Immaculate Conception wrote in his Bull entitled *Ineffabilis Deus*:

Wherefore ... for the glory and adornment of the Virgin Mother of God ... by the authority of Jesus Christ our Lord, of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own: "We declare, pronounce, and define that the doctrine which holds that the most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instance of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin, is a doctrine revealed by God and therefore to be believed firmly and constantly by all the faithful" (Pius IX, 1854: 5).

More recently Pius XII in his *Munificentissimus Deus* wrote:

By the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own authority, we pronounce, declare, and define it to be a divinely revealed dogma: that the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory (Pius XII, 1950: 10-11).

These extracts delineating the doctrine of infallibility and the two declared statements pertaining to it remain the only two declared infallible statements. The point here is that if, in fact, the pope claimed the charism of infallibility, then this very declaration must also be an infallible statement. Otherwise, no subsequent claim to infallibility would be logical. Thus, there must be three infallible statements. If the statement claiming infallibility is not itself an infallible statement, then no infallible statement made subsequent to that declaration could be considered infallible. However, all of that is a moot point, since the very nature of infallibility is based on the thinking of a man past his prime, and threatened by a new religious phenomenon: incipient Protestantism! Although the claim by the Catholic Church that the bishops in session at the time of the proclamation voted one hundred percent in favour of the declaration, the fact that is seldom mentioned is that many bishops, perhaps unwilling to vote against the wishes of Pius IX, for two reasons – fear of repercussions should they vote against him, and because they disagreed with the very concept of any man holding infallible capabilities – absented themselves from the deliberations. De Rosa in *Vicars of Christ* writes:

Theology was not Pius' forte. His private secretary ... admitted in a letter ... "As the Pope is no great theologian, I feel convinced that when he writes (his encyclicals) he is inspired by God." Complete ignorance was no bar to infallibility.... Of the 532 bishops ... 140 bishops had absented themselves.... At least two-thirds of the American bishops ... were opposed to the definition, believing it would make conversions more difficult (De Rosa, 1988: 135).

It is interesting that in an institution which inveighs against democracy in the Church, accepts the result of a democratic decision! But, in spite of the Vatican's refusal to consider any form of democracy in the Church, in this case, when it would benefit the pope, a facsimile of democracy was entertained.

Although the Church claims this infallibility only under specific circumstances, the creeping infallibility on a myriad of subjects adversely affects Catholics in general and demands their silence and obedience. But the Church seems unable and unwilling to acknowledge its mistakes, to learn from them, and in genuine humility, to act decisively in the spirit of Christ. Furedi in *Politics of Fear* points out:

It is important to remind ourselves that politics is not meant to exist for its own sake but for a higher reason. Without a sense of meaning, politics turns into a series of arbitrary acts that ... have a detrimental effect on the workings of public life (Furedi, 2005: 59).

In the *Syllabus of Errors*, Pius IX condemned the idea that "Decrees of the Apostolic See and of the Roman congregations impede the true progress of science" (Pius IX, 1862:2). Although he rejected this idea, he did, in fact, impede the progress of science. When Galileo announced his discovery that the earth was not the centre of the solar system, but that the sun held that distinction, Pius denounced both Galileo and his discoveries. Although Pius did not claim infallibility for his determination of the workings of the solar system, he did, nevertheless, make it an article of faith. Vatican II, however, in the document entitled *Faith and Culture*, in an obvious refutation of the position taken by Pius IX, endorsed scientific discovery, recommending "exact fidelity to truth in scientific investigation" (Vatican II, 1965: part 2:7):

When we work in the disciplines of philosophy, history, mathematics and science ... we can greatly help humanity to reach a higher understanding of truth, goodness, and beauty, to make judgements of universal value. Humanity

will thus be more fully enlightened by the marvellous wisdom.... Among these values we would like to draw attention to the following study of the sciences and exact fidelity to truth in scientific investigation (Vatican II, 1965: 7).

Furthermore, in the document endorsed by Pius, he recorded other views which he also denounced. "Every man is free to embrace and profess that religion which, guided by the light of reason, he shall consider true" (Pius IX, 1862, Indifferentism, Latitudinarianism, 2). He also wrote in his denunciation, "Man may, in the observance of any religion whatever, find the way of eternal salvation" (Pius IX, Syllabus of Errors, Indifferentism, Latitudinarianism, 2). He also denounced the idea that "Good hope is to be entertained of the eternal salvation of all those who are not at all in the true Church of Christ" Pius IX (1862). *Gaudium et Spes*, however, once more contradicts Pius:

It is, however, only in freedom that people can turn themselves towards what is good. The people of our time prize freedom very highly and strive eagerly for it. In this they are right.... But genuine freedom is an exceptional sign of the image of God in humanity. For God willed that men and women should "be left free to make their own decisions" (12) so that they might of their own accord seek their creator and freely attain their full and blessed perfection by cleaving to God. Their dignity therefore requires them to act out of conscience and free choice, as moved and drawn in a personal way from within, and not by their own blind impulses or by external constraint (Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, part 2, 8).

Pius continues, noting yet another statement with which he disagrees. He writes, "The Roman Pontiff can, and ought to, reconcile himself, and come to terms with progress, liberalism and modern civilization" (Pius IX, *Syllabus of Errors*, Errors having reference to Modern Liberalism, 3). *Gaudium et Spes*, however, states that:

The heritage of its institutions forms the patrimony proper to each human community; thus, too, is created a well-defined, historical milieu which envelopes the people of every nation and age, and from which they draw the values needed to foster humanity and civilization (Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, Proper Development of Culture, 5, 6).

Whereas Pius condemned modernity, Vatican II taught that we draw our values from our history, values which we require in order to foster humanity and civilization. But in every instance noted above, nowhere is any mention made of the fact that in the light of newer knowledge the teachings of the Church have changed and that some of the

information taught as truth by earlier popes was, in fact, in error. Therefore, if we accept the current findings as truth, it must show that not only were some previous teachings in error, but that the individual responsible for the teaching was in error. In the instances noted above, Pius IX, in his *Syllabus of Errors*, had pronounced definitively erroneous opinions, at least in the opinion of Vatican II.

It may be obvious, then, to the impartial reader that the Church, primarily through the auspices of the pope, makes statements which are in complete opposition to statements made by previous popes or Councils as matters of truth. Yet the later popes or Council refrains from admitting that a previous pope was in error. A contrary statement is made which contradicts statements made by an earlier pope. Thus the earlier, erroneous statement becomes lost in the realms of antiquity. But the fact is that contemporary popes, John Paul II and Benedict XVI, for example, while accepting the newer versions of truth which show the errors of Pius IX, still accept Pius IX's claim to infallibility! It seems obvious that contemporary popes, while proclaiming new truths, fail to admit papal error and avoid doing so, possibly out of a sense of fear – fear of losing credibility for the Church and fear that some future pope might very well find fault with some of their own statements.

Critics of my assessment of this situation will, no doubt, insist that Pius IX was not speaking *ex cathedra* when condemning the articles in his infamous *Syllabus of Errors*. But this does not alter the fact that he considered his view of the entire world as a matter of faith. The contemporary creeping infallibility which infects the Church today was active also in the time of Pius IX. Some additional errors refuted by the *Syllabus of Errors* which subsequently have been exonerated include the following, paraphrased:

The Church cannot claim unique authentic validity. This concept is one which the Church still holds as truth, allowing other denominations within Christianity to hold only partial truth, in spite of claims to the contrary by other religious groups.

Divorce may be decreed by civil authority. As a matter of fact, the Church requires that the partners in a marriage do acquire a civil divorce before an annulment will be allowed.

The abolition of papal temporal power would contribute to the liberty and prosperity of the Church. Christ deplored religious temporal power in favour of the adoption of a service mentality by those whom he chose as leaders.

The Catholic Church should not claim unique state monopoly. The Church no longer claims this preference.

Immigrants should be allowed to practice their own faith. The Catholic Church no longer disagrees with this view.

The pope should accept and come to terms with progress, liberalism, and modern civilization. The Vatican does now accept modernity, as, for example in its active participation in modern technology, such as the use of the internet.

In every case noted above, with the exception, perhaps, of the concept that the Church alone possesses the fullness of truth, the Catholic Church has reversed its stand on the definitive statements taken from the *Syllabus*, but in no case has it ever acknowledged an error made by Pius IX.

In its profession of faith, the Church, through John Paul II in *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, asserts the marks of the true Church of Christ: “The Church Is One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic” (John Paul II, 1995: 232). That the Church has produced many righteous individuals is undeniable. But the Church has produced, also, sinners, a fact which supports the view that its adherents are human, incorporating the potential for both good and evil within themselves. It is in following the teachings of Jesus Christ that an individual is able to overcome evil with good. But the Church’s position, significantly altered now, claimed that “Outside the Church there is no salvation”. The Church acknowledges today that those outside the Church do have access to salvation.

But once again, the Church has altered its former teaching without admitting that it was in error earlier in its history.

Perhaps fear, again, is a factor controlling the silence of the hierarchy on this issue. In contemporary Catholicism, those attributes by which the hierarchy maintains control of the members of the Church, are, in essence, relatively dissimilar to those attributes extant in the *naissance* of the Early Church. More and more, as the Church evolved, stricter guidelines of conformity arose so that the hierarchy began to assimilate power and control in its own hands. In the contemporary Church and in the attempt by the hierarchy to maintain control, the imposition of laws continues, laws which the bishops must affirm and legislate, the lower clergy must support, and the laity must observe.

Examples are numerous: Any use of artificial contraception is outlawed; in consideration of the supposed superiority of the hierarchy over the laity, sexual status ensures that women are assured of their equality with men while simultaneously being denied the right to ordination; married men are denied the right to preside over the Eucharistic celebration (unless a married priest of the Anglican communion has converted to Catholicism); and practicing homosexuals are denied the right of acceptance into seminaries or even the recognition of the morality of their sexual practices. Priests are subject to their bishop who, in turn, is subject to the pope. With regard to religious organizations within the Catholic Church, members are bound not only by obedience to their own leaders, but are bound, also, by directives from Rome. This micro-management by the Vatican assures control over all levels within the Church, the *sensus fidelium* notwithstanding!

2.9 Summation

This chapter has noted the nature of authoritarianism which includes the imposition of fear and punishment, the demand for secrecy, and the belief in the power, authority, and infallibility of the leadership. Toleration of free dialogue is non-existent; and laws and decrees are considered sacrosanct. The *locus classicus* of authoritarianism is that of the comparison between the authority practiced in Islam and in Roman Catholicism. The Church condemns the practice of homosexuality, referencing it with the label *intrinsic disorder*, seemingly overriding

personal conscience, yet acts inadequately in cases of pedophilia. A sociopathic personality seems to infect the Vatican authority where often power is exercised negatively rather than positively. This resort to the use of negative power becomes visible through exploitation, coercion, manipulation, and domination. Dissidence in any form is not tolerated and is punished according to Vatican decrees. Theologians are especially targeted by the Vatican and Catholic universities are compelled to abide by Vatican directives. The problem inherent in the vassal-like bishops and in the evil of misogyny will be treated in later chapters.

3.0 Authority by Default

3.1 Introduction

As was suggested in Chapter Two, the hierarchical, patriarchal governance of the Roman Catholic Church seems to promote authoritarianism with its inherent injustice, secrecy, and fear. In this present chapter I intend to pursue these factors as they affect the bishops of the Church. In doing so, I intend to compare the autonomy enjoyed by the general membership in the Early Church with the authoritarian control of contemporary ecclesial life. I wish to explore the lack of autonomy experienced by the bishops, the system of rewards and punishments levied by the Vatican, clerical exclusivity, and the endemic fear potentially intrinsic to the organization. I wish to pursue, also, the relationship between papal infallibility, dissension, justice and control.

3.2 Early Church vs the Contemporary Church

“The harem is nothing but rules and endless homilies about upholding rules” (Robin, 2004: 56). This quotation concerning a human harem is disconcerting for two reasons. First, the very idea of a harem suggests servitude of the women involved, and second, the apparent interminable laws would seriously constrict the behavior of the women as well as the eunuchs in the employ of the Persian autocrat who holds all of them in bondage. But this fable, as noted by Robin (2004: 56), based on *The Persian Letters*, is significant in another way: the control inherent in the harem is analogous to the control imparted by the Vatican.

Obviously, the Vatican does not retain women as sexual slaves nor does it indulge in the employment of eunuchs, at least not in the contemporary setting. (In historical times the Vatican did select young boys who had been castrated for the purpose of employment in the Vatican Boys’ Choir, ensuring by the procedure that soprano voices were preserved. The Vatican may not have legislated this mutilation but it was a mandatory procedure for any boy wishing to become or to remain a member.) The Vatican does, however, continue to control women and clerics in particular. Clerics

who consistently follow the dictates of the Vatican, bishops of the dioceses, are thus enabled to retain their positions of authority, even though such authority is of a much lesser degree than that enjoyed by the Vatican hierarchy. Central authority unfortunately, has usurped the concept of collegiality, a system of shared Church governance which was still intact during the first three hundred years of the fledgling Roman Catholic Church. In *The Dysfunctional Church* Crosby writes:

The fourth century marked the beginning of a clerically controlled institutionalization of the Church. The Church was to be hierarchically centred around the papacy as the empire was centred around the emperor (Crosby, 1991: 68).

Common contemporary understanding and belief holds that the Church of today represents the way the Church has always been from the beginning. Today, for example, in the Catholic Church, following the dictates of the Vatican seems to be the accepted norm. In the Early Church decisions were made not only by the two accepted leaders but by the community at large. Even in the Old Testament women, for example, were consulted as leaders in the religious community. “I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam” (Mic 6:4); and “Deborah, a prophetess ... was judging Israel ... and the Israelites came up to her for judgment” (Judg 4:4). In the Early Church, as well, members of the group, including women, were recognized as leaders within the Church. “I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae” (Rom 16: 1-2); and “Apollos ... began to speak boldly in the synagogue; but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they ... explained the Way of God more accurately” (Acts 18: 26). This is vastly different from the way the Church operates today as is evidenced by regulations emanating from the Vatican. In his reference to the Book of Acts in *As It Was in the Beginning*, McClory writes:

Although the leading actors in the book are the two authority figures, Peter and Paul, the Spirit does not work exclusively through them. The Spirit also operates through deacons like Stephen, teachers, elders, prophets, women like Lydia and Priscilla, and ordinary believers (McClory, 2007: 31).

McClory refers, also, to the first major crisis with which the Church had to contend. The dispute centred on the question of whether or not Gentiles who embraced the faith

were obliged to follow the Mosaic Law, including male circumcision and dietary laws. “The apostles and elders met together to consider this matter. After there had been much debate” (Acts 15: 6-7), Peter, accepting the will of those assembled, reiterated the decisions which they had reached, requiring new Gentile members in the main to refrain from idol sacrifice and fornication. This is certainly unlike the decision by Paul VI to oblige all Catholics to avoid the use of contraceptives, a decision reached by denying the majority report of his own chosen committee. (This point is discussed at greater length in other portions of this dissertation.)

McClory cites another example which pertains to Cyprian, the bishop of Carthage. He writes, concerning Cyprian:

Over and over, in his correspondence, he emphasises that the full church, especially the laity, are to have a voice and a choice in the major decisions of his diocese. Furthermore, he assumes that the practice is not unique to him or a mere personal preference; it is, he says, the way the church is supposed to operate everywhere (McClory, 2007: 41-42).

McClory has taken this information from *The Letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage, Bishop and Martyr*. Again, the practice of sharing decision-making in the Early Church is an unequivocal historical fact, unlike contemporary decision-making, notwithstanding the belief of much of the Catholic population that the governance of the Church today is as it has always been.

In fact, however, until the time of Constantine, the Church consisted of numerous and somewhat autonomous cults, each of which believed in Christ and followed the teachings of Jesus as they believed he would have wanted them to. But Constantine, in order to utilize the Church as a vessel whereby he could consolidate his vast empire under a single philosophy, used religion to effect that goal. I would argue that this may be the most egregious of Catholic misunderstandings. It was not the leaders of the Church, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, who developed its power and authority. On the contrary, it was Constantine who enforced his own will on the Church leaders so that a semblance of uniformity became the norm, resulting in a network of faith

communities in which Constantine's empire as well as the Church itself thrived. Carroll, in *Constantine's Sword*, writes:

Constantine's pragmatic alliance with Christian groups in various contested localities was really what had proved decisive. Christians had faithfully rallied to him, and made the difference. And he could see that his allegiance to Christ would continue to be useful as he set out to consolidate his power over Asia Minor, the Levant, and Africa.... The unity of the empire ... was to him the absolute political virtue.... In turning to religion, unity of belief and practice, not tolerance of diversity, had to seem paramount (Carroll, 2001: 186-7).

This predominance of Constantine vis-à-vis the bishop of Rome, (only centuries later referred to as the pope), is noted as well by Peter De Rosa in his book entitled *Vicars of Christ: The Dark Side of the Papacy*. De Rosa writes:

No one approached his [Constantine's] stature and authority.... Even the bishop of Rome ... was, in comparison, a non-entity ... he was vassal of the emperor ... compared with Constantine, a second-class bishop.... As Burckhardt stresses in *The Age of Constantine*, the emperor's title of ecumenical bishop "was not merely a manner of speaking; actually the Church had no other central point". Not the pope but he, like Charlemagne later, was the head of the church, its source of unity, before whom the bishop of Rome had to prostrate himself and pledge his loyalty (De Rosa, 1988: 43).

The contemporary papal pre-eminence differs drastically from the actual historicity. The commentaries of Carroll, De Rosa (and Burckhardt) above attest to the veracity of early papal subordination as compared with the wishful thinking of contemporary Catholics who have been lead to believe otherwise.

In the early Church the laity chose from their ranks those who would lead them. By the time that the position of bishop became solidified in the Church, however, the laity began to lose their right to select and appoint them. As time wore on the papacy began to control appointments. Crosby, in *The Dysfunctional Church*, writes:

By the twelfth century not even priests were allowed to have a hand in the three essential stages in the making of a bishop – election, confirmation, and consecration. But despite Rome's increasing efforts to control the election of bishops, as late as 1829 popes appointed only a limited number of bishops outside the papal States (Crosby, 1991: 73).

History shows, then, that the papal control of the clerical state was confirmed in the mind of the Church only by degrees, making any claim to the assertion of universal jurisdiction in the matter as though “from the beginning” unsubstantial. This is one of the main reasons why bishops fail to enjoy any degree of autonomy from Rome. Nor does the laity enjoy the privilege of selecting bishops who will serve. But it seems as though bishops, both individually and collectively, fear to question let alone challenge the status quo. Although this statement, on the surface, may seem harsh in recognition of the good work performed by bishops throughout the world, nevertheless, it does bear consideration.

3.3 Bishops’ Lack of Autonomy

If the bishops are, in fact, held in bondage by papal authority, and if bishops fear to challenge papal authority, then there are understandable reasons for it. Bishops have seen, for many decades, the repercussions from the Vatican on dissent from Roman edicts. Priests have felt the uninhibited power of Vatican bureaucracy and theologians, also, have felt the wrath of Roman sanction. Examples of priests who have been censured by the Vatican include, among many others, Father Tisa Balasuriya, who was excommunicated for his opinions and statements which challenged Rome. This is noted in *Mary and Human Liberation*:

The Provincial Superior of the Oblates of Sri Lanka together with his Council and the Theology Circle [who] met ... to assess the sad situation that has arisen by the excommunication inflicted on our brother Oblate Fr. Tissa Balasuriya, OMI (Balasuriya, 1997: 253).

The treatment of Hans Küng, priest and theologian, is another example of Roman censure, documented by Carroll in *Practicing Catholic*. “It was he (Ratzinger) who had instigated John Paul’s insulting attack on Küng in 1979, when the theologian was stripped of his license to teach as a Catholic” (Carroll, 2009: 247). If priests and theologians fear Vatican sanctions, then all the more do bishops, who have much greater responsibility. One case of jurisdictional control is that of Archbishop Raymond

Hunthausen. Archbishop Rembert G. Weakland, in *A Pilgrim in a Pilgrim Church*, writes profusely on the treatment of Archbishop Hunthausen:

At the November 1986 meeting, another drama was playing itself out.... I was very disturbed ... for it was creating a new level of tension between the U.S. Conference of Bishops and the pope.... Accusations of bad management in the archdiocese of Seattle ... had reached Rome and provoked an investigation. Rome appointed Cardinal James Hickey of Washington D. C. ... to interview some people (it was not clear how they were selected), and write up a report, not to be given to Dutch (Hunthausen). Then an auxiliary bishop, Bishop Donald Wuerl, was assigned to Seattle as an auxiliary bishop to take over certain areas of the archbishop's pastoral ministry. It was never clear who, Rome or Hunthausen, was to make the decision about what powers were to be delegated to the new auxiliary bishop.... His fellow bishops respected him highly.

The situation of a bishop in the Catholic Church is a unique one. His legal rights within the Church are not spelled out; the pope personally is the arbiter of each case. With regard to the accusations brought against Archbishop Hunthausen, the procedures taken and the solutions decided upon seemed improvised and ineffective. It was also evident to the bishops gathered at this meeting that any one of them could be the next bishop so judged, since complaints to Rome were a common aspect of American Catholic culture.

The gathered bishops ... wanted to be of support ...; many saw him as being treated unfairly without proper procedures, but they could not come to any consensus on how to be of help. It would have been unthinkable in that climate for the bishops to pass a resolution that in any way appeared to place themselves between Rome and a local bishop.... The bishops felt their hands were tied.... I lamented the conference's impotence.

These instances (Hunthausen and Curran) seemed to be clear signs that the atmosphere of openness and respect for each person in the Church, created by Pope John XXIII's talk at the opening of Vatican II, was being reversed.... The price of orthodoxy one could see was a Church that lived in fear (Weakland, 2009: 298-300).

The above lengthy passage depicts, perhaps, as well as possible, the fear extant within the Church; there seems no better way to show the impotence of the bishops of the Catholic Church than in the very words of one of the bishops themselves.

As long as bishops accept the dictates of Roman power, although they are maintained in luxury and security, they forfeit their independence, their integrity, and their

freedom. The influence these bishops enjoy in their own dioceses is always at the behest of the pope. Within Catholicism, the pope makes the Church his private harem, generating innumerable rules and regulations through edicts, encyclicals, and letters. Where the harem master uses eunuchs to enforce his rules, the pope resorts to the Curia for the same purpose.

But the bishops themselves are an emasculated group. In *Liquid Fear* Bauman writes: [That group] “wishes to be governed by unrestricted force: it has extreme passion for authority ... it has a thirst for obedience.” (Bauman, 2006: 171) In order for bishops to be able to demand obedience from their followers, simultaneously they must accept the control of their leadership in Rome, and they must be seen to accept that control. As the eunuchs become sexually impotent owing to their willing acceptance of castration, the bishops of the Church, as they willingly forego their own authority, accept symbolic castration, rendering them little more than princes following the directives of their king. Should they reject this voluntary castration, the bishops place themselves in jeopardy as the loss of their prestige and position become inevitable.

The decision of some of the bishops to acquiesce to the demands of the pope is perhaps tied, in part, to their hope for advancement or to their fear of the loss of the positions as well as the loss of the inherent authority and security enjoyed within these positions.

In the fictional harem described by Corey Robin in *Fear*, the eunuch conducts a beauty contest whereby each of the women is commanded to strip naked in front of him, degrading them, thus making them vulnerable.

The beauty contest appears to be the perfect metaphor for the stripping down of self which has come to be emblematic of the totalitarian state ... (The winner's) only thought was to win the contest ... (to gain) greater status in the harem.... She accepts her own degradation as a means of rising above others (Robin, 2004: 58).

Perhaps the bishops, accepting unconditional control by Rome, accept their own degradation.

3.4 Exploring a Metaphor

This metaphor is applicable to the manner in which rewards and punishments are handed out by the highest echelons of power to all those at lower levels of Church governance. Especially to the bishops is this metaphor applicable. Every bishop who wishes to retain his position or to advance ever higher along the continuum of power extant in the Catholic Church, must, in metaphorical terms, strip naked; that is, must renounce his independence, adhere to the lines of authority emanating from the Vatican, and conduct the affairs of his diocese in a manner which proves his allegiance to the pope. Not only is the bishop restricted in the performance of his obligations in deference to higher Roman authority, he is limited as well by Vatican law which restricts his authority in disciplining any priest in his diocese who may be in error. For example, the bishop is restricted in how he chooses to discipline a priest accused of pedophilia. Podles, in *Sacrilege*, states that the authority of the bishop “is constrained by canon law ... (and though) it is theoretically possible for a bishop to discipline a priest ... the obstacles that canon law places in the way are enormous” (Podles, 2008: 496).

The *1983 Code of Canon Law* contains numerous statutes which guide but also control the actions which a bishop is allowed to take in activating disciplinary matters. A few of these statutes are noted here for the purpose of indicating “the obstacles that canon law places in the way” (Podles, 2008:496) of a bishop’s discretionary decisions. “The judge of first instance is the diocesan bishop” (Can. 1419). “Each diocesan bishop is obliged to appoint a judicial Vicar” (Can. 1420). “In each diocese the bishop is to appoint diocesan judges, who are to be clerics” (Can. 1421). “(Certain) matters are reserved to a collegiate tribunal of three judges” (Can. 1425). “A defender of the bond is to be appointed in the diocese for cases which deal with nullity of ordination or the nullity or dissolution of marriage” (Can. 1432). “Whenever ... the judge is required to decide some matter, the submission of the promoter of justice and the defender of the bond engaged in the trial has equal weight” (Can. 1434/2). These are but a few of some

164 canons pertaining to disciplinary trials alone, giving credence to Podles' comment concerning obstacles a bishop faces in disciplining a priest.

3.5 Punishments and Rewards

One notorious example of a reward for services rendered is that of Cardinal Law, formerly of Boston, who, in following the dictates of the Vatican in order to ensure that no scandal would soil the reputation of the Church, reassigned pedophile priests to other parishes as soon as their sexual assaults became known to him. In these new parochial settings a new band of children awaited the exploitation of the pedophile priest, all at the behest of the pope, notwithstanding the fact that the pope obviously could not have been aware of each and every individual case of child sexual abuse. When, eventually, the activity of pedophile priests became common knowledge and the capability for hiding the truth and using bribes to silence the victims became ineffectual, Law was brought to Rome where he was rewarded for his diligence in avoiding scandal, a scandal which became even greater when the victims could no longer be silenced. This way of dealing with crime "follows the rule of locking the stable door after the horse has bolted" (Bauman 2006: 76). This is true both of bishops who sent priests to other dioceses and to the pope who brought Law to Rome. Law was rewarded with a prestigious position, a luxurious apartment, and a healthy salary. In *Practicing Catholic*, James Carroll writes:

But as he (Law) had protected abusive priests, the Vatican protected him. Law was named archpriest of the Basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome by Pope John Paul II.... In pursuing his illegal policy of obfuscation, denial, and protection, Law was carrying out instructions from the Vatican itself.... Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger ... (had) sent a secret letter to every Catholic bishop in the world (Carroll, 2009: 235).

The "secret letter", Carroll explains, was subject to the "pontifical secret", "the violation of which was punishable by excommunication" (Carroll, 2009: 235). Bishops, then, follow Vatican orders, understandably in fear of the worst Roman sanction that one could encounter: that of excommunication. And the Vatican did not know of the atrocities perpetrated against the innocents? They have expressed such deception by

claiming ignorance. This, unfortunately, is symptomatic of both past and contemporary attempts to proclaim innocence through avowal of ignorance.

Law acted as many bishops did according to the dictates of a Vatican which had drifted away from the concepts of justice, morality, and freedom of conscience. For a bishop to act in a manner which might disturb his conscience is reminiscent of the excuses made by the Nazi war criminals in their robotic affirmation of Hitlerian ideology. In his defence at his trial, Eichmann, who had been responsible for countless numbers of atrocities against the Jewish people, argued that ‘intent held greater weight than actual conduct’. Bauman, in *Liquid Fear*, writes that Eichmann argued that:

“Intent to do wrong” was, therefore, absent ... as there was nothing wrong in the fulfillment of one’s duty to the best possible effect, according to someone else’s intention, higher up in the hierarchy. What would be “wrong”, on the contrary, was an intention to disobey the orders (Bauman, 2006: 60).

As with Eichmann, the bishops of the Catholic Church failed to intervene appropriately in the numerous cases of pedophilia because they were merely following orders from someone higher up in the hierarchy. “There seems to be no defence ... if moral scruples, pangs of conscience, impulses of human compassion and aversion to inflicting pain on humans are eroded” (Bauman, 2006: 63).

Does this reinforce the concept that fear is endemic in the Church, and that many of those who act, react, or avoid acting, do so out of fear?

3.6 Clerical Exclusivity

Bishops, cognisant of papal directives, are obliged to admit only males to priestly ordination. John Paul II (1994: 2-3) in his *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, refers to the Declaration *Inter Insigniores*, the encyclical by Cardinal Seper with the approval of Paul VI, (1976: 2) which states that “the Church ... does not consider herself authorized to admit women to priestly ordination” (Paul VI, 1976: 2). John Paul continues:

In virtue of my ministry of confirming the brethren ... I declare that the Church has no authority ... to confer priestly ordination to women and that this

judgment is to be definitively held by all the Church's faithful (John Paul II, 1994: 2-3).

Unable or unwilling to demand autonomy from the Vatican, the bishops continue to accept Vatican sovereignty, notwithstanding their right to govern their own dioceses independently. In a bureaucracy individual rights and personal consciences are usurped by the demands and the welfare of the organization itself. Bauman continues:

The performance of an organization managing to come close to the ideal type of bureaucracy would be independent of whatever might still remain of the moral conscience of its officers (Bauman, 2006: 87).

Fear may be a natural reaction to threats from those in charge. It seems logical that the first duty of each bishop is to act in accordance with his conscience; the second, to act in accordance with his responsibility for those under his care; and the third, at least until a democratic Church can evolve, to inform the Vatican of occurrences within his own diocese. But this latter report could be accomplished in the spirit of mutual sharing between the pope and the bishop, without any recrimination, without any rancour, and certainly without any adverse repercussions to the detriment of the bishop or his diocese. The pope can be a source of inspiration to each bishop, not by command, supported by fear, but by encouragement in accordance with the hope and trust and love to which Jesus Christ was committed.

3.7 Disdain for a Saint

While Bishop Law was rewarded for his malfeasance by Rome, any bishop who contravened the statutes commanded by Rome was punished according to the severity of his "crime". Bishop Romero, while attempting to protect his people from the dictatorial and repressive regime in El Salvador, received absolutely no encouragement or support from the Vatican. The Vatican apparently preferred the stability of an evil, authoritarian regime over what it perceived as a threat by Communistic entities. Having precluded any affirmative action in support of Romero, the Vatican continued to play the situation low key so that even following the assassination of this good bishop, the Vatican uttered a very feeble response.

John Paul's weak response to Romero's plight was significant in its inadequacy even prior to the archbishop's assassination. Virtually alone among his fellow bishops in condemning the atrocities committed against the peasants, David Yallop, in *The Power and the Glory*, writes:

When Romero became aware of (the) campaign being waged against him, not only in his own country but within the Vatican, he requested an audience with the pope. His treatment by the Vatican was disgraceful. He was kept waiting for four weeks.... [but] Eventually he was received by the Pope.... Romero showed the pope photographs of murdered priests and mutilated peasants. He told him what was blindingly obvious: "In El Salvador the Church is being persecuted." The pope responded, "Well, now don't exaggerate it....".

At the end of January 1980 Romero had a second audience with the Pope.... Again Romero had to make do with platitudes (Yallop, 2007: 77).

Romero, in spite of a political climate which terrorized his people and threatened him personally, demanded that the government refrain from inflicting his people. Stourton, in *Absolute Truth*, echoes Romero's pleas:

In the name of God, and in the name of this suffering people whose laments rise to the heaven each day more tumultuous, I beg you, I ask you, I order you. In the name of God: stop this repression! (Stourton, 2000:144).

Following Romero's assassination, Yallop writes:

The Pope never acknowledged Romero as a martyr and continued to give credence to the "theory" put forward by Cardinal Trujillo that Oscar Romero was murdered by left-wingers wishing to provoke a revolt.

An Italian judge in a letter to *Corriere della Sera* commented that clearly the Pope liked to travel and asked,

"Why did this travelling Pope not immediately set off for San Salvador to pick up the chalice that had been dropped from Romero's hands and continue the Mass which the murdered archbishop had begun?"

The Vatican response to the murder was minimal. The Pope confined himself to condemning the "sacrilegious assassination" with his "deepest reprobation," as reported in *L'Osservatore Romano*. To represent him at the Archbishop's funeral he sent Cardinal Ernesto Corripio Ahumada of Mexico.

Such evil flourishes best in a culture of indifference. While the Archbishop was rapidly forgotten within the Vatican, his enemies flourished.

During a papal visit to El Salvador, one of the country's bishops accused Oscar Romero, the murdered Archbishop, of being responsible for the death of 70,000 Salvadorans. This slander went unchallenged by the listening Pope (Yallop, 2007: 79; 200).

To establish the fact even further, that John Paul II showed only a minimal interest in the life and death of Romero, Cornwell, in *Breaking Faith*, writes:

But the Pope, ever wary of left-wing clerics, especially the ones in South America, remains unenthusiastic about Oscar Romero's potential for sainthood, while honoring him as a brave priest (Cornwell, 2001: 232).

Was this Vatican response – or lack of it – reminiscent of its lack of response to the Holocaust, or the lack of an affirmative response from Peter when the girl asked him if he “knew the man”? “Did I not see you in the garden with him? Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed” (Jn 18: 26-27). In an obvious contradiction to the manner in which Romero was treated by John Paul II, the *Chronicle Journal* reports “Pope Francis on [Feb. 3, 2015], declared he was a martyr killed out of hatred for his Catholic faith.... It opens the way for Romero to be beatified” (*Chronicle Journal*, 2015: A11).

3.8 Endemic Fear

Since the Vatican controls each diocese on a direct basis through its legislation and decrees and even the quotidian aspects of local governance, the bishops find themselves in a precarious position. As we have seen above, any attempt by a bishop to use independent judgement and to take appropriate action regarding any issue to which Rome might be hostile, would result in the wrath of the Roman authority. The local bishop or a number of bishops acting together such as those acting in unison in a national conference, may safely introduce concerns and practices which the bishops are assured that the Vatican will approve. But any cleric of whatever rank, especially a bishop, is reluctant to take any measure which might endanger the security of his position vis-à-vis Vatican hegemony.

Additionally, just as the Vatican fears any threat to its universal authority by any encroachment by bishops or theologians, so too, do bishops fear the encroachment of their authority by the increasing role of the laity in the Church. Thus it is with considerable reluctance on the part of many bishops that they allow any women or unordained men to appropriate positions which traditionally have been reserved for clerics. The role of the bishop has evolved through the centuries to that of the status of prince within the Church. Crosby, in *The Dysfunctional Church*, writes:

The fear of losing this status and the authority that goes with it undermines their personal identity.... Increasing participation by lay people in the church's life often seems like a creeping encroachment on authority that threatens to swell into a flood (Crosby, 1991: 92).

Since the sexual abuse scandal has placed the Church hierarchy in a vulnerable and indeterminate position, the leaders of the Church are bound to fear future assaults against their privileged status. Many members of the laity in general, women seeking equality with men including their recognition as viable candidates for the priesthood, homosexuals demanding justice whereby their sexual orientation is recognized as natural, wholesome, and a God-given endowment through which they can live their lives according to the fullness of their sexuality, and many members of the lower clergy decry the clericalism which has invaded the church and are beginning to demand an end to this situation where the elite have privilege, power, and authority, and the rest of the Catholic population adheres to their edicts as vassals in a serfdom.

The bishops, however, persist in bowing to the restrictive measures legislated by Rome, and dare only to attend to trivial tasks. But even mundane issues such as the wording of prayer in the new missal, must receive Roman endorsement – again and again after alterations are made to the satisfaction of the Roman authority. Even when the English wording becomes awkward, ungrammatical, and distasteful to any student of the English language as well as the general population of parishioners, the Roman version of the prayer must become the standard. The standard directed by Rome, however, is based on what the Church refers to as the original Latin, forgetting or

intentionally avoiding the fact that the early language of the Church was Greek, not Latin. This aspect of Church duplicity is possibly based on the fear experienced by the hierarchy of losing any portion of its control over its followers. The very initiation of celebrating Mass in the vernacular is a result of Vatican II. Paul VI prescribed the document entitled *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy):

These norms being observed, it is for the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority ... to decide whether, and to what extent, the vernacular language is to be used; their decrees are to be approved, that is, confirmed, by the Apostolic See (Paul VI, 1963: 9).

This innovation, once more controlled by the Vatican, although endorsed by Paul VI, was not seriously accepted by the late John Paul II and the more recent Benedict – both of whom would have preferred, it seems, to reverse.

3.9 Escaping Authoritarianism

With regard to mundane issues, Frank Furedi, in *The Politics of Fear*, writes:

[Such] politics can mean no more than fiddling around with minor issues on the margins of society ... [The bishops must] play down any `direct hands on` responsibility, seeing their role ... as being that of a facilitator rather than a manager (Furedi, 2005: 14).

For important issues the bishops are even more reluctant to act on their own.

Unfortunately, they utilize time in discussing insignificant matters such as re-writing prayers rather than attending to matters which are of much more importance both to them and to their constituents. On this topic, the selection of hymns which are recommended for use at Mass by the book inspired by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops is, with exceptions, mundane, tedious, unimaginative, and boring. Catholics are well known to be non-singers at Mass, but the use of such uninspiring hymns does little to alter that lack of participation so endemic in Catholic congregations. Joyful songs do exist and one need only to attend a Mass where guitars and cymbals and drums and dancing take place to experience the joy which could be inherent in every congregation and in every celebration of the Eucharist.

Bishops are not and need not be followers; indeed, they could be authentic leaders within their own dioceses. Bishops, were they proper representatives of their parishioners and were they effective leaders of their Churches, could address Vatican autocracy and Vatican errors. In *Practicing Catholic*, Carroll writes: "Someone must dare to look the captain in the face and, when they know better, to contradict him. The highest authority ... is not the captain, but the Lord, the owner of the ship" (Carroll, 2009: 245).

Perhaps the bishops are crippled by fear, a fear which they would not admit, claiming their actions are based on legitimate authority which resides in Rome. Still, not every bishop has remained dormant in the face of dictatorial edicts from the Vatican in spite of the repercussions which follow every attempt at independent thinking. One of these brave souls, Archbishop Quinn of San Francisco, met with continual harassment from Rome for his unilateral approach to the reality of Christian life: Crosby, in *The Dysfunctional Church* writes:

For years he, (Archbishop Quinn) had tried to give the Catholic Church some credibility only to be undermined by Rome. Whether it was his sensitivity to homosexuals, his dialogical approach with women and men religious ... (his call) for a review of the official position of the Church on birth control, or his efforts at collegiality, he continually met challenges from Rome, ... (which) likely contributed to his ultimate breakdown (Crosby, 1991: 94).

Other bishops too, have attempted to combat the authoritarian manner of governance in the Church but the majority of bishops, perhaps fearing to challenge higher Church authority, are content to abide in the safety of their palaces.

Bishops might recognize that parachuting bishops into dioceses from other areas is non-biblical and completely contrary to the manner in which bishops were chosen in the Early Church. Schoenherr, in *Goodbye Father*, notes that:

In modern democratic societies, ascriptive barriers to high office in most institutions are illegal.... The Roman Catholic Church remains one of the last strongholds of authoritarian monarchy in the modern world (Schoenherr, 2002: 195).

Schoenherr makes a valid point, once more corroborating the manifestation of Roman Catholic authoritarianism.

3.10 The Status Quo

Every bishop is the head of his Church and not merely a departmental manager of a corporation whose CEO sits in state in Vatican City. But notwithstanding the legitimate authority bestowed on the Church through Peter, the only true authority comes from God through his Son, Jesus Christ. “And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church” (Mt 16:18). It is notable that many theologians understand the Petrine reference as the Church itself rather than the person of Peter, but, notwithstanding this interpretation, Christ himself is the head of the Church. This fact of Christ’s headship is affirmed through numerous biblical assertions. Perhaps some of the most significant examples are the following:

Regarding the Christian household St Paul notes, “just as Christ is the head of the Church” (Eph 5:23); in noting the supremacy of Christ, Paul writes, “He is the head of the body, the church (Col 1:18); and with reference to the fullness of life in Christ, Paul writes, “And you have come to fullness in him, who is the head of every ruler and authority” (Col 2:10); with reference to the Christian household, Paul writes: “For the husband is head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the Church” (Eph 5:23).

Regarding the supremacy of Christ: “He is the head of the body, the church” (Col 1:18); Paul’s interest in the Colossians: “I am completing what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church” Col 1:24); and, most importantly in this chapter concerning bishops, regarding the qualifications of bishops: “For if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how can he take care of God’s church?” (1 Tim 3:5).

Numerous other scriptural statements emphasize the fact of Jesus’ headship and supreme authority in the Church. With regard to head coverings Paul writes: “But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man” (1 Cor 11:3); Paul’s

prayer: “And he has put all things under his feet and he has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all” (Eph 1:22). Regarding the Body of Christ: “We must grow up in every way unto him who is the head, into Christ” (Eph 4:15); regarding the fullness of life in Christ: “Do not anyone disqualify you ... dwelling on visions puffed up without cause by a human way of thinking, and not holding fast to the head, from whom the whole body ... grows with a growth that is from God” (Col 2:19); in a salutation to the Corinthians, Paul writes: “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God” (2: Cor 1:1); Paul’s prayer: “And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the Church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all” (Eph: 22-3); and in speaking of the mystery of religion, Paul writes: “If I am delayed, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God” (Col 1:24).

These examples emphasize the importance of the Headship of Christ who is the real and only Head of the Church, and all the office-bearers are to serve his headship.

Furedi, in *Politics of Fear* (2005: 14), talks about TINA (There Is No Alternative), the policy of Margaret Thatcher while she was Prime Minister of Britain. She believed that the status quo was the answer to all political problems, an avenue endorsed by Rome. When Father Marciel Maciel Degollado, the founder of the *Legion of Christ*, was found to have violated his vows of chastity, the Legion determined to avoid any scandal which might adversely affect the continuity of the organization. The new leadership merely denied any wrongdoing, confirming the fact that, as John Thavis states in *The Vatican Diaries*, “The self-preservation instinct still reigned” (Thavis, 2013: 108). This same instinct is a constant within the Catholic Church in general and among the bishops in particular. It is this Roman imperative which stagnates the evolution of the Catholic Church, preventing it from entering into the twenty-first century with any degree of credibility and progress. This is where the bishops have the greatest obstacle to overcome; this is where they will either advance toward a democratic Church filled

with the Spirit of God or remain in the dungeons of mediocrity reluctant to demand their own emancipation from Vatican rule. Jesus Christ abolished burdensome laws, criticized the priestly caste, and laboured unto death for the freedom of the people. TINA can be related to the Church when insistence on central control and unchangeable orthodoxy rule the day. Furedi's contention that change can be realized in governance is applicable to the Catholic Church. He writes:

The notion that there is no alternative and that it is not really possible to solve most of the problems facing humanity is based not on an identification of new and insuperable difficulties, but on a novel underestimation of human capabilities. So while this prejudice is profoundly entrenched it can be contested (Furedi, 2006: 16).

Corey Robin, in *Fear*, in his discussion of Hobbes' view of fear, suggests the three elements of fear which, though applied to secular politics, is no less applicable to religious politics, the governance of the Roman Catholic Church. He suggests, first, that fear is created; secondly, that fear depends on illusion; and finally, that fear, among other things, can be used to overcome the impasse of moral conflict (Robin, 2004: 33). If the bishops of the Roman Catholic Church considered these concepts and acted in order to reduce or eliminate fear within the Church, Catholicism could become a more viable and welcoming community.

3.11 Dissension

One example of this top-down control is evident in the continual interference in the operation of Catholic universities by the Vatican. Universities, by their very nature, are intended to awaken in the minds of both students and staff the concepts, desires, and curiosity to investigate, to challenge, and to become catalysts in the development of new ideas, new interpretations, and even controversial questions. To refuse the right to a free sharing of ideas is tantamount to the appropriation of the freedom to think. In her book, *Nomad*, Ayaan Hirsi Ali distinguishes between her relatives and herself, suggesting a stratagem which might prove useful for bishops as well as Catholics in general. This woman has dared to question the abusive and authoritarian nature of her

Islamic religion, a position which places her very life in jeopardy. Ali states that, “The only difference between my relatives and me is that I opened my mind” (Ali, 2010: 81).

This aphorism is equally relevant to Catholics in general. A dissenting Catholic might very well be criticized for questioning some of the entrenched teachings of the Church but is hardly likely to be put to death for such transgressions. Nor would a bishop receive the death penalty, at least not in the physical sense, but he might very well experience the termination of his clerical hierarchical position. But the message here is an important one: Catholics, whether lay or clerical, seem to be addicted to authority which claims their unquestioning loyalty. The acceptance of the *sensus fidelium* by the Vatican is hardly recognizable.

Zygmunt Bauman addresses this question in his *Liquid Fear*, and although his work is more concerned with human life in general, his concept here is particularly reminiscent of Catholic Church dynamics. He makes reference to “the horror of being excluded” (Bauman, 2006: 47), a fear experienced by bishops who refrain from criticizing the Vatican possibly for personal security reasons. Bauman continues with an agenda which once more is easily equated with religious authoritarianism. Should any bishop attempt to attain jurisdictional authority *sans* Roman approval, he will suffer the dire consequences of Roman style justice, ensuring that he has no acceptable means, by Roman standards, of defence:

There is no immunity – and there is no effective way for you to claim, let alone vindicate your rights, because there are no universally acknowledged rules to be invoked, or ... common practices, which you could turn to in order to convincingly prove that the verdict of exclusion ... has been unwarranted and the verdict ought to be quashed. There is no foolproof way of winning your case, however keenly you may try, and however earnestly you do (Bauman, 2006: 47).

In a Letter to the Editor which I submitted to the *Prairie Messenger*, I challenged a remark made by Cardinal McCarrick in his address to a group of college presidents. He had stated that:

It is naïve for college presidents to believe they can invite to campus speakers who advocate divisive positions on abortion and same-sex marriage contrary to church teaching and expect a productive debate (McCarrick, Feb. 10, 2010).

My response to the cardinal's statement was as follows:

On the contrary, if everyone involved in a debate holds the same opinion, then there simply is no debate. In order to have a viable debate, there must be at least two differing opinions (Bishop, Oct. 13, 2010).

This fear of critical thinking is common within the hierarchical Church. What Furedi relates in his *Politics of Fear* confirms this. He says:

Managerial language is a form of mechanical discourse that “removes the need for thinking. That is why it has been so readily embraced by an unimaginative political class” [Read here: Roman Catholic hierarchy] (Furedi, 2005: 17-18).

The bishops of the Catholic Church are mandated to observe the disciplines and directives given them by the Vatican bureaucracy. These directives, as in the educational system of which Robbins speaks, are not intended as “instructional tools”. Robbins says, rather, that “they are devices used to punish schools when they fail to ... meet achievement criteria over which they have little to say” (Robbins, 2008: 65, 66). In the Catholic Church the directives are used as methods of control and punishment for any bishop who dares to move in a different direction. Free thinking, subsequent relative action, and independent speech, each of which is recognized as a right inherent in a democracy, are denied bishops who remain under the volatile Vatican varsity. But regardless of whether or not bishops demand their rightful autonomy, they are still responsible for the diocese under their authority. “If enlightenment is the courage to think for oneself, it’s also the courage to assume responsibility for the world into which one is thrown” (Bauman, 2006: 81). And that responsibility for every bishop is the diocese to which he has been assigned and the Catholic people within the diocese. In the same way that schools have no input into the construction of these edicts which control their behaviour, so, too, are the bishops deprived of any opportunity to express their opinions, unless, of course, those opinions do not challenge any Church teaching. Critics of this last statement will insist that in fact the

bishops do have a say in central Church government. But this fallacy is discerned by the fact that the pope and the Curia make the decisions; the bishops merely carry out their orders. But when any bishop perceives an injustice in the government of Church, or in faulty teachings from the Vatican, then is he not bound to challenge what he believes is in error? As James Carroll asserts in *Practicing Catholic*, “Moral reasoning is not mere obedience” (Carroll, 2009: 266).

Requests, which could be directed to the Vatican as intentions, such as the ordination of married men and women is another area in which bishops have no say, again despite the fact that the reasons for denying either refusal are groundless. Bishops who venture outside the norms laid down by the Vatican are subjected to a spy system which watches every move, and reports any divergence from Vatican norms to the corporate “head office”. The treatment of Hunthausen, McNeil, Küng, and Balasuriya, among many others, reflects the punishment inflicted on those who would question Roman orthodoxy. Rights and privileges within the Catholic Church are limited to those few at the top and those who abide by their precepts. Those members of the clergy who hope one day to be raised to the episcopacy must pass the papal loyalty test just as presiding bishops must assure their superiors in Rome of their loyalty to the pope, much as vassals in years gone by swore allegiance to their king. Schoenherr, in *Goodbye Father*, writes:

Orthodoxy ... is determined by the degree of loyalty to the Holy See and the pope’s personal version of Catholic doctrine. Thus, along with ensuring adherence to the teaching of *Humanae Vitae* against birth control (for example), bishop-candidates are routinely probed for their firm opposition to the ordination of women and married men (Schoenherr, 2002: 151).

3.12 Papal Infallibility

Küng’s treatment seems to be a particularly unjust and tragic affair. With the publication of his book questioning the concept of papal infallibility, the wrath of the religious empire crashed down on his head. Carroll, in *Practicing Catholic*, writes, “John Paul ordered Küng’s *missio canonica*, his license to teach as a Roman Catholic

theologian, withdrawn” (Carroll, 2009: 243). This destruction of the integrity of the episcopate under John Paul II moved any hope for the development of a democratic Church even further away from possibility. Not only did this pope curb any attempt by theologians to discover a newer understanding and interpretation of truth but he reasserted the papal claim to infallibility without actually claiming his decision as infallible. Following this injustice there was no outcry from the bishops of the world against this travesty against Küng. Had any bishops done so, the wrath of the Vatican may have descended on them as well.

The two statements in which infallibility was claimed by two of John Paul’s predecessors are the only two statements actually designated as infallible. Some of John Paul’s statements do, however, capture the essence of infallibility. In his mind at least, some of his statements became infallible pronouncements. For example, in the encyclical entitled *Veritatis Splendor*, “John Paul asserted that his own sexual teachings were moral absolutes” (Carroll, 2009: 243). In my own perusal of this document, it became clear that John Paul included at various times the requirement that Catholics are bound to accept the teachings of what he called the Magisterium, i.e., Vatican directives, directives which are always subject to papal acquiescence. At no time, however, did the encyclical specifically mention that the bishops of the universal Church held equality with him in the teaching charism of the Church. Nor did any bishop question this unfortunate omission. The encyclical itself contains several references to the Magisterium. Some of these are as follows:

The task of authentically interpreting the word of God ... has been entrusted only to those charged with the Church’s living Magisterium.... The Church has the right always and everywhere to proclaim moral principles, even in respect of the social order (John Paul II, 1993: 16). The Magisterium has the duty to state that some trends of theological thinking and certain philosophical affirmations are incompatible with revealed truth. In addressing this encyclical to you, my Brother Bishops, it is my intention to state *the principles necessary for discerning what is contrary to “sound doctrine”* (John Paul II, 1993: 17).

The faithful are obliged to acknowledge and respect the specific moral precepts declared and taught by the Church in the name of God (John Paul II, 1993: 11).

The theologian's role is to pursue ... an ever deeper understanding of the word of God ... handed on by the living Tradition of the Church. He does this in communion with the Magisterium, which has been charged with the responsibility of preserving the deposit of faith (John Paul II, 1993: 57).

The Church's Magisterium intervenes not only in the sphere of faith, but also, and inseparably so, in the sphere of morals. It has the task of "discerning", by means of judgments normative for the consciences of believers, those acts which in themselves conform to the demands of faith and foster their expression in life.... The Church's Magisterium also teaches the faithful specific particular precepts and requires that they consider them in conscience as morally binding.... The Magisterium carries out an important work of vigilance, warning the faithful of the presence of possible errors, even merely implicit ones, when their consciences fail to acknowledge the correctness and the truth of the moral norms which the Magisterium teaches (John Paul II, 1993: 57-58).

Moral theologians are called to develop a deeper understanding of the reasons underlying its teachings (the Magisterium's) and to expound the validity and obligatory nature of the precepts it proposes.... Moral theologians are to set forth the Church's teaching and to give ... the example of a loyal assent, both internal and external, to the Magisterium's teaching in the areas of both dogma and morality (John Paul II, 1993: 58).

Although the above arguments may be viable they fail to show any representation by the bishops, in spite of the fact that the Magisterium represents "the teaching authority of the church, especially as understood in Roman Catholic theology as resting in the pope and the bishops" (McKim, 1996: 166).

John Paul II makes it clear that his view alone defines sound doctrine. He requires complete obedience from all members of the Church. Theologians are limited in their teaching capacity to teach only what John Paul has articulated as truth. The conscience of every Catholic must conform to the teachings of the pope, and all must give loyal assent to both dogma and morality as proclaimed by him. Once again the bishops are, as are theologians, prohibited from interpreting aspects of dogma and morality. They continue to act as vassals, fearing to evaluate, discern, and teach truths as the Holy Spirit leads them. The bishops acquiesce to the dictates of Rome, perhaps too fearful to question the absolute decrees of the papacy. Perhaps they dreaded kneeling at the

feet of the pope, requesting a blessing, and receiving a finger-wagging reprimand as happened to Ernesto Cardenal. John Cornwell, in *The Pontiff in Winter*, writes:

Four Catholic priests became members of the Sandinista cabinet, including the priest and poet Ernesto Cardenal, minister of culture. When John Paul finally met him on his trip to Nicaragua in 1983, Cardenal, dressed in lay clothes, went down on his knee, but John Paul withdrew his hand and shook an angry finger at him. "You must straighten out your position with the Church," he said (Cornwell, 2004: 82).

It is interesting to note, as Cornwell reminds us, that John Paul himself had no problem in his own involvement in the 1970s in Poland. But this priest, Ernesto Cardenal, supporting the sentiments expressed in liberation theology, resisted the demand of John Paul that he resign his position as Minister of Culture in Nicaragua. But never in his entire overly-lengthy pontificate did John Paul ever wag an accusing finger at a pedophile priest. Nor did his successor, Benedict XVI. Jesus would have lifted Father Cardenal from his kneeling position and embraced him. John Paul may have known that he was not Jesus, but he did not seem to know that he was not the Church! In *Always on Sunday*, Harpur writes:

His (John Paul II's) agenda has been clear: nothing less than total conformity of every bishop, priest, and theologian to the ultra-conservative views of a Vatican clique presided over by himself.... While praising the concept of collegiality – the joint sharing by Pope, Curia, and local bishops in running the Church – he has in fact increasingly centralized power at the Vatican (Harpur, 1988: 115).

This dogmatic, authoritarian stance adopted by John Paul is at variance with his earlier thinking in Poland where he was more open to the concept of collegiality. But with his rise to the papal throne, the acquisition of supreme power and authority had a negative effect on his style. From a humble, intelligent, and loving cleric, he assumed a more combative stance. His word was law and any priest, bishop, or theologian who dared to challenge it did so at his own peril.

Although the Vatican has not yet established a system of "canine watchdogs" as mentioned by Robbins in some school systems, the human watchdogs can be especially

vigilant in ensuring that orthodoxy is practised according to Vatican standards.

Punishments of “erring” theologians and bishops have been swift, decisive, and harsh.

Each bishop, during his *ad limina* visit to Rome, a mandatory visit every five years, must provide information regarding the successful or otherwise operation of his diocese as well as his dutiful attendance to orthodoxy. Considering the effort put into ensuring each bishop’s loyalty to the pope and his assurance of safeguarding orthodoxy, it is impossible to believe that the Vatican was unaware of any bishop who moved pedophile priests from one jurisdiction to another. This was done in order to ensure that no scandal would soil the face of the Church, and it was done at the behest of the pope himself. The Roman imperative to retain silence and secrecy has resulted in praise from Rome and rewards for those who thus followed explicitly Roman edicts. Bishop Law, mentioned earlier, was one example of Vatican duplicity. Robbins, in *Expelling Hope*, notes that zero tolerance “is not only an authoritarian conception of authority, but also the promotion of teachers’ inability to recognize their authority as a shared force” (Robbins, 2008: 162).

In the same way Rome dictates its policy to the bishops, first by demanding that all cases of sexual predators be sent to Rome and that legal authorities be denied any information, and the secrecy is to be guarded under threat of excommunication. Zero tolerance for sexual abuse of minors by priests might be enforced, but such determination would be enforced by the local bishop, and the bishop could report any such abuse to the lawful civil authority. Once again, because of fear of losing credibility on account of scandal in the Church, the Vatican has become if not a practitioner then at least a facilitator for the behaviour of pedophiles and those who protect them. (Since the abuse crisis has become public knowledge, and a number of dioceses have gone bankrupt because of being forced to recompense individual victims, the scandal which the Church has attempted to avoid has come to the fore in a manner much more grievous than that which they had tried to avoid. After the Vatican duplicity has been

recognized, no longer able to conceal the truth, the Vatican has finally allowed local bishops to inform the civil authority of the names of those who are suspected of guilt.)

3.13 Fear as a Weapon of Control

Christopher Robbins, in quoting Corey Robin, writes, “Fear is a powerful political tool” (Robbins, 2008: 164). It seems evident that bishops, fearing excommunication and the resultant loss of prestige, local jurisdictional authority, and personal maintenance, have abdicated their duty to protect those under their charge in order to placate the officials in Rome. It is inconceivable that priests could so abuse children, and that their bishops could protect the abusers, and that both priests and bishops would not be well versed in the biblical injunction concerning child abuse:

If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea (Mt 18:6).

Arguably, the sexual abuse crisis has been, more than any other cause, the result of an overly domineering and authoritarian government in Rome. If bishops denounced the authoritarian, fear-inducing control imposed by Rome, it could introduce democratic governance whereby the individual bishop would be empowered to act in the best interests of those under his charge. But “persons who are fear-based or fear-responsive never feel free to say what they think or feel” (Crosby, 2008: 103). A bishop, rather than executing orders from on high which not only diminishes him as a leader, as a cleric, and as a human being, but which compels him through fear to maintain the pretence of a scandal-free society, could act unilaterally in order to protect innocent children whose very lives have been desecrated, damaged, and corrupted. People do not exist for the Church but the Church exists for the people. “Hope”, Robbins states in *Expelling Hope*, “enables people to identify – and implicitly denounce – the social relationships and conditions that do violence, in any form, by claiming that a different type of human existence is possible and desired” (Robbins, 2008: 168).

Robbins concludes his book by stating what should be obvious but which, unfortunately too often, is not: the requirement for education, a challenge which the bishops could very well emulate for the governance of their own jurisdictions. He says:

The challenge now is to have the respect, openness, trust, and courage to act, as mutually responsible members of a shared social fate, as if the future mattered, and has already begun to emerge, by talking and acting as if youth [and lower clergy and laity in ecclesiastical environments] matters (Robbins, 2008: 170).

Michael Crosby, for his book, *The Paradox of Power*, has added the intriguing subtitle *From Control to Compassion*, a sentiment embraced by Pope Francis. This concept is the very essence of what Jesus proclaimed when he chastised the religious authorities of the day who, intoxicated with their own power and the control over the people, exercised that power at the expense of those whom they abused. Scripture reminds us, however, that leadership should involve giving service rather than receiving it.

“Whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant.... just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve” (Mt 20: 27-28). In his book entitled *The Paradox of Power*, Crosby writes:

The clearest definition of “abuse” comes perhaps surprisingly, from a religious group that has been identified with abuse of power possibly more than any other entity in the United States: the Roman Catholic bishops.... Abuse is any way one controls another through fear and intimidation. Abuse can occur ... when small groups of individuals control institutions (Crosby, 2008: 55).

The scenario clarified by Crosby is an accurate description of the power exerted, not only in Rome, specifically by the pope and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, a department of the Curia, formerly known as the Inquisition, but by the bishops themselves as they flex their ecclesiastical muscles in order to reap some of the privileges enjoyed by their Roman superiors. Punitive measures have been taken by some of them, purportedly in deference to the faith, but possibly in order to gain prominence among their peers, and so that they may direct any interest from Rome in their direction. To toe the party line, to be even more conservative than those in the Vatican, to be seen as defenders of strict orthodoxy, will, possibly, in their minds increase the likelihood of their advancement in the ecclesiastical milieu. Crosby writes:

“By nature, control freaks usually lack behaviour flexibility and are reticent to change, particularly in response to feedback” (Crosby, 2008: 54).

Bishops, under the Roman authoritarian dictatorship, feel compelled to acquiesce to any and all directives from the centre of orthodoxy. As a result, they become accomplices in the sexism which permeates the very fabric of the Vatican enclaves. Clericalism, patriarchy, an infallible-like agenda, and the hierarchy itself affect the bishops who seem to fear challenging any of these Vatican absolutes. Vatican authority, “inspired by God” and authorized by that same deity, pervades Catholic theology and Church life, affecting all members of that society, but especially the bishops, who are, in the final analysis, the only segment of that society which could, if fear did not control their lives, introduce drastic changes to the imperfect governance inherent in the Roman court. Schoenherr, in *Goodbye Father*, writes, “Hierarchic power leads to authoritarian leadership characterized by permanence and taken-for-granted legitimacy” (Schoenherr, 2002: 143). This attitude, accepted by bishops, is perhaps the main stumbling block to any effort they might consider in the future to full emancipation from Roman manipulation and control. This propensity to impotence with regard to papal dictatorial conduct is hardly a new development in the Church. It has ensured the uncontested and entrenched belief in the papal retention of supreme power and authority:

Eliminating the intermediary power of bishops ... was begun by Gregory VII (1073-1085) and continued through the Council of Trent, the (First) Vatican Council, and it was completed by the edicts of Pius X (1903-1914) (Schoenherr, 2002: 144).

But the bishops refuse to budge; they seem to prefer to enjoy the fruits of their ecclesiastical positions, regardless of the unjust consequences to the laity and the lower clerics under their authority. The bishops, again, possibly through fear, refuse to accept the fact that they are simply pawns under the influence of a power which is undeniably restrictive. Crosby, in *The Paradox of Power*, writes, “Denial allows us to avoid coming to terms with what is really going on inside us.... It (denial) is the major defence mechanism” (Crosby, 2008: 61-62). When bishops choose to follow the

unilateral dictates of the Vatican, they seem to do so out of fear of the potential and inevitable consequences of their disloyalty. The aphorism *Roma locuta est, causa finita est* is no truer than here in the reluctance, indeed possibly the fear, under which bishops survive, to revolt against Roman dictum. It is a rarity to hear of any bishop challenging the dictates of the Vatican, but when one does hear of it, one hears also of the penalties imposed on the recalcitrant cleric.

In spite of the fact that the Vatican does all in its power to ensure secrecy regarding its treatment of what it considers recalcitrants, the truth does, at times, emerge, further incriminating the Vatican in its unjust, authoritarian practice. Crosby, in *The Paradox of Power*, writes:

When the controlling group's self-serving narrative becomes the official ideology, all are expected to believe in it as a matter of faith, as the way to redemption and salvation (Crosby, 2008: 108).

Unfortunately, this self-serving aspect of clerical life, beginning at the Vatican, filters down through the ranks, where it infects even the bishops with its cynical and poisonous aridity. Having been infected with this disastrous condition, the bishops pass on the infection to the clerics under their charge who in turn taint the minds of those still unable to accept the truth. What the Church legislates – what the bishops promote – what the lower clerics teach – is not necessarily the word of God. When this legislation, this promotion, and this teaching become a hindrance to the development of love and harmony but increase self-servitude, then to claim that such teaching derives from the deity is to bastardize the very meaning of Christianity.

Bishops seem to forget the injunction by Jesus Christ who warned his followers of the responsibilities of those who would be leaders. When James and John asked Jesus for special places in Paradise, Jesus reminded them of the difficulties in leadership. The other apostles, angered by the attempt to curry favour with Jesus, rebuked the two disciples. But Jesus intervened, outlining the behaviour acceptable in leadership roles. Jesus said:

You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so

among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many (Mk 10:42-45).

A comparison between the above quoted Scripture passage and the governance of the contemporary Roman Catholic Church suggests some disturbing themes, in which the relationship between attitude of the leadership of the Church toward those whom they are supposed to shepherd is less serving and more dictatorial. This suggestion will be viewed by some as erroneous and injurious to the welfare of the Church itself. But to fail to indict those leaders who fail to follow the injunction commanded by Jesus would indicate a serious deficiency. Some questions require consideration by the reader as well as special attention to the answers. For example, if, as Scripture states, "God saw everything that he had made and indeed it was very good" (Gen 1:31), then why does the Church hierarchy insist that homosexuality is "intrinsically disordered"? The answer seems clear. The belief that homosexual relations characterize aberrant behaviour is based on the outmoded belief that the homosexual orientation is chosen and is not a naturally occurring phenomenon. John McNeil, in *The Church and the Homosexual* writes:

The only certain substantive conclusion that follows from the scientific data is the terrible cost in terms of human suffering and degradation that has followed on the mistaken moral judgments and prejudices of the present (McNeil, 1993: 113).

But even that is a moot point since homosexual persons are made, as is everyone, in the image of God, and all that God has made is good. Another example relates to the divorced and remarried Catholic who has not obtained an annulment and who is denied the right to participate in the reception of communion. Christ welcomed everyone to his table, sinners included, and he refused no one. The refusal to allow some persons to communicate is itself an aberrant behaviour, an oxymoron, since the very word communion designates a coming together.

3.14 Justice

When a law is promulgated by the Church leadership which brands homosexual behaviour deviant, or when a woman feels called to the priesthood and is denied that opportunity, or when two loving individuals of the same sex desire to be included in the life of the Church through marriage, but are denied that possibility, or when a child is sexually assaulted by a priest, or when a bishop allows such activities to occur, again and again, is any of this service? When a pope requires bishops to refer all cases of pedophilia to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, where a proverbial “slap on the wrist” is the usual penalty, and ensures that the pedophiles are exempted from being reported to civil authorities and the victims, bribed with monetary conferral, are sworn to secrecy under pain of excommunication, is this service? There is absolutely no doubt that these questions require a negative response. But the bishops do not censure the Roman Pontiff, preferring, perhaps, to lie low in the safety of silence.

But the overriding question here relates to what principle is involved in which to determine the right or wrong of practices and views in any Church. In fact, the only real authoritative principle is none other than the Word of God, and the task of the Church is to serve this truth in any situation or dispute within the Church. Any human law made within the Church must be based on the laws of God through Jesus Christ. God’s law of love must permeate and surpass any human law:

For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him (Jn 3: 16-17).

The very fact of refusing communion because of a law made by humans seems to be at odds with the law of God. Communion, by its very nature, is intended to encourage both unity and community. It seems reasonable, therefore, that every member of the Church who has the right intention and wishes to receive communion be welcomed as he would be welcomed by Jesus Christ himself.

Michael Crosby, in *The Paradox of Power*, refers to the 1971 Synod of Bishops, which convened to discuss “Justice in the World”, a topic, Crosby continues, which the bishops, again, have failed to address in any comprehensive manner. But justice in the world must first involve justice in the Church and until that justice is realized it seems pharisaical to even consider justice outside the Church in the wider world society:

The Church recognizes everyone’s right to suitable freedom of expression of thought. This includes the right of everyone to be heard in a spirit of dialogue which preserves a legitimate diversity within the Church (Crosby, 2008: 111).

This statement, a step in the direction of a more perfect Church, could be accepted totally by the bishops and indeed be incorporated into the life of the Church. But the concept, although written, has not been followed with any meaningful action. Certainly when a cardinal can publicly express the opinion that a debate can be useful only if the debaters all agree on controversial topics, then the idea of a free exchange of ideas dies on the very perimeter of the field of disputation. Perhaps when a theologian has been declared unfit to teach as a Catholic theologian, then the bishops might remind the Vatican of one of the decrees emanating from their 1971 Synod, “the right of everyone to be heard in a spirit of dialogue” as noted above. It is refreshing to note here that Pope Francis seems to welcome debate; it seems that in his pontificate at least, members of the clergy, theologians as well as the laity, are free to express their opinions, even though such opinions may not meet the criteria of historical orthodoxy.

Harpur reminds us in *Always on Sunday* that the bishops have shown outstanding leadership in the development of their statements concerning social justice, but at the expense of neglecting the spiritual needs of their flocks. He says:

What they have to offer spiritually makes less and less sense to more and more people. Until they give as much vigor to this crisis as to social justice, they will continue to be increasingly irrelevant (Harpur, 1988: 135).

This is particularly true when one considers the ineffectual leadership which devotes its time and talents to developing an updated form of prayer, even at the expense of Standard English language, when it allows Rome to dictate that language, and when it

fails miserably to attend to the sexual abuse crisis which has rocked the Church to its very foundation. With this ineffective leadership on so many pressing issues, it is little wonder that the prestige formerly enjoyed by the episcopate has been diminished. But as long as fear controls their actions and they remain reluctant because of that fear to challenge Rome, then this dismal picture will continue to overrule any courageous action on the part of bishops, and the laity and lower clergy will continue to suffer the consequences of ineffective and impotent leadership.

A good bishop, according to traditional Vatican expectation, is one who unquestioningly follows the dictates of his superiors. One such bishop, Johannes Baptista Sproll, appointed to the bishopric of Rotenberg, was somewhat of a hindrance to Cardinal Pacelli (later Pius XII) who had been appointed nuncio to Germany. But in spite of his shortcomings, Pacelli spoke well of him. Wolf, in *Pope and Devil*, writes, "Sproll carried out Pacelli's instructions without complaint, making him the epitome of a good bishop" (Wolf, 2010: 53). But in the eyes of Pacelli, bishops were little more than pawns with whom he could, though not yet pope himself, move around the chessboard of Roman orthodoxy with impunity. His condescending attitude to "mere bishops" was well described by Hubert Wolf who expressed the opinion that "for Pacelli the bishops were little more than papal head altar boys, called on to act only on the instructions of the pope" (Wolf, 2010: 74).

How little the atmosphere changed under the reigns of John Paul II and Benedict XVI regarding the Roman belief in the inconsequential part bishops play in Church governance! How zealously have contemporary bishops heeded the instructions given them by the Vatican, as they freely and willingly accept their insignificant roles!

3.15 Summation

This chapter has compared the Early Church governance with that of the Catholic Church today, noting that authoritarianism has overshadowed the freedom which existed originally. This chapter has shown how the bishops of the Church have become little more than vassals, attempting to conduct the affairs of their jurisdictions under the yoke of Vatican imperialism. The system of punishments and rewards appears to

favour those bishops who assiduously follow the party line. The bishops, fearing to object to the claim of Vatican infallibility, endure their role as subservient to and inferior in authority even in their own jurisdictions, to Rome. Clerical exclusivity imposed by previous papacies remains an antiquated concept, in which women, who had enjoyed equality with men in the Early Church, now find themselves virtually in bondage to patriarchal, hierarchical authority. The following chapter on misogyny will examine this phenomenon more extensively.

4.0 Misogyny

4.1 Introduction

Although misogyny refers to hatred of women, the basic motivation is the fear of women, whose very existence seems to threaten the power authority particularly in the Roman Catholic Church. This chapter looks at how misogyny envelopes the theocracy which is intrinsic to Roman Catholicism. Owing to the servitude which is expected of women and their lack of the physical characteristics which would make them, in the eyes of the hierarchy of the Church, eligible for ordination to the priesthood, the patriarchy of the Church sustains the status of women as second class citizens. Even women religious are not immune to Vatican censure as the Vatican has seen fit to place them under an edict for evaluation, a step which has never been taken with reference to pedophile priests or their bishops who failed to pursue measures to curtail the obscene activities of these pedophiles. Women in general have been held to responsibility of menial tasks, ensuring that positions of authority are generally denied them. The male bastion of power seeks to secure its own prestigious position as law-maker and enforcer while women are denied the recognition of their innate intelligence and capabilities. It is claimed that fear itself, manufactured by the hierarchy, is used as a direct means of control, second in influence only by the claim to infallibility or a creeping infallibility which ensures obedience from adherents to the faith. To begin I shall examine the Church as a theocracy.

4.2 Theocracies

But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith.... There is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus (Gal 3: 25-28).

In spite of the above quotation from St. Paul, the contemporary Roman Catholic Church maintains its belief in the superiority of men over women. This is abundantly clear in the Church's maintenance of a patriarchal theocracy. James Carroll, in his *Toward a New Catholic Church*, writes: "The Second Vatican Council represented the beginning of the long-overdue demise of a Constantinian imperial Catholicism (Carroll,

2002: 21). This seems to suggest that perhaps the Church is heading toward a more democratic and less authoritarian style. If such is the case, then perhaps women will begin to take their place beside the men who currently govern the Church.

But not only in Christianity does this current fundamentalist view prevail. In Islam as well, a call for the introduction of Sharia law throughout the world is a dominant preoccupation. In his *When Religion Becomes Evil*, Charles Kimball writes, “Any inquiry into the corruption of a religion must begin with the claims to truth it makes” (Kimball, 2002: 41).

Theocracies share a basic compulsion to control the lives, thoughts, and personal actions of those of its members who are the least prominent, least effective, and least powerful. It assumes a following which is, at times, uneducated, subject to coercion, and eager to withhold personal conscience, the right to democracy, and the boldness to dissent from intimidation, power structure, and unbelievable dogma. Such followers have subjugated their right of independent thought, free expression, and freedom to dissent to the power structure which controls them. Obedience is not only required but demanded through intimidation, torture – whether physical or mental – and control through laws, dogmatic statements, and threatened punishments. Kimball writes:

Leaders demanding or expecting total obedience can and do find willing followers. Corrupt religion frequently includes coercive tactics designed to keep members in line (Kimball, 2002: 83).

But perhaps the singular characteristic inherent in all such modes of government is misogyny, that apparent hatred of women which is fuelled by fear of women. To the extent that fear is an integral part of a theocracy, to that extent are those who are subjected to theocratic laws subjected to a loss of freedom. As the wearing of the hijab by Muslim women represents their lower status, vis-à-vis males, the now defunct requirement for Catholic women to wear a head covering in Church had much the same intent, even if not overtly stated. With regard to head coverings for females, it is useful to consider St. Paul:

Any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled disgraces her head [because] (she) is the reflection of man.... Indeed, man was not made from woman, but woman from man (1Cor 10: 5-7).

This prescriptive text suggests, perhaps, a misogynistic bent in the mind of St. Paul, but it is expedient to remember that Paul taught in an atmosphere of societal disdain for women in areas of leadership. At other times and in other circumstances, Paul is less concerned with preservation of menial roles for women than with the emancipation of women in his descriptive passages such as his statement concerning the equality of women with men, suggesting that, in fact, in religious matters at least, there is “no longer male and female”.

Torjesen, in her *When Women Were Priests* reminds us of the subordination of women to men. She writes:

Protection implied subordination, and as subject to fathers and husbands, women became subordinate to all men in general – their subordinate role reinforced by an assumed inferiority of woman’s nature (Torjesen, 1993: 45).

This attitudinal stance versus women is only one part, although a significant part, of the male superiority complex which is apparent not only in the secular world but in the religious sphere as well, a topic to be discussed at greater length later in this dissertation. It is expedient now to consider the theocratic nature of the Catholic Church.

To what degree is the Catholic Church a theocracy? If one of the earmarks of a theocracy is that it encompasses both religious and secular status, then it appears that the Catholic Church is indeed a theocracy. Let us examine the fundamental characteristics of a theocracy as they apply to the Catholic Church.

- 1) A theocracy, according to Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary (2001: 1218), is one in which a state is governed “by immediate divine guidance or by officials who are regarded as divinely guided”. Although the leaders of the Church are clerics, the Vatican insists on being recognized as a state with the right to express its opinion in non-religious organizations such as the United

Nations. Moreover, several countries, acknowledging the legitimacy of the Vatican as a state, exchange diplomatic ties with the Vatican State as with other states throughout the world. The Vatican, too, holds reciprocal arrangements with secular powers by appointing diplomats to represent the Vatican in these foreign states. No other branch of Christianity shares diplomatic relations with secular states. The justification for considering the Vatican a state is arguable, but, if it is a state, then it requires representation as a secular authority as well as a religious one.

- 2) A theocracy believes itself to be the unique representation of God on earth. It alone holds the fullness of truth; all other religions and denominations are either Godless states or hold only a minimum of the revealed word of God.

In the encyclical entitled *Dominus Jesus* a statement reveals the Catholic understanding of the possession of truth. It states:

The Church of Christ, despite the divisions which exist among Christians, continues to exist fully only in the Catholic Church, and on the other hand, that “outside of her structure, many elements can be found of sanctification and truth”, that is, in those Churches and ecclesial communities which are not yet in full communion with the Catholic Church. But with respect to these, it needs to be stated that “they derive their efficacy from the very fullness of grace and truth entrusted to the Catholic Church” (Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, 2000: 11).

As a theocracy, the Church extols compassion and understanding, attitudes which must, in justice, include every member of the religious community. This includes women but, obviously, this assertion is hardly recognized. The treatment of divorced Catholics who wish to remarry is neither compassionate nor just. Requiring a couple to obtain an annulment, which is, in my view, nothing less than a Catholic divorce, (the Church will adamantly oppose this statement) is a duplicitous position adopted by the Church. It has been observed in the past that certain individuals are granted annulments in spite of questionable grounds for authorizing the decree. The treatment of Mrs. Kennedy is a case in point. She did not want a divorce but was unjustly manipulated by the hierarchy and the annulment was given to her husband, Senator

Ted Kennedy, so that he could remarry. Garry Wills, in his *Why I Am A Catholic*, refers to historical precedents as well as more current incidences of annulments such as that granted to Senator Edward Kennedy dissolving the marriage with his wife as described in *Shattered Faith*, a book written by the senator's wife, Sheila Rauch Kennedy. Wills writes:

These favors [divorces and annulments] to kings in need of heirs may have been corrupt, but they were common. (Some even claim that even current annulments, for prominent Catholics like the Kennedys, are corrupt.) Such dispensations were a lucrative business for popes like Alexander VI, whose record in the matter is cited by [Lord] Acton (Wills, 2002: 172).

There is no proof or indication that the Kennedy annulment was granted because of monetary gain, but the fact remains that the annulment was granted to someone of prestige. (One easily recalls a king of England, Henry VIII, who fared less favourably with the Vatican than did Ted Kennedy.)

In his *Reforming the Church Today*, Hans Küng alludes to the need for the Church to overcome its penchant for allocating to women a status of inferiority. He writes:

The animosity and even hostility of many Church Fathers and subsequent theologians toward women does not reflect the attitude of Jesus but rather the attitude of numerous male contemporaries of Jesus, who thought women were socially insignificant (Küng, 1990: 101).

In The Eye of the Catholic Storm, a book by Mary Jo Leddy, Bishop Remi De Roo, and Douglas Roche, Leddy discusses perhaps the main reason for the treatment of women as inferior persons. She states:

The woman has been the source of emotional, affective power. It has been hers to give or take away, because the father was more distant – at work. And the thought of having women in positions of power in the Church is, for that reason, really frightening. So it's not so much a dismissing of women; it's an actual fear of them, a fear of the power in the mother image (Leddy *et al.*, 1992: 46).

This description not only augments the belief in the inferiority of women but, almost as a paradox, supports one of the main themes of this thesis, that fear may be a predominant attitude inherent in the Catholic Church.

Women who have remained unmarried and have not entered into a religious state are, as part of the laity, considered of less importance than clerics. For those women who have chosen the married state, they are still considered inferior to priests. Women who have entered into a religious community also suffer the same inferior status. And women, no matter their religious or secular state, are not esteemed worthy to be accepted into the membership of the ordained priesthood, because, as John Paul II states in his encyclical entitled *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, “the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women” (John Paul II, 1994: 3). But was this always the case?

4.3 Ordination vs Subordination

Relatively recently, the Anglican Communion has seen fit to ordain women to the priestly ministry. This decision by the religious body has increased the pre-existing chasm which has separated the two Churches, that is, the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church, for centuries. The adamant refusal by the Vatican to embrace the concept of the ordination of women is evidence of the deep-seated and long-lasting misogyny which has not only deprived women of full participation in Church, but which has also deeply impaired any progress in the Church which may have resulted as an effect of Vatican II.

But what lies at the root of this misogynistic mentality? Perhaps a fear in the minds of men tends to compel them to savor their own prominence vis-à-vis women. Perhaps they fear that any apparent rise in the contemporary status of women will somehow threaten their masculinity. But in any case, it seems, any loss experienced by men is loss which is in effect self-inflicted, and based on inherent insecurity, an egotistical superiority complex, a need for control, and fear.

John Paul II had made it clear that the Church did not have the authority to ordain women to the priesthood, going so far as to say that even to discuss the matter was prohibited. In his *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* he states:

She (the Church) holds that it is not admissible to ordain women to the priesthood, for very fundamental reasons. These reasons include ... her living teaching authority which has consistently held that the exclusion of women from the priesthood is in accordance with God's plan for his Church (John Paul II, 1994:1).

Cardinal Ratzinger reinforced the command mandated by his superior, a position which he continued to hold as Benedict XVI. But the argument is flawed, as James Carroll points out in his *Practicing Catholic*. Vatican II, Carroll reminds us, stated emphatically that:

Any type of social or cultural discrimination in the basic personal rights on the ground of sex, race, colour, social condition, language or religion must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God's reign (Carroll, 2009: 246).

To suggest, however, that no one has a right to ordination is a moot point since the same would hold true for men. The right to ordination comes directly from God who calls his servants, regardless of their sex – or sexual orientation for that matter – to serve His Church in that capacity. The configuration of sexual organs has no bearing on the matter.

The concept of Early Church leadership being shared by both women and men has not been acknowledged by the male hierarchy of today's Church. Such denial exists, as well, within the ranks of some of the lower clergy and ultra-conservative members of the laity. The view in Rome sees Mary as the role model for women – her meekness, her subordination, her obedience. But it is not only men nor the Vatican itself who see the proper role of women as subordinate to men. John Cornwell in his *Breaking Faith* suggests this very unfortunate attitude is demonstrated by some women, and this not only tends to retain women's subordination but also bolsters the male dominated Vatican posture.

There are, of course, conservative women's groups. Some, like *The United Women of America*, deplore the changes of Vatican II and seek to restore "Marian values of acquiescence and obedience" (Cornwell, 2001: 186).

Such groups work, it seems, in opposition to their own best interests by endeavouring to maintain the status quo – to ensure that male, misogynistic domination holds women in positions of inferiority, subservient always to the male. Nevertheless, many women have become theologians and some, particularly women religious, have even achieved positions of authority in the Church, as, for example, the position of Diocesan Chancellor. [The diocese of Thunder Bay, Ontario, was favoured for a number of years by the expertise of a nun who held the position of Chancellor of the Diocese, years in which this author was privileged to serve under her leadership as editor of the diocesan newspaper.] These strides achieved by women are, however, few in comparison to those offices held by men, especially the clergy. Where women have excelled in this regard it is owing to more liberal-minded bishops.

John Paul II made a number of statements concerning the equality of women in the Church but still denied women the right of ordination not only to the priesthood but even to the diaconate, in spite of the fact that deaconesses did function as such in the Early Church and, arguably, women priests as well. John Paul's objection was based on the fact that Christ chose only men to serve as priests. It is interesting to note here that, according to Hans Küng in his book entitled *Christianity: Essence, History, and Future*, the New Testament does not use the word "priest" when referring to the Christian community.

It is striking that in the New Testament the word "priest" in the religious sense of sacrificial priest ... is avoided in connection with functions of the community – in favour of designations of function drawn from the secular sphere. Certainly the word 'priest' is used as a matter of course for Jewish and pagan dignitaries, but strikingly never for those serving in the Christian communities. For this reason it is usually avoided in Protestant churches (Küng, 1995: 82).

It should be noted here, however, that at least one Scriptural passage does use the term. "Let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood (1 Peter 2:5).

To continue the discussion of John Paul's dismissal of women as valid candidates for the priesthood, this pope seemed to believe that because women lack those significant features which made Jesus a male, they are thereby ineligible for ordination. The fact that a male exhibits similar bodily characteristics to those of Jesus Christ does not somehow better equip him for religious activity. True disciples of Jesus Christ exemplify those attitudes of holiness which Jesus possessed, or at least strive to do so. In an attempt to ensure that his definitive statement would hold for all time, John Paul insisted that the concept could no longer even be considered as a possibility – a statement uttered as though it were an infallible one, even though not labelled as such. In his Apostolic Letter entitled *Ad Tuendam Fidem*, he refers to updates he has made in some of the Canons in the *Code of Canon Law*. These updates refer to any beliefs “proposed ... by the solemn Magisterium of the Church” (John Paul II, 1998: 2). It reads, further, “All are therefore bound to avoid any contrary doctrines” (John Paul II, 1998: 2). Such a position taken by the pope, where in one breath he endorses the liberation of women and in the next denies them ordination but regulates them to the roles to which they have been accustomed throughout the centuries, represents roles which are subservient and which fail, as well, to recognize the loss the Church suffers through the denial of their call to ordination.

John Paul's consistent denigration of women in refusing to relent in his banning of women priests has done little to slow the tide of the desire of many women to achieve the position of cleric. It is noteworthy that this injunction by the Holy See has been ignored as much as has the ban on the use of methods of artificial birth control as documented in *Humanae Vitae*, which states that the Church condemns “as being always illicit, the use of means directly contrary to fecundation” (Paul VI, 1968: 5).

The command by the Vatican to refrain from discussion of any specific topic is reminiscent of a similar ban inherent in Islam. In her book entitled *Heretic*, Ayaan Hirsi Ali denounces the restrictions placed, again by a male bastion of power, on any

discussion which may instigate change in the existing policies and restrictions. Ali writes:

I intend to speak freely, in the hope that others will debate equally freely with me on what needs to change in Islamic doctrine, rather than seeking to stifle discussion (Ali, 2015: 3).

Ali's book discusses the need for a Reformation in Islam, a Reformation of the kind which brought Martin Luther to a place in Christian history. But the Roman Catholic Church remains in a state of turmoil within as progressives demand that a new Reformation injects equality for all of its members.

The contrast between two opposing ideas concerning women's ordination is both poignant and extreme. On one side of the argument are those adamantly opposed to the possibility; on the other are those who maintain that ordination is possible and that it will occur in time. The latter view that possibility with corollary benefits for the Church as a whole. It can only alleviate the situation where parishes are denied adequate priestly services and where many priests are overextended. Together with the adoption of a married priesthood, women priests could very well solve the problem of the shortage of priests. Ali refers to a statement made in 1853 by the Reverend Theodore Parker of Boston:

To make one half of the human race consume its energies in the function of housekeeper, wife, and mother is a monstrous waste of the most precious material God ever made (Ali, 2015: 151).

John Paul's declaration that the subject of women's ordination is incontrovertible is upheld by those who understand any statement uttered by the papacy as a God-given word. Perhaps only the belief in the inerrant word of Scripture holds more power over those who refuse to use their God-given intelligence and their personal sense of maturity to express their right and their obligation to take responsibility for their own decisions. No one and no written word exceeds the power of personal conscience. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* commends the application of conscience: "It is by the judgment of his conscience that man perceives and recognizes the prescriptions of the

divine law” (John Paul II, 1995: 490). To allow another to dictate how to think, how to act, and what to believe in order to attain to eternal life is to abdicate our personal responsibility for our own growth. The Fathers of the Church can certainly be an important guide to the development of faith in the general Catholic population but that intrusion into the life of the people is a guide, not a series of commands, injunctions, and prohibitions. Personal conscience, then, must be our essential guide.

Until the Catholic majority who love the Church, hold their leaders to accountability and accept their own responsibility in personal growth, the Church as an organization will remain a stagnant force, one in which fear takes precedence over John XXIII’s *aggiornamento* by which the Church would have been able to offer freedom, justice, and equality to every member. The refusal to consider women’s ordination is not an infallible statement. It is, however, a statement which falls under the ominous creeping infallibility by which the Vatican attempts to ensure that its laws are accepted and followed by all adherents to the faith. Ali notes an inauspicious fact concerning American women in society in general. She writes:

Historically, some of the most vocal forces opposing the emancipation of American women came from the Christian clergy. Many argued that the subservience of women was a God-given fact, and that to release women from the home would lead to the enslavement of men (Ali, 2015: 151).

With the vast majority of Catholics ignoring Church discipline in the matter of the banning of artificial methods of birth control, [a subject to be treated more fully in Chapter Five on sexuality], the flood gates were opened for Catholics to begin to ignore other statements made by Rome and to see them open for debate where previously members of the Church had considered Roman law sacrosanct. Thus, discussion of the ordination of women became a major point of discussion and controversy in spite of John Paul.

A contradiction is certainly evident in John Paul’s statements concerning women. On the one hand he declares that women share equality with men; on the other, however, he insists that women are unfit to perform the function of priest. John Paul’s appeal for

the recognition of women as equal to men seems to ring hollow in light of his apostolic letter entitled *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis: On Reserving Priestly Ordination to Men Alone*. In this letter which he sent to the bishops of the Catholic Church, he outlined several reasons for not allowing the ordination of women to the priesthood. Among his reasons is the fact that Christ chose only apostles, that ordination has always been reserved to men, that the Virgin Mary was not afforded ministerial priesthood, and that (quoting his predecessor, Paul VI) the Church does not consider herself authorized to admit women to priestly ordination. “I declare, [he said], that the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and that this judgment is to be definitively held by all the Church’s faithful” (John Paul II, 1994: 3).

This sounds like an infallible statement, although it has not been stated as such. Nonetheless, the phrase “this judgment is to be definitively held by all the faithful” appears to require acceptance by all Catholics. There are a number of instances where Catholics, both lay and clergy, disregard Church edicts and instructions. These include, in addition to ignoring the ban on discussion of women’s ordination, and the ignoring of the papal injunction to refrain from the use of contraceptives, the ignoring of the stipulation against abortion, the ignoring of frequent use of the confessional, most recently encouraged by Benedict XVI, the so-called illicit ordination of women in the Catholic Church in several places throughout the world, the “living in sin” status of unmarried couples, and the practice of active homosexuality. All of these practices have been positively endorsed by many Catholics – laity, clerics, and theologians – who have interpreted their conduct in the light of contemporary theology, personal conscience, and their presumed right to utilize their own God-given gift of intelligence. No one has the right to usurp the right of another for his or her own conscientious decisions. As John Cornwell points out in quoting from the Women’s Ordination Conference:

If Christianity teaches that all are redeemed in Jesus Christ then it is contradictory to exclude women in the full ministry. It is a denial of redemption. Either Jesus is saviour of all or what we believe is false (Cornwell, 2001: 171-2).

In his Apostolic Letter entitled *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, John Paul (1994:1) made reference to an earlier document published by Paul VI entitled *Inter Insigniores*. John Paul quoted some of Paul VI's reasons for refusing ordination to women, reasons which leave little doubt that the popes in question were attempting to impose their will, grappling with the ongoing and persistent demand that a woman who feels called by God to priestly ministry should not be denied.

In his *Inter Insigniores* Paul VI writes:

Since in our time women have an ever more active share in the whole life of society, it is very important that they participate more widely also in the various sectors of the Church's apostolate (Paul VI, 1976: 1).

The Church seems to have no problem with women taking more prominent roles in secular society, and states that within the Church women may also participate more widely in the Church apostolate. Then the document states that:

The Church in fidelity to the example of the Lord, does not consider herself authorized to admit women to priestly ordination, [although] a few heretical sects in the first centuries, especially Gnostic ones, entrusted the exercise of priestly ministry to women: this innovation was immediately noted and condemned by the fathers. By calling only men to the priestly Order and ministry in its true sense, the Church intends to remain faithful to the type of ordained ministry willed by the Lord Jesus Christ and carefully maintained by the Apostles (Paul VI, 1976: 2).

It becomes evident that during the time of the Early Church, although women were allowed to preside in the priestly ministry, the practice was condemned. But that decision seems to be unsubstantial considering that the decisions of the "fathers" often proved incorrect as, for example, in their understanding of the woman's role in conception, a role which saw her as merely the receptacle for the seed. The claim of remaining true to what Jesus willed is also faulty in consideration of the Church's inadequate response to the clerical abuse crisis. The Church seems to have no difficulty acting other than in accordance with what Jesus willed whenever it determines it is necessary for the preservation of its own jurisdictional power.

Paul VI notes in his Letter (*Humanae Vitae*) that Jesus “does not hesitate to depart from the Mosaic Law in order to affirm the equality of the rights and duties of men and women with regard to the marriage bond” (Paul VI, 1976: 3). Still, the Church insists that it cannot depart from its own law regarding the ordination of women. Paul continues:

Women were the first to have the privilege of seeing the risen Lord, and it was they who were charged by Jesus to take the first paschal message to the Apostles themselves ... in order to prepare the latter to become the official witnesses to the Resurrection (Paul VI, 1976: 3).

Again, when it seems advantageous to the leaders of the Church, they accept passages from the biblical record to be literal fact, despite the fact that many Christian theologians hold them to be literary myths. According to this view, Scripture consists, to a great extent, like the parables of Jesus himself, of literary myths, told or written for the purpose of teaching a spiritual lesson. Different traditions, however, are divided on what Scripture teaches. But in any event, it seems that the women were the first to see the risen Lord but that men were somehow to become the official witnesses to the Resurrection. In a Declaration entitled *Inter Insigniores: On the Question of Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood*, a document approved of by Paul VI who ordered its publication, the author writes:

It was nevertheless women who were the first to have the privilege of seeing the risen Lord, and it was they who were charged by Jesus to take the first paschal message to the Apostles themselves (Mt 28:7; Lk 24:9; Jn 20:11), in order to prepare the latter to become the official witnesses to the Resurrection (Paul VI, 1976:3)

Women, then, who first witnessed Christ after the Resurrection were not suitable candidates to serve as official witnesses. They were not men! In contemporary times, little has changed with regard to the disdain with which the patriarchy holds women: disdain and fear of the elevation of women to priestly ministry. A woman’s ascendancy to the priesthood would threaten the security of the male elite who possess exclusively that office, minimizing their unilateral authority and threatening their prestige and power. Paul VI goes on to contrive other reasons for claiming the priesthood exclusivity

to males but nowhere in all this argument is it possible to discover any valid and binding reason why women should not be ordained.

In John Paul II's *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, he refers again to the Letter of Paul VI, stressing above all the necessity to follow tradition; he claims that since Christ chose only men to be apostles, "The exclusion of women from the priesthood is in accordance with God's plan for the Church" (John Paul II, 1994: 1). To suggest that God's plan for his Church is based on the interpretation of what Jesus did not do, is, to say the least, paradoxical. Jesus did not marry, according to the Church, at least, but this does not suggest the incompatibility between marriage and Christianity, even in the Eastern Rite Churches in which married priests are the norm. He did not counsel his followers to conduct warfare, but this did not preclude the Church's launching of Crusades. He did not don anything more than sandals and a robe, but the pope and his bishops clothe themselves in gaudy and affluent attire. This kind of reasoning may seem somewhat absurd to those who insist on precluding women from the priesthood, but it is no more absurd than claiming the above association with what Jesus did not do with what the Church must not do. The very concept is a *non sequitur*.

More than half a century after Vatican II, the prospect of the development of equitable relations between men and women in the Church remains an unrequited hope. Jesus said that he had come not to bring peace but conflict. His specific words are as follows: "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace but a sword" (Mt 10: 34). This unusual speech by Jesus is based on events in the Old Testament where it is written that the Lord was displeased with his people because of their sins, of which syncretism was one, a phenomenon by which beliefs of one religion were incorporated into the beliefs of another, resulting in the pollution of the original faith. The author of Micah writes, "Therefore I have begun to strike you down, making you desolate because of your sins" (Micah 6: 13). This conflict is particularly applicable to the Roman Catholic Church – other Christian denominations may not be entirely immune from similar conflicts within their own persuasions – and it will

continue until every woman achieves real equality with her male counterparts, until her inferior status is denounced, and equality and justice for every woman is achieved. John XXIII opened the windows of the Vatican; John Paul II seems to have closed them again; and Benedict seems to have secured the lock. Under Pope Francis the windows may be opened once more so that fresh air will circulate within the dingy halls of Vatican bureaucracy, realizing the prayer of Jesus Christ that we are to abandon fear and obtain the full fruits of the freedom he promised. Jesus said, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love" (1 John 4:18). This descriptive passage related by John may, perhaps, compare the fear of which he speaks to judgment itself. When fear is overcome and individuals begin to strive for the love which Jesus embodies, then fear would disappear and the fear of judgment would be replaced by the perfect love which Jesus recommends.

Barber in his book entitled *A Crisis of Conscience* recalls a letter from one of his correspondents.

What do you think it feels like belonging to the Church and attending Mass if you're a woman? How do you think it feels to stand up and profess your faith ... "We believe in one God ... " when it gets to the part, "For us *men* and for our salvation he came down from heaven"? If you were a woman how would you like saying "For us *men*"? (Barber, 1993: 46).

Barber adds an explanation which supports this sentiment with a scientific analysis. He writes:

Some parents use this technique (refusing to acknowledge their existence) as punishments for their children, but psychiatrists tell us it is a very dangerous tool. If employed for any length of time, it can induce permanent emotional injury. And yet the Church chooses to practice this technique with more than half its membership ... (This is) the product of an androcentric patriarchal culture and history (Barber, 1993: 46).

This seems to reinforce the concept that women are treated as inferiors by the hierarchy.

As the sexual abuse scandal became more evident, calls for a married priesthood and the ordination of women became more vociferous. The cause of the scandal was, in large part, according to liberal-minded Catholics, the requirement for celibacy in the priesthood and the now outdated maintenance of male exclusivity in clerical orders. Had women been ordained in addition to married men, as noted previously, the sex abuse scandal could have been avoided, at least in the mind of the general Catholic population. Women, it has been suggested, would never have allowed the scandal to flourish, and even more significantly, would not have allowed bishops to cover up the evil where it did occur. Women, it has been suggested, would not have tolerated the abusive exploitation of the young. This statement is, however, somewhat controversial in view of the abusive treatment of the young by nuns in orphanages and schools dedicated to the eradication of native language and culture. Nonetheless, women in positions of clerical leadership, arguably, would have insisted on swift and decisive action by the bishops in dealing with the crisis of clerical abuse. Assigning pedophile priests to new parishes which provided fertile ground for their infamous behaviour, was a worse injustice than the evil perpetrated by the priests themselves. Women, I believe, would have denounced both the behaviour of the priests and that of their bishops who, by their incompetent response to the crisis, were, in fact, co-conspirators with the priests guilty of these criminal activities.

4.4 Misogyny

In the contemporary Church numerous voices have been raised in support of women's ordination but there still remains a deep seated aversion, as we have seen, to the possibility not only within the hierarchy but within the fundamentalist element among the laity. In his *Absolute Truth*, Edward Stourton, radio and television host and author, concurs with this concept. He quotes Rosemary Goldie, one of the observers at Vatican II. He writes:

The misogyny that once ran deep there [in the Vatican] is diminishing, even though some older priests and bishops continue to find it difficult to deal with

women. But a change in the Church's attitude to women does not mean a change in its teaching on the priesthood (Stourton, 2000: 250).

The change in the law pertaining to the ordination of women has been reinforced under John Paul II and Benedict XVI and is unlikely to change even under the more liberal-minded Francis. Nevertheless, the constant cry from both women and men that the law be modified will continue. When the Church eventually begins to take seriously the concept of the *sensus fidelium* then the priestly aspirations of many women may be eventually realized.

One of the most prestigious and influential bodies within the Church is that body known as the Curia. This group of men – only ordained men are eligible for membership – acts as an aid to the pope in governing the Catholic Church through the several dicasteries of which it is formed. Decisions made by these bodies are normally endorsed by the pope, who retains, however, the privilege of repudiation. John Allen Jr., in his *All the Pope's Men* mentions a remark made to him by Cardinal Jan Schotte who said with reference to the possibility of women priests participating as members and even heads of curial departments, "We're a hierarchical organization and power comes from ordination. So for now, there cannot be a woman" (Allen, 2004: 219). The obvious implication here is that lay men are also deprived of any possibility of leadership within that sacred body, another example of the inherent clericalism which denies equality for the laity, men and women included.

A tragic result of the refusal to ordain women is the exodus of women not only from the convent but also from the Catholic Church itself, in order to realize their quest for leadership positions in churches wherein they are invited to become ordained ministers. For some, ordinations have been achieved within the Catholic Church by validly consecrated bishops. Such ordinations, however, are seen by Rome as invalid and both those undergoing ordination and those involved in the ordination process are excommunicated. The Church leadership seems oblivious to the fact that the ordination of women – as with the ordination of married men – would substantially alleviate the priest shortage, and arguably, had women been ordained to the

priesthood long ago, as noted above, the crisis facing the Church today in the form of scandalous behaviour by pedophiles would have been eliminated or at least greatly reduced.

This tragic anomaly within contemporary Catholicism lies in shocking contrast to the numerous expressions by Jesus pertaining to the equality of women with men. In *The Jesus Sayings* by Rex Weyler, a highly acclaimed author, he relates the Markan tale of the woman who begs Jesus to deliver her daughter from the satanic forces which afflict her. Jesus at first refuses but owing to the woman's persistence and clever arguments accedes to her request. "For that retort, [Jesus says] be on your way, the demon has come out from your daughter" (Mk 7:29) (Weyler, 2008: 140). The author continues the story by indicating the high esteem in which Jesus held women. "The story demonstrates the respect that Jesus and his followers held for women, *giving them equal footing with men*, a radical notion in first-century Palestine" (Weyler, 2008: 140-1, my italics). A radical notion in first-century Palestine certainly; a radical notion in twenty-first-century Rome as well. As Küng points out in his *The Catholic Church*, in the time of Paul there was no distinction between men and women as far as authority in the Church was concerned, and women deacons were a reality. At that time there was no "laying on of hands" for ordination purposes. On the contrary,

Women, especially well-to-do women who made their houses available for meetings and worship, often played the leading role here. The Acts of the Apostles knows of prophetesses, and Paul, even of women apostles (Küng, 2001:20).

Examples of these women prophetesses include those mentioned in Acts: "He [Philip] had four unmarried daughters who had the gift of prophecy" (Acts 21: 9). Nor is Küng alone in his recognition of the predominance of women in Early Church circles.

Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza in her book entitled *In Memory of Her*, which is "A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins", writes:

When we read the occasional Pauline reference to women in their own setting, we recognize that the Pauline and the post-Pauline literature knew of women not merely as rich patronesses of the Christian missionary movement but as

prominent leaders and missionaries who – in their own right – toiled for the gospel. These women were engaged in missionary and church leadership activity both before Paul and independent of Paul.... The Gospel traditions still reflect the fact that women were ... involved in expanding this movement to gentiles in the adjacent regions (Fiorenza, 2002: 161-2).

These authors, as well as others, speak directly to the fact that women did, in fact, in the Early Church, hold places of authority.

4.5 Women Religious

Comparatively recently Rome had introduced an evaluation of orders of nuns in the United States. This had been done unilaterally, which is to say without initial consultation with the appropriate bishops of the dioceses concerned. This example of the fear of utilizing the principles of collegiality and subsidiarity detracts even more from the integrity of the Vatican. To make matters even worse, the entire project was to be carried out without the results being shared with the sisters. Furthermore, this encroachment on the rights of bishops is further compounded by the fact that the bishops themselves were asked to assume the expenses involved. The main problem, however, as seen by the Vatican at least, was that the nuns had become more adamantly opposed to certain Roman dictates. Rosemary Radford Ruether, a popular feminist theologian and prolific writer, has stated clearly in her book, *Catholic Does Not Equal the Vatican*, that:

The official Church ... continued to make vigorous efforts to reassert control over women religious. One example of this is its insistence that religious orders of women submit their constitutions to the Holy See for censorship (Ruether, 2008: 79).

The Vatican continues to attempt to control the roles of women religious who aspire to some degree of autonomy and freedom. Where the Church has historically perceived women as somehow defective and therefore unable to act in positions of senior leadership, it now stresses that perception even more strenuously, maintaining that owing to their insufficiency vis-à-vis male anatomy, they are unable to act in *alter Christi*. John Paul II's forbidding even the discussion of the concept of women priests

makes his statement, in effect, one of those which fall under the designation of a “creeping infallibility”.

Reports from Africa suggest that priests have raped nuns in order to avoid acquiring HIV which could more easily be acquired by having sex with members of the laity.

According to Lisa Miller of *Newsweek*:

In 1998 a Roman Catholic nun wrote ... of her concerns to her colleagues and superiors. It was labeled “strictly confidential.” She was worried, she said, about the sexual abuse of nuns by Roman Catholic priests in Africa.... According to the *National Catholic Reporter*, which made McDonald’s memo public in 2001, Vatican officials did take steps to rectify the problem, but publicly, their stance was chillingly familiar. “The problem is known and is restricted to a limited geographical area,” said Joaquin Navarro-Valls, the Vatican spokesman at the time. This is an isolated incident, in other words; we’ve got it under control (Miller, 1998: 1).

These practices have served to reduce the number of women religious in that part of the world. In North America as well as in other parts of the world, the numbers of women religious have dwindled, owing in large part to the perceived and actual male dominated Church where women are still considered and treated as second class citizens who are expected to embrace their subservience to the male clergy. The importance of the contributions made by women in the Church has been recognized and acclaimed but still the aspirations of women to ordination are denied.

It is interesting to note that women were indeed ordained to the diaconate from the early Church and beyond the fourth century. It was only in the fifth century that the practice was discontinued. Certainly, as Küng notes in his *The Catholic Church*, “Jesus was anything but the representative of a patriarchal hierarchy” (Küng, 2001: 7). Jesus had, in fact, held women in high esteem. He welcomed their association with him and endorsed their responsibility, involvement, and did not support the concept which endorsed patriarchy.

As noted above, women had been ordained as deacons until the fifth century when patriarchal dominance eliminated this Early Church traditional role of women included

in the diaconate. From the philosophy of Aristotle and through Augustine, Thomas Aquinas believed and taught that women were inherently inferior to men since men served as sole procreator because of his seed while women were merely receptacles of that seed, since, at that time, the female ovum was not understood to exist. As an inferior being, then, a woman could not represent Christ, and therefore ordination to either the diaconate or the priesthood was unimaginable. This teaching runs contrary to St. Paul's statements, although Paul's voice cannot be fully relied upon because of apparent contradictory remarks attributed to him. In Galatians, Paul says:

There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise (Gal 3:28-29).

Confusion results, as McClory (2007: 28) suggests, in *As It Was in the Beginning*, when adverse remarks are also attributed to Paul. He says:

Women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home (1 Cor 14: 34-35).

The question must be asked, then, what the meaning of these contradictory statements proves. One possibility for the apparent dichotomy may be that forgeries were known to have taken place so that some forgeries were added to Scripture long after the demise of the attributed writer. Such forgeries were used to further the agenda of the individual who inserted his own personal views, using the name of Paul, in these instances, to gain greater stature for his own beliefs. But instances of forgeries, however, do not account for the multiple Scriptural passages which demonstrate Paul's assessment of women in less than glowing terms. The following prescriptive Scriptural passages draw attention to the disparity:

Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Saviour. Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands (Eph 5: 22-24).

Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the lord. Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly (Col 3: 18-19).

But any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled disgraces her head (1 Cor 11: 5).

These excerpts from Paul suggest that Paul was somewhat influenced by the misogynistic attitude of his contemporary society. Still, if we accept that Paul was a true follower of Jesus Christ then it becomes obvious that his statements regarding women would have been in harmony with the obvious love for women which Jesus espoused. It is possible, too, that in instances where Paul says, "There is no longer male and female" (Gal 3: 28-29) he is speaking esoterically, considering the equality based on spirituality. In other instances where he speaks disparagingly, he is speaking in the realm of the purely physical. Perhaps another important fact to be considered from these contradictory statements is the meaning of biblical inerrancy.

Still, forgeries apparently did find their way into Scripture. Tom Harpur in his *The Pagan Christ* discusses the use of forgeries and outright lies in various writings within the Early Church, methods by which Church leaders deceived the faithful. Although Harpur fails to provide a source for his findings, he does refer to a letter purported to have been written by St. Gregory of Nazianzen (329-389) to St. Jerome wrote:

Nothing can impose better on the people than verbiage; the less they understand, the more they admire. Our (Christian) Fathers and Doctors have often said, not what they thought, but what circumstance and necessity forced them to (Harpur, 2004: 56).

The German scholar John Laurence von Moshheim, in his celebrated *History of the Christian Religion*, says of the Gospel of Hermas, "At the time he wrote, (most likely) between 140 and 155 C.E., it was an established maxim with many of the Christians that it was pardonable in an advocate for religion to avail himself of fraud and deception if it were likely they might lead to attainment of any considerable good" (Harpur, 2004: 57).

Centuries later ... Cardinal John Henry Newman, in the *Apology for his Life*, appeared to put his stamp of approval on this kind of dishonesty for the glory of the faith. He writes, "The Greek Fathers thought that when the cause was just (*justa causa*) an untruth need not be a lie (Harpur, 2004: 58).

Harpur continues by saying that “with such logic, one can justify almost anything” (Harpur, 2004: 558). It becomes possible, then, if not probable, that Church leaders have deliberately deceived the faithful by implying that women deaconesses and even women priests did not exist in the Early Church.

Hans Küng in *The Catholic Church* outlines the development of the male only hierarchical structure within the Church and the inherent injustice perpetrated on women. He says:

Unfortunately the establishment of hierarchical structure, in particular, prevented the true emancipation of women and still does.... Hostility to sexuality ... took on a particular stamp in Christianity.... Education was usually withheld from women, [and] male domination established itself completely, especially in the sphere of the sacral. Countless theologians and bishops advocated the inferiority of the feminine and – contrary to all that was allowed and desired in the earliest church – called for the exclusion of women from holding office in the church (Küng, 2003: 28).

Nevertheless, although it seems apparent that one can hardly call on Paul to ratify one’s views on women, the fact seems clear that women were once treated as equals with men, taking their rightful places beside them as followers of the Christ and of exercising the traditional roles as leaders and presiders at the Eucharistic meal.

It is obvious that the Church sustains its unjust retention of its authority and its inattention to the real issues which face the Church. Perhaps the most singular and regrettable action introduced by the Vatican is the recent investigation of the nuns while simultaneously avoiding serious attention to pedophile priests and their accommodating bishops. Women and their supporters who advocate women priests are chastened by the authorities, threatened with excommunication, and forbidden to speak on the subject, with the concurrent imposition of fear. In order to overcome the fear, some members of the Church feel compelled to capitulate to the male bastion of power. Corey Robin in his *Fear: The History of a Political Idea* writes:

That is the function of political fear, not to quell one individual but to make an example of her, to send a message to everyone else that they should be careful, or they might be next (Robin, 2004: 179).

An example of the nature of religious authoritarian power is reflected in the intransigence of Phoenix Bishop Olmsted in the case of an abortion undertaken in order to save the life of the mother. Both mother and foetus would die if the pregnancy were not terminated, and if the mother died the child could not survive on its own outside the womb. After consultation with the members of the ethics committee, Sr. McBride agreed that the only rational and ethical solution would be to approve the abortion. In November, 2011, Zoe Ryan reported in the *National Catholic Reporter* the following:

For this McBride was excommunicated *latae sententiae*, or automatically, Phoenix Bishop Thomas Olmsted said in May 2010. In December 2010, Olmsted withdrew formal recognition of St. Joseph's, a Catholic hospital (Ryan, 2011: 1).

Subsequently, McBride's excommunication was lifted, subject to her confessing to a priest and resigning her position at the hospital. It seems duplicitous that a nun could be excommunicated in this case while no pedophile priest has been excommunicated for his crimes. Nor, to make matters worse, have any bishops been excommunicated for their complicity in the pedophilia perpetrated by some of their priests. To this date, also, the designation of Catholic as it applied to the hospital, has not been restored.

4.6 Fear of the Keepers of the Faith

Although the Church has not recognized the desire of women to participate in priestly ordination, it does make several references to what it considers the role of women. In the document entitled *Inter Insigniores: Declaration on the Admission to the Ministerial Priesthood*, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith wrote:

The Church desires that Christian women should become fully aware of the greatness of their mission: today their voice is of capital importance, both for the renewal and humanization of society and for the rediscovery by believers of the true face of the Church (CDF, 1976: 10).

Women have virtuously borne the responsibility of rearing children according to the precepts of the faith. They have, for the most part, faithfully accomplished this duty through the necessary work of teaching, their personal example of faithfulness and obedience, and through a piety by which they not only followed the precepts of the Church but also raised the status of the clergy to lofty pinnacles, from which too many failed in their own vocations. Women have always been the main volunteers for any non-liturgical task which was allowed to them and they have fulfilled their roles in these instances with great care, generosity, and dedication. In spite of all this, the appreciation shown by the clergy was accepted by them even though the main desire, an unrequited desire, of many of them, was to enter ever more deeply into the sacred. This unrealized desire left them unfulfilled. Robert McClory, in his *As It Was in the Beginning*, writes:

They do the critical work in parishes as schoolteachers and organizers of virtually all the social, educational, and recreational activity.... Without women, the Church would collapse overnight as a stable social entity (McClory, 2007: 154).

Because of the discriminatory practices within the Church, many women have deemed it more fulfilling to leave the Church, thus depriving themselves of the spiritual solace which can be found in Catholicism but simultaneously arriving at a place in their own spiritual growth outside the Church in which they had been reared. Because they have done so, the Church has been deprived of the intelligence, leadership, and piety with which these women are endowed. The Church, in its attempt to retain the concept of male superiority, has, in effect, lost a major contributor to the welfare and growth of the Church while simultaneously denying women the justice and equality which I believe are rightfully theirs.

Language used in Church documents is often insensitive to women. Language is attuned to men with noticeable omissions of women. In his *Breaking Faith*, John Cornwell quotes from the prologue to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* which

demonstrates the typical insensitivity to women by the patriarchal Church structure.

Cornwell quotes from the *Catechism*:

An example of the language that is exclusive to the point of absurdity is to be seen in the official *Catechism* of the Church which opens with the statement: “at every time and in every place, God draws close to man. He calls man to seek him, to know him, to love him with all his strength. He calls together all men” [John Paul II (1994: 9)]. No longer a case of women’s sensitivities, the entire draft of sensibilities – men and women – finds such expressions not only unacceptable but ludicrous (Cornwell, 2001: 192).

This relegation of women to a state of anonymity is typical of virtually every document emanating from the patriarchal Vatican structure, except where women are explicitly mentioned. When the context includes both genders, often the male only is designated. Some examples from *Evangelii Nuntiandi* by Paul VI, *Octogesima Adventiens*, also by Paul VI, *Ubi Arcano Dei Consilio* by Pius XI, *Ad Beatissimi Apostolorum* by Benedict XV, and *Lecture of the Holy Father* by Benedict XVI follow:

“The kingdom which the Gospel proclaims is lived by *men*” (Paul VI, 1975: 6).

“It is with confidence that we see the Spirit of the Lord pursuing his work in the hearts of *men*” (Paul VI, 1971: 1).

“Human personality, too, would be raised to a higher level, for *man* has been ennobled by the blood of Christ” (Pius XI, 1922: 9).

“It is when they contribute to stimulate true love of God and of our neighbours in the hearts of *men*” (Benedict XV, 1914:3).

“If science as a whole is this and this alone, then it is *man himself* who ...” (Benedict XVI, 2014: 5).

The male designation has sometimes been used selectively to include both male and female genders. However, in contemporary society, the use of exclusive male terminology has become a source of offence to women. Nonetheless, regardless of the relegation of women to third place, after the clergy and male members of the laity, women have always been at the forefront of service to the entire Church. To demean women as though somehow they were of less value than men is not only unjust and unconscionable, but unresolved as well. When males in general and the male clergy in

particular rise above the fear which haunts them and holds them captive to the imagined threat of the complete emancipation of women, then males will themselves arrive at a truly emancipated status.

4.7 Fear of Loss of Authority

Following the revelation of the sexual abuse scandal in the Church, a number of bishops became concerned that not only their own authority but that of the church as a whole was liable to erosion. In his *The Coming Catholic Church*, David Gibson writes:

As the bishop of a small Midwestern diocese ... (Bishop) Gregory had the pieces in place to pass the tough policy that ... he hoped would signal the beginning of the end of the bishops' crisis of credibility. "This crisis is not about a lack of faith in God," Gregory told the prelates as he opened the meeting. "The crisis, in truth, is about a profound loss of confidence by the faithful in our leadership as shepherds, because of our failures in addressing the crime of the sexual abuse of children" (Gibson: 2003: 25).

Nor were local bishops alone in their concern over the loss of credibility. At the Vatican, Cardinal Ratzinger, then Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, singled out theologians who presented a challenge to Roman authority. Any theologian, priest, or bishop who challenged any teaching from the Magisterium became suspect and immediate steps were taken to defuse any situation which threatened the invincibility of Church jurisprudence. When Father Charles Curran, the American moral theologian, dissented from the teachings in *Humanae Vitae*, Cardinal Franjo Seper, Ratzinger's predecessor, and then Ratzinger himself, took steps to assert their authority. No one could expect to avoid censure when the authority of the Church was at stake. John Allen describes the incident in his book entitled *Cardinal Ratzinger*. He writes:

Curran eventually lost his license to teach Catholic theology.... After Ratzinger concluded that Curran's views were unacceptable, he was fired from his position at Catholic University in January 1985 (Allen: 2002: 258).

These two examples of Church autocracy serve to suggest that the hierarchy of the Church, when threatened by any assault on its authority or threat of scandal which

could undermine it, acts quickly and decisively to preserve its supremacy. This attitude seems to be at odds with Matthew's reminder about Christian stewardship:

"Whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant" (Mt 20: 26). It is neither unique nor merely a contemporary phenomenon that the hierarchical, patriarchal centre of authority experiences serious challenges to that authority. In the Early Church, many Christian sects vied for prominence, eventually losing out to a single Christian Church which became even more centralized and powerful under the influence of Constantine. In his *Christianity: Essence, History, and Future*, Küng writes:

Toleration and recognition were prepared for by the emperor Galerius before his death in 311; it was implemented by the new Augustus who went by the name of Constantine.... He soon favoured Christianity in a variety of ways.... Constantine was already sole ruler in 325. And in practical terms this meant that with him Christianity could develop throughout the empire.... So the universal empire very soon again had a universal religion (Küng, 1995: 176-7).

Since that time various elements have attempted to rival the Christian Church but without serious success. Then Martin Luther accosted the Church for its intransigence in refusing to modify its money-making projects such as the sale of indulgences among many other practices which he deemed to lack Christian authenticity. In her *The Dark Side of Christian History*, Helen Ellerbe writes: "Protesting a Church more concerned with collecting money than with teaching scripture, Martin Luther ignited the Protestant Reformation" (Ellerbe, 1995: 93). As a result, a rival Christian sect was born and, subsequently, a number of other denominations began to flourish. The attempt by the Catholic Church to overcome the "dissidents", however, proved ineffective, mainly because of its refusal to search its own conscience, its organizational composition, and its laws. And although Luther incriminated the Catholic Church for its pecuniary exploits and other sins, he was himself not immune to personal faults, including hatred of the Jews and his casting aspersions on females. James Carroll, in his *Constantine's Sword*, writes:

Luther advocated the burning of synagogues. Jews, he said, should be “forbidden on pain of death to praise God, to give thanks, to pray, and to teach publicly among us and in our country” (Carroll, 2001: 367).

With regard to women, Helen Ellerbe in her *The Dark Side of Christian History* writes: “In 1533 he [Luther] wrote, ‘Girls begin to talk and to stand on their feet sooner than boys because weeds always grow up more quickly than good crops’” (Ellerbe, 1995: 99).

Contemporary Catholicism has reaped the “rewards” of those earlier Catholic decisions, and today it still experiences fallout from its own members who refuse to be intimidated by an undemocratic and authoritarian seat of power. Thus, many members of religious orders, including nuns who have professed their vows, have abdicated their profession in favour of living lives which have become, for them, more meaningful, more fulfilling, and more valued. Many of these nuns have withdrawn from the Church because they have experienced the call of Christ to ordination to both the diaconate and the priesthood, a call unrecognized by the Roman Catholic male power structure.

These ex-nuns, as noted previously, rebelled against the intransigence shown by Rome in matters which concern them, as have numerous lay women. These matters include the concept of abortion, the contraceptive mentality shown by the Vatican, and the general oppressive and controlling nature of the male priesthood, especially in the higher echelons of Roman power.

Humanae Vitae, Paul VI’s infamous encyclical on birth control, was perhaps the most ignored of all papal edicts. Catholics throughout the world in thousands refused to abide by its directives and opted for the use of personal conscience in opposition to such discriminatory, futile laws. Paul VI, who had convened a group to study issues of sexuality, fearing to risk taking an adverse position in relation to traditional Church teaching and especially the earlier encyclical, *Casti Connubi*, ignored the major report from his own commission and insisted on retaining the decrees against artificial birth

control. The idea of altering any previously stated norm was anathema to him. In *A Crisis of Conscience*, Hugh K. Barber, M.D., writes:

The commission produced by an astounding 64-to-4 vote a majority report suggesting to the pope that a change in the Church's position was both possible and advisable.... The commission suggested that ... it should not be forbidden to practice artificial contraception for purposes of limiting the number of children or postponing their arrival.... Paul VI ... ignored completely the advice given by the commission he himself had appointed.... The pope's decision precipitated the most serious crisis for papal authority since Luther.... *Humanae Vitae* has marked the end of the totalitarian rule by the Pope.... Most lay people simply chose to disregard the encyclical and to continue to practice contraception (Barber, 1993: 41-42).

Although neither encyclical, *Casti Connubi* nor *Humanae Vitae* was stated as infallible, it represented at least a creeping infallibility by which Catholics were given to believe that anyone who participated in sexual relations contrary to those encyclicals would be doomed to an eternity of hellfire. It seems to be an insane position to believe that some 90 percent of the Catholic population would be doomed to hell.

Hans Küng elicits a poignant response from readers when he touches on one of the ignominies of which the Church stands accused. In his *The Catholic Church* he writes:

Scarcely any of the great institutions in our democratic age deal in such a despicable way with critics and those of other views in their own ranks, nor does any discriminate so much against women – by prohibiting contraceptives, the marriage of priests, and the ordination of women (Küng, 2001: XXI).

This, nevertheless, is the reality in Roman Catholicism.

Harvey Cox, in his *The Future of Faith*, discusses this concept particularly succinctly. He writes:

The clerical seizure of power in the Church not only altered the meaning of words; it tainted the capacity of Christians to know their own history. The revised account of the first several decades that male bishops concocted was especially dismissive of women (Cox, 2009: 179).

Karen Jo Torjesen, in her book entitled *When Women Were Priests*, corroborates the position adopted by Cox. Torjesen writes:

By taking a close look at ancient Greek theories of the male and female self, we can begin to see what is at the root of the millennias-old claim for innate male superiority and the justification for female subordination (Torjesen, 1993: 180).

Torjesen explains, further, that the phallus was a symbol of power and that “enshrined within this theory of the self are the gendered values of male honor and female shame” (Torjesen, 1993: 180). Considering that the Early Christian Church was adamantly determined to purge itself of any remnants of paganism which might threaten the viability and uniqueness of the Christian religion, it is conspicuously evident that the concept of male superiority and female inferiority, fully extant within paganism, has been retained even within contemporary Catholicism.

In Islam, where women are considered vastly inferior to men (an even more perverse attitude than that which exists in the Catholic Church), certain intra-Muslim relationships such as honor killings are exempt from punishment. In her *Cruel and Usual Punishment*, Darwish writes that some “relationships between Muslims ... are based on fear, arrogance, and a holier-than-thou attitude” (Darwish, 2008: 69). This is like the attitude inherent in Catholicism, where the patriarchal power structure sees women as inferior to men – they lack certain biological prerequisites to attain clerical status. The hierarchy seems to fear that women, if awarded the status of a cleric, might someday achieve a position of leadership – such as that of the episcopacy – within the Church. Such an unprecedented occurrence would threaten the status quo which currently limits itself to patriarchal dominance.

Darwish condemns Sharia law, entrenched as it is in the very fabric of the Muslim faith, for its degradation, belittlement, and control by which it sustains a system of subservience of women. Darwish writes further:

The Muslim system of total control through fear, terror, and the lure of sexual bliss in heaven is unnatural, unsustainable, and corrupt. If jihad ends, the pyramid scheme collapses (Darwish, 2008: 127).

This fear which is inflicted on women obscures the suppressed fear of loss of control experienced by those in authority. In the Muslim world the definition of martyrdom is

unrealistic. In our culture, a martyr is one who relinquishes his life for the benefit of another, such as the martyrdom of Oscar Romero. In Muslim society, however, a martyr is one who kills innocent people as well as himself or herself for supposedly strengthening Muslim society, and in the case of male martyrs, to reap the reward in heaven of achieving sexual favors from countless virgins. Although the Catholic Church does not murder its opponents or dissidents physically, it does destroy their self-esteem. This condescension of women obscures the fear inherent in the minds of the hierarchy of the potential ascendancy of women.

4.8 Fear

Fear in both religions plays a major role in the policies under which members are governed. In both instances, fear is the ultimate weapon of control where fear is inflicted on women, playing a major role in their subjugation. In both instances, however, the fear is embodied in the psyche of the male hierarchy. In both cases, regardless of whether the victim is the perpetrator of the injustice or the reaper of his own malfeasance, the result is the same. Fear controls life, distorts the mutual respect between the sexes, diminishes those who are affected by it, and curtails any hope for an imminent end to injustice and the development of a stable and equitable community.

Several authors have noted how fear is utilized by governing bodies in attempting to control their populace, sometimes equating fear with evil. This use of fear is a distinct characteristic of how the Roman Catholic Church exerts influence on its constituents. Christopher Robbins in his *Expelling Hope* writes, "A culture of fear benefits those with power ... because ... it ... squelches opposition" (Robbins, 2008: 2); Joanna Bourke in her *Fear: A Cultural History* writes, "Fear is manipulated by numerous organizations with a stake in creating fear while promising to eradicate it" (Bourke, 2005: 385); Zygmunt Bauman, in his *Liquid Fear*, writes, "Evil and fear are Siamese twins. You can't meet one without meeting the other" (Bauman, 2006: 54); and Frank Furedi, in his *Politics of Fear*, in quoting the Harvard political theorist Judith Shklar writes, "What can

motivate people is not a positive vision of future possibilities but the fear of evil” (Furedi, 2006: 135).

The ongoing fear ensconced particularly in the male hierarchy of the Catholic Church, possibly unlike anything extant in Protestant denominations, is fear of the potential feminization of the Church. This would occur should women be given too much authority, a situation which might easily lead to their insistence on equality with men, including entrance into the clerical state. It is, after all, the women who support the Church most actively. Their financial contributions are not a small matter, but their greater part is their unqualified support for male dominance, attention paid to the physical needs of the Church, and especially to faithful attendance at both religious and non-religious functions within Church society. John Allen, in his *The Future Church*, notes:

Below the top levels, the sociological pattern in Christianity [particularly Catholicism] has long been a predominance of women, both among Church workers and Church goers... “Women go to Church, men go to football games” (Allen, 2009: 203).

Should every Catholic woman abandon the Catholic Church, the Church, devastated by the loss of arguably more than half of its constituents, would shrivel, implode, and eventually cease to exist entirely. The real workers in the Church would no longer be available for all the menial jobs which women have historically undertaken, and it is unlikely that the few men who would reluctantly attempt to fill the gap left by these women would be adequate to maintain any comparable degree of authentic devotion. This scenario is unlikely to occur. Still, the fact remains that the bulk of women parishioners are so indoctrinated into the fiction of male superiority, intimidated by the threat of damnation, and convinced of the sanctity inherent in the hierarchical pyramid of power, that they submit obsessively and unapologetically to the system of subservience to which they have become accustomed. This being the case, the Church will survive, men will acquiesce, and women will remain loyal victims in their subordination to male dominance.

Corey Robin, in his *Fear: The History of a Political Idea*, speaks of political fear which is destructive to anyone who falls under its control. Since the Catholic Church claims statehood, to refer, then, to its politics is an appropriate conclusion. Robin writes:

Political fear supports and perpetuates elite rule, inducing inferiors to submit to superiors, not to protest or challenge their power but to accommodate it. Fear ensures that those with power maintain it, and prevents those without power from doing much, if anything, to get it.... Political fear entails more than a simple top-down politics, in which a cohesive cabal threatens punitive sanctions or conjures fantastic enemies in order to preserve their rule. It is an affair of collusion, involving the grunt work of collaborators, the cooperation of victims, and aid from bystanders who do nothing to protest fear's repressive hold (Robin, 2004: 162-3).

Who are the "elites" mentioned in the above quote as it pertains to the Roman Catholic Church? The inferiors? The collaborators? The victims? The bystanders? All of these can be found in the halls of Catholic Christendom. Obviously, the pope, members of the Curia, and the cardinals fit well into the elite category. The inferiors are the bishops of the Church, who, by their inaction toward gaining any degree of meaningful independence and freedom from the yoke of imperial power, sustain their subordination to the elite. Because of the fear of losing their positions of authority in their own dioceses, the bishops support the decisions made by the pope, thus sustaining papal power and ensuring their own subservience. By the careful, indecisive action by the bishops, the papacy is reinforced in its attitude toward those to whom it claims to minister. The bishops are aided by those under their direct supervision, their inferiors, the collaborators, the priests within the dioceses, and the general population of Catholic laity, the bystanders, all of whom are the victims and most of whom cooperate in their own submission, fearful of reprisals for any direct challenge to the imposed authority. Finally, fearful of confronting their leadership, they remain impotent pawns, unwilling to react positively to the repression to which they have become accustomed and addicted. It is easier and less fearful to simply act in accordance with the dictates of Rome as administered by their local authority figures than to reject the injustice which has ravaged the very fabric of the Church and to act

positively to compel authority to relinquish their stranglehold on the members of the Church and to eliminate all vestiges of authoritarianism which sustains the Machiavellian pulse of injustice. In such a climate, it is understandable that women, always at the lower echelons of existence, are virtually incapable of achieving justice within the Church.

4.9 Summation

This chapter has illustrated the depth of the misogynistic attitude prevailing in Vatican seats of power. Women have been prevented from inclusion into the realms of male dominance, attaining virtually only the most menial and unauthoritative roles in Catholic life. Women religious have fared no better than the laity, having been burdened by an inquisitorial evaluation that is both demeaning and insulting to women, with not even the courtesy of full and equitable cooperative analysis. The theocracy evident in Roman Catholicism has proven detrimental to women in general and to the institution itself. Owing to the fact that the physical properties of women do not match those of Jesus Christ – and male members of the Church – they have been denied full participation in Catholic life, being denied the legitimization of ordination. The Church has ruled that their sex leaves them in a position of inferiority, their sexuality being an integral prohibition for full participation in Church. The following chapter will consider that sexuality of women, how it is used as an argument against their full emancipation and how the Church's extreme attitude toward sexuality in general confines the Church to a narrow and anachronistic position in contemporary Christianity.

5.0 Sexuality

5.1 Introduction

Homosexual acts, premarital or single sex, extramarital sex or fornication, adultery, masturbation, coitus interruptus, oral and anal sex, and deliberate pleasure derived from pornography are all regarded as “gravely disordered” according to the teachings of the Catholic Church – in other words “mortal sins” and deserving of everlasting damnation (Cornwell, 2001: 118).

The above quotation from John Cornwell’s *Breaking Faith* expresses the inherent fear of sex manifested by the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church, a fear which compels them to stigmatize any “inordinate” use of the sexual faculties of Catholics. This chapter will explore in detail the vilification of various sexual practices by which the Church controls its members. The chapter examines the Church’s apparent fascination with equating sex with sin while stressing its own monopoly on truth in all sexual matters. Gluttony and lust are compared – two apparently unrelated aspects of humanity which are, nevertheless, twin entities of the preservation and continuation of life – while the evil of one is contrasted with the lesser evil of the other. Procreation, a compelling force innate to humanity, requires that the central purpose of sexual intercourse must be open to life and that any form of artificial contraception is evil, as is any use of the sexual faculties strictly for pleasure such as masturbation. The *Song of Songs* celebrates the act of sexual union between two lovers, whereby a vision of pure sexual love is portrayed. The views and teachings of Augustine are explored and the Church’s addiction to Augustine’s anachronistic views of sexuality based on his reading of Aristotle is paramount. Finally, nudity is considered, beginning with Adam and Eve, continuing with the Crucifixion, and concluding with society’s acceptance of nudity in art while deprecating nudity in the flesh. The chapter begins with the fatality of fear itself.

5.2 Fear of Sexuality

André Guindon, in his *The Sexual Creators*, writes:

The problem with most alleged moral principles is that, upon close examination, they prove to rest on a time-bound understanding of human nature or of God's will.... The principle "no smallness of matter in sexual morality" (is) grounded on sexual fears and on an ignorance of the non-biological functions of sexuality (Guindon, 1986: 11).

Guindon seems to capture the lack of understanding extant within the Catholic Church of sexuality in general. The Church appears to be fixated on sexuality and that fixation is concentrated more on women than on any others – men, clerics, or homosexuals. Of the seven deadly sins – pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, and sloth – lust is the one sin which seems to captivate the imagination and the interest of the Church, as well as the effort to magnify the evil supposedly inherent in it. Placing sexuality at the forefront of Catholic condemnation seems to be a methodology by which the hierarchical structure in Rome maintains discipline, power, and control. From the dawn of Christianity, sexuality has been retained at the forefront of Catholic teaching, Catholic repression, and Catholic guilt. The fear imposed by the Church on those who dare to venture into the realms of "illicit" sex is real and daunting.

Other theologians and Scripture itself make it plain that the Spirit of God resides within each one of us. "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's spirit dwells in you? (1 Cor 3: 16). Another example is a confirmation of the above quotation from Scripture. In *Even Greater Things* by Daly, Daly, and Bishop Remi De Roo, the authors write:

The incarnation is complete. We are no longer talking about Jesus somehow mysteriously walking beside us. But the Spirit sent by the Risen Christ is with us. Jesus first receives the Spirit, and is led by the Spirit in his mission, leading to the crucifixion. After the Resurrection, Jesus as Lord sends his spirit; and it is the Spirit of Christ who now develops and leads us, the church (Daly *et al.*, 1999:128).

It is interesting to note here that Bishop De Roo sees the Church as comprised of all the people, not just the authority in Rome. The concept of truth then becomes an integral

part of each one of us. It is only by the claim of a unique possession of truth by the hierarchy alone that the Church can attempt to retain its superior status by the imposition of guilt on its followers. This guilt is manufactured by the hierarchical authority in Rome and is a direct result of the fear imposed on Catholics for the expression of their sexuality. This is not to preclude any imposition of guilt by other sources, such as, for instance, psychoanalytic theory. Certainly, especially in the minds of psychoanalytically inclined readers, the sexual drive itself requires the imposition of rules which give rise to feelings of guilt which are threatening to the well-being of individuals. Such psychoanalysis, however, is a recent player in the field; the Roman Catholic Church has been in existence for 2000 years. And, although recognition of other sources of anxiety and guilt seems to be a legitimate factor in guilt formation, this dissertation is more concerned with the role of the Catholic Church in such anxiety formation.

In 1929 Eugenio Cardinal Pacelli, the future Pope Pius XII, acting as Nuncio to Germany, published a lengthy document entitled *Die Lage der Kirche in Deutschland* on the situation of the church in Germany at that time. A portion of his document expressed his concern about the contemporary dress which, according to him, threatened the sexual purity of the members of the Church, once again placing sexuality at the forefront of his concerns. In his *Pope and Devil*, Hubert Wolf quotes from the document:

Although Catholic morality has no objection to becoming and tasteful clothing, nor to changes in fashion, it must with disgust resolutely and unconditionally condemn and reject the currently dominant fashion with its tendentious exposures and accentuations of physical forms, because in the final analysis they emanate from a cynical and paganistic conception of life and tend to engender concupiscence. Parents, and mothers in particular, are responsible for the clothing of their daughters (Pius XII, 1929: 137) (Wolf, 2010: 64).

The stress on sexuality in the document is consistent with the Church's obsession with sex throughout its history, an obsession which continues today. It is noteworthy to observe that women and girls are identified as the culprits and with the responsibility

involved. As we shall see later, Augustine's negative attitude to women has been transmitted through the ages until contemporary times. It is the female gender which carries the blame for concupiscence and the responsibility to make things right. Little has changed concerning the Church's excessive interest in sexuality from either the time of Augustine or from the more recent time of Pius XII. Augustine had led the march against any inordinate use of the sexual faculties, teaching that the degree of sensual pleasure experienced by the participants indicated the degree of their sinfulness. Thomas Fox in his *Sexuality and Catholicism* writes, concerning Augustine's theology:

Pondering sexuality, Augustine once considered its various degrees of sinfulness. There needed to be degrees, he reasoned. Why? Since it takes two to have intercourse, one might engage in it out of lust while the other merely obliged. Augustine was convinced that the person who demanded sex from a spouse (except for procreation) committed sin. Certainly, he reasoned, the partner who agrees to sex simply to please – but who does not seek pleasure – commits the lesser sin (Cox, 1995:21).

The apparent absurdity here in suggesting that every act of sexual intercourse bears with it some degree of sinfulness is, in my view, an affront against God who has established the biological sexual means by which the continuation of the human race is assured. A change in the Church's thinking regarding sex was realized under the otherwise ultra-conservative pontiff, John Paul II. He acknowledged that enjoyment of the sexual act was legitimate provided that the pleasure factor was not the dominant reason for sexual expression. Still, somehow, he manages to change what might have been a positive analysis of married sexual love into a negative and feckless commentary. Hans Küng, in his *Christianity: Essence, History, and Future*, notes the ridiculous aspect of John Paul's statement concerning lust. He writes:

For Augustine ... sexual pleasure purely for its own sake is sinful and to be suppressed.... This Augustinian legacy of the vilification of sexual libido represented a tremendous burden for the men and women of the Middle Ages, the Reformation, and far beyond. And still in our own day, a Pope has proclaimed in all earnestness the view that even in marriage a husband can look at his wife 'unchastely', if he does so purely for pleasure (Küng, 1995: 295-6).

But this reasoning seems to be at variance with the actuality of lived sexual experience. The sexual faculties are, in fact, used for immediate gratification of the natural sexual instinct which is inherent in the animal kingdom, including mankind. The resulting insemination is often if not ordinarily of secondary import. The very fact that sexual activity provides extreme pleasure makes the act itself a popular one. To state that the pleasure derived from the act is only a secondary motivation for sexual activity is, at the very least, a duplicitous statement, intended to ensure the obedience of Catholics and the retention of Roman authority. Unfortunately, as Tom Harpur in his *Always on Sunday* expresses the idea, there is too little support for a more realistic engagement with the reality of sexual expression. Harpur writes, “Most moralists have been so obsessed by sex that they have laid too little emphasis on other more socially useful kinds of ethically commendable conduct” (Harpur, 1988: 125). Pretensions by the Church that clerical celibacy is an advantageous element in Church leadership has been proven to be a useless attempt at control at the least and a provision of opportunity for excessive and deleterious forms of expression at the worst.

It is interesting to note that where sexuality has been at the forefront of Catholic interest, Pope Francis has introduced a more enlightened view. In the April 10th edition of the *National Catholic Reporter*, Sean Winters writes:

Synods were notoriously sleep-inducing during the pontificates of John Paul II and Benedict XVI. But Francis encourages participants to speak their mind and risk open disagreement in order to get to the heart of the questions in a way that the entire church is consulted.... The Church’s teachings on matters related to human sexuality have taken up a disproportionate amount of time and attention – from popes, bishops, theologians, clergy and laity (Winters, 2015: 24).

The above quotation and its reference to a more reasonable reflection on human sexuality is recognition that sex can be considered a joyful expression as opposed to the Augustinian view of sex as an instrument of wickedness. John XXIII’s window has begun to open once more.

5.3 Gluttony and Lust

The association of two of the seven deadly sins – gluttony and lust – perhaps deserves an examination. The similarities, though not ordinarily perceived, do, nevertheless, exist, and these similarities are of significant relevance. To begin, both the sexual appetite and the appetite for nourishment are natural human traits. The sexual appetite ensures the continuation of the species; the appetite for bodily nourishment directly ensures the continuation of the life of the individual and, indirectly, thereby ensures the survival of humanity. Both appetites, then, are necessary for the perpetuation of the human race.

The other inherent factor in both sexuality and hunger is the incontestable fact that satisfying the needs of either is a particularly pleasant and enjoyable exercise. Certainly no one is likely to dismiss the notion that fulfilling the need for nourishing a hungry body is anything but pleasant. Similarly, unless one is burdened by a Victorian ethic of sexuality or filled with guilt and fear because of the teachings of Augustine, promoted by the Catholic Church, fulfilling the need for sexual expression is an enjoyable exercise.

Why, then, is the Church so adamantly opposed to so many sexual practices while the attention paid to eliminating the pangs of hunger is rarely noted and never criticized, let alone condemned? The many examples of corpulence and obesity in both clergy and laity are obvious enough but rarely mentioned as an example of sinful behaviour. Nor does this dissertation suggest that the Church invoke its practice of condemning what it considers sinful in order to castigate overeaters as it does for certain expressions of sexuality. The fact is that both eliminating hunger by eating and eliminating sexual urgency are normal and enjoyable activities. The answer to the question posed at the opening of this paragraph is simply this: that the Church, cognizant of the extreme urge to fulfill sexual expression, apparently uses that information as a source for enforcing discipline.

Hunger management is a social exercise whereas the practice of sexuality, probably in most cultures, is normally conducted in private, whether heterosexually, homosexually, or unilaterally. Everyone, including clergy, fulfills the natural need for dispelling hunger by ingesting food, often in public. It would be contrary to the sensibilities of everyone, then, all of whom participate in the act of eating, to encroach on their hunger management practices. But the expression of sexuality, an act normally conducted in private, is found to be worthy of both direction and condemnation. This condemnation is reinforced by inducing fear in those who use their sexuality by endeavouring to act in accordance with the manner in which these activities contribute to their well-being and fulfillment.

Fuelling the body with nourishment is natural, unregulated, and exalted; relieving sexual tension through orgasm is also natural, but regulated, and often condemned. The Church gives not a damn what you ingest, but it may damn you to hell for what you expel. The Church discovered millennia ago and continued the practice of controlling sexuality through fear, and the command centre in Rome thus retains its power and authority, controlling the lives of those whom they purport to serve.

The Church has often, including in the recent past, discouraged and even condemned the human animal for enjoying sexual experience, particularly if the means chosen for that expression fails to meet the criteria established by the Roman authority. To condemn sexual practices, where there are no victims of oppression, seems as sensible as it would be to condemn the enjoyment of food. Both practices do, ordinarily, sustain life whether for the individual or posterity. John Boswell, quoting from the *Summa Theologia* of St. Thomas Aquinas in his *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, writes:

The invocation of “nature” is significant, however, as an indication of the lengths to which Scholastic apologists for Christian ethics would go to demonstrate that “nature” was at the foundation of Christian society’s sexual taboos. Even granting the selective inference from monogamous species of birds, sexual promiscuity ought to have been no more reprehensible in “natural” ethics than gluttony, which also prescinds from the supposedly

“natural” tendency of animals to eat only what is necessary for sustenance. Indeed, Aquinas concedes, heterosexual promiscuity would be no more serious than gluttony if it were not for its potentially harmful effects. While one excessive meal has no permanent consequence, a single act of heterosexual fornication may ruin the life of a human being: that of the illegitimate and (Thomas assumes) uncared-for child produced by it [Aquinas, 1265: 2a.2ae.154.2 ad 6) (Boswell, 1980: 321).

It is significant, perhaps, that Boswell makes a comparison between sexuality and gluttony, but significant, also, that he selects the word “may” by which Aquinas appears to be uncertain about his own theses. As Boswell points out, Aquinas only assumes that the potential child will be uncared for, leaving in doubt any need to disparage heterosexual promiscuity. It is interesting, also, that the Church accepts Aquinas’s claims with reference to sexuality and the process of fecundation of which he seems to have known so little.

The incidence of sexual concern is related to the manner in which human sexuality is expressed. Noted above is the co-relation between sexual expression and the ingestion of food, a relationship which bears further comment. Both exercises are related to and necessary for the preservation of life. Through sexual intercourse between male and female the end result, if pregnancy occurs, is the preservation of the human species. Through the act of consuming nourishment, again, the end result is the preservation of the species. Both activities are vital to maintaining life and ensuring progeny for the future. The Church, however, while saying virtually nothing about the excess consumption of food which results in overweight, obesity, and potential illness – referred to in Scripture as gluttony – and a serious burden to health facilities, has a great deal to say about any sexual experience. It seems ludicrous to ignore the epidemic of nutriment overindulgence while simultaneously condemning so many sexual practices.

5.4 Procreation

The major stated concern expressed by the Church is that all sexual expression must leave open the possibility for pregnancy to result. *Humanae Vitae* of Paul VI states,

“The Church ... condemn(s), as being always illicit, the use of means directly contrary to fecundation” (Paul VI, 1968: 5). Sexual expression, in some instances such as pre-marital sex, homosexual sexual activity, masturbation, use of artificial methods of birth control such as the use of condoms, and sexual expression between spouses where the male member, as Augustine so explicitly noted, “must not be inserted into an inappropriate vessel”, are all condemned by the Church since, through these acts, procreation is made impossible. In these instances, the Church makes no allowance for the normal and recently accepted concept that couples have the right to pleasure derived from sexual intercourse, nor for the need for a couple to nourish each other through sexual activity, nor for the fulfillment of the individual person. In *Persona Humana*, authorized by Paul VI, the writer states, “Every genital act must be within the framework of marriage; ... Homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered; and Catholic doctrine (states) that masturbation constitutes a grave moral disorder” (Cardinal Seper, 1975: 4-5).

In all of these cases the Church considers the participants sinners and once again imposes fear of punishment from a God who apparently is more concerned with crime and punishment than with the love and compassion expressed by Jesus Christ. There are, however, a number of instances where pregnancy is impossible but the Church does not condemn the activity. One example follows from *Humanae Vitae*, which states that “the Church is coherent with herself when she considers recourse to the infecund periods to be licit” [for engagement in sexual relations] (Paul VI, 1968: 5). Sexual activity between spouses where the woman is already pregnant or where she has advanced through menopause, or has had the necessary organs for the development of pregnancy removed owing to disease, also negate the possibility of productive insemination. These situations, however, occasion no problem for the Church. Since in all of the above noted situations, conception is impossible, there seems to be an inherent contradiction in the teachings of the Church, unless, of course, the Church leaves open the chance for a miraculous birth. Since it is unreasonable for an infertile couple to engage in sexual intercourse for the purpose of effecting

pregnancy, then it appears that the only other purpose for the act seems to be to provide comfort and pleasure to the partner. This must be obvious to the Church authority, but it does not condemn the act, thereby in effect, condoning the pleasure factor in sexual intercourse.

Why lust the most prominent of the seven deadly sins? Simply stated, it is because by ensuring that sexuality is rendered liable to sinfulness and guilt, and by demanding that numerous laws and prohibitions are directed at those who engage in sexual conduct, licit or illicit, the Church attempts to maintain control over her people. The Church maintains that the use of human sexual faculties is innocent only when the purpose of sexual intercourse is open to procreation. The fact is that within the latter part of the last century, under John Paul II, the Church has reluctantly admitted the pleasure factor as a tolerable adjunct to sexual expression for the mutual support of married spouses. In his *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* of June, 1991, Fr. Regis Scanlon, O. F. M., discusses Chapter 27 in Part 3 of Pope Gregory's "Pastoral Rule," (sixth century). In this article, Charles E. Curran, John T. Noonan, Jr., and R. Van Allen all claim that:

According to Pope Gregory ... if any pleasure is 'mixed' with the act of intercourse, the married couple have transgressed the law of marriage; they have 'befouled' their intercourse by 'their Pleasures' (Scanlon, 1991: 2).

Scanlon continues citing portions of the "Pastoral Rule":

The married must be admonished to bear in mind that they are united in wedlock for the purpose of procreation, and when they abandon themselves to "immoderate intercourse" they transfer the occasion of procreation to the service of pleasure (Scanlon, 1991: 4).

Scanlon indicates that John Paul II concurs with the teaching of Gregory. He writes:

(Regarding John Paul's teaching on the same subject), John Paul II describes lust as ... "reducing the riches of the perennial call to communion of persons ... to mere satisfaction of the sexual 'need' of the body" (Scanlon, 1991: 4).

Scanlon's conclusion is that the interpretation of Gregory's and John Paul II's view of pleasure in sex by Curran, Noonan, and Van Allen, is incorrect. But Scanlon's contention is that "It would have been ridiculous for a pope and Doctor of the Church

to have taught that the ‘mere presence’ of pleasure in marital sexual intercourse is sinful” (Scanlon, 1991: 2). But in consideration of the teaching of both Augustine and Aquinas, it appears that early popes and theologians did in fact embrace teachings which are not generally accepted in contemporary times. It is owing to this fact that I believe Scanlon to be in error and that Curran, Noonan, and Van Allen are correct. Further evidence of John Paul’s view of pleasure obtained from sexual intercourse comes from his own writing in his *Love and Responsibility*. John Paul writes:

Seeking pleasure and enjoyment in intercourse – is wrong.... It is an intrinsically impure element, a sort of necessary evil. That evil must, however, be tolerated since there is no way of eliminating it (John Paul II, 1981: 59).

The Church does, however, maintain its insistence that the act must be open to conception. The Church obviously is aware of the fact that sexual expression between couples who have passed the years of being capable of gestation are not open to conception; that conception cannot occur when the woman is already pregnant; and that when, for whatever reason, the couple are incapable of effecting pregnancy, the couple cannot conceive. But in spite of these factors, the Church continues to show partiality toward those incapable of gestation.

The Church, as we have seen, in part, is adamantly opposed to certain sexual practices and related actions which include, but are not limited to, pre-marital sex, contraception, divorce, masturbation, nudity, and homosexuality. Let us examine each of these sexual practices in the light of Church denunciation.

5.5 Pre-marital Sex

Perhaps the *Song of Songs* is a reasonable place to begin. Although the *Song of Songs* has been attributed to Solomon by some sources, (the poem is titled *The Song of Solomon* in *The HarperCollins Study Bible*), this is possibly a later identification of the author and is likely suspect as no proof exists for its authenticity. Harper Collins suggests several possible interpretations such as “a religious allegory recounting God’s love for Israel”; “an allegory of Christ’s love for the church”; “the lovers are regarded as

bride and groom”; and “secular love poetry”. This latter interpretation is the one I shall follow in the ensuing notes. This, in my view, represents a more realistic interpretation which suggests that the song reflects a love relationship between two unmarried persons. In any case, the view from this writing is that the relationship between the two lovers is one which is pure, natural, and free from any inordinate laws which would tend to control the behaviour of the lovers, instigating in them any sense of guilt or fear. There is no definite indication that the lovers are already married. As *The HarperCollins Study Bible* suggests:

There are, however, no signs that the author intended to depict any sort of experience other than human, sexual love.... The constraints of the patriarchal society do not seem to determine the lovers’ behaviour toward each other ... (Harper Collins, 1989: 1000 -1003).

The erotic poetry exemplifies the portrayal of love which has not been sullied by anyone who would prefer to suppress the erotic beauty within it. Phrases such as, “My beloved is to me a bag of myrrh that lies between my breasts,” and, “With great delight I sat in his shadow, and his fruit was sweet to my taste”, are indicative of the love the girl declares for her beloved. The male lover speaks to his beloved in a similar vein as he says, “Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle, that feed among the lilies.” She continues with an invitation to him which states, “Let my beloved come to his garden, and eat its choicest fruits,” to which he replies, “I come to my garden, my sister, my bride.” She continues, describing her lover:

His head is the finest gold;
His locks are wavy,
 Black as a raven.
His eyes are like doves
Beside springs of water,
Bathed in milk,
 Fully set.
His cheeks are like beds of spices,
 Yielding its fragrance.
His lips are lilies,
 Distilling liquid myrrh.
His arms are rounded gold,

Set with jewels.
His body is ivory work,
Encrusted with sapphires.
His legs are alabaster columns,
Set upon bases of gold (5: 11-15).

The lover responds in equally erotic tones as he says:

Your rounded thighs are like jewels,
The work of a master hand.
Your navel is a rounded bowl
That never lacks mixed wine.
Your belly is a heap of wheat,
Encircled with lilies.
Your two breasts are like two fawns,
Twins of a gazelle (7: 1-3).

He continues, saying:

You are stately as a palm tree,
And your breasts are like its clusters.
I say I will climb the palm tree
And lay hold of its branches (7: 7-8).

In the lover's statement when he says, "I come to my garden", this expression seems to be an expression of the consummation of their love in sexual ecstasy. This poem is not only an erotic love poem but is, as well, a statement of pure sexual love, unencumbered by laws, restrictions and fear. It is a depiction of a sexual encounter between two lovers, perhaps betrothed, but not yet married. Unfortunately, the Catholic Church, which has employed harsh criticism of various expressions of sexuality in the past, is unlikely to accept the premise that pre-marital sexual experience can be pure, sincere, and free from the repercussions of fear. In the papal document entitled *Persona Humana*, however, authorized by Paul VI, the author writes:

There are many who vindicate the right to sexual union before marriage, [but] this opinion is contrary to Christian doctrine, which states that every genital act must be within the framework of marriage (Seper, 1975:4).

Continuing the commentary on the Song, the female lover says, "My beloved thrust his hand into the opening" (5:4), which means, according to the Harper Collins Study Bible,

that he thrust his hand through the opening of the window (1006). It seems hardly likely, then, that the couple are married. If they were married, surely he would have entered through the door. But, in any case, this is not a recommendation for unbridled sex; it is, however, awareness that sexual experience between two lovers can be responsible, fulfilling, and pure giving of self to another, a gift of self which is unencumbered by admonitions, prohibitions, or fear.

5.6 Contraception

In his encyclical entitled *Casti Connubi*, Pius XI wrote definitively on the evil of the use of artificial means of birth control. Objections to birth control began with Augustine and have been vigorously endorsed by subsequent papal directives, such as *Humane Vitae*. In his encyclical, Pius XI states:

Some justify (frustrating the marriage act) [with] this criminal abuse on the ground that they are weary of children and wish to gratify their desires without their consequent burden. Others say that they cannot on the one hand remain continent nor on the other can they have children because of the difficulties whether on the part of the mother or on the part of family circumstances.... But no reason, however grave, may be put forward by which anything intrinsically against nature may become comfortable to nature and morally good. Since, therefore, the conjugal act is destined primarily by nature for the begetting of children, those who in exercising it deliberately frustrate its natural power and purpose sin against nature and commit a deed which is shameful and intrinsically vicious.... As St. Augustine notes, "Intercourse even with one's legitimate wife is unlawful and wicked where the conception of the offspring is prevented. Onan, the son of Juda, did this and the Lord killed him for it (Pius XI, 1930: 9).

The Bible does not explicitly condemn birth control except, perhaps, in the one occasion where:

Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife and perform the duty of a brother-in-law to her; raise up offspring for your brother". But since Onan knew that the offspring would not be his, he spilled his semen on the ground whenever he went in to his brother's wife, so that he would not give offspring to his brother. What he did was displeasing in the sight of the Lord, and he put him to death also (Gen 38: 8-10).

It is interesting that the Church relies in part on this biblical quotation to condemn any means by which conception is frustrated, while simultaneously utilizing the same Scriptural passage to condemn masturbation. The “sin” of Onan was an act against the established custom of the time to ensure progeny for a deceased member of the family, and not an act of self-gratification through masturbation.

Pius XI followed the teaching of Augustine and set the stage for similar declarations of sexual intercourse solely for the purpose of procreation. In the time of a predecessor of Pius XI, Leo XIII, Christianity as a whole interpreted Scripture, for the most part, as an exact historical rendering of the word of God, an interpretation which is still endorsed today by certain religious sects or fundamental Christians even within the Roman Catholic Church. The fact that Leo made a declaration on Christian marriage in a document in which he inferred a belief in the concept of biblical inerrancy suggests a possible inconsistency with contemporary exegeses of Scripture. He wrote in *Arcanum*:

God, ... having made man from the slime of the earth, and having breathed into his face the breath of life, gave him a companion, whom he miraculously took from the side of Adam when he was locked in sleep. God thus, in his most far-reaching foresight, decreed that this husband and wife should be the natural beginning of the human race (Leo XIII, 1880:2).

The fact, alone, that Leo XIII was handicapped by a belief in the literal word of Scripture, seems to be sufficient grounds to question the authenticity of any of his arguments in favour of sexual ethics. His lack of (what is now) contemporary knowledge absolves him of any malfeasance, but for contemporary Christian leaders to accept his mandates is baffling. Even the Galileo fiasco was rectified after a century or so by John Paul II.

The command by John Paul II to avoid speaking about the ordination of women is a command which has been virtually ignored by members of the laity as well as by some of the clergy. The degree to which that command has been obeyed is similar to the acceptance of the ban on the use of artificial means of regulating conception. Studies have determined that that particular Church injunction has been ignored by

approximately 90 percent of practicing Catholics. Andrew Greeley in his *The Catholic Myth* has addressed this very concept. Greeley writes:

It was obvious from our data that the encyclical [*Humanae Vitae*] had not worked. In 1963 half the Catholic population had accepted the birth-control teaching. In 1974 only twelve percent accepted it (Greeley, 1990: 23).

Owing to the fact that the Vatican is a closed, male-centred, hierarchical association, women are routinely kept at an arms-length distance, encouraged to contribute to the welfare of the Church but never extended the privileges appropriated by the clerical caste. As a result, women are denied the privilege of sexual intimacy without being open to conception, an opinion expressed by the Vatican as an impregnable law, but one to which a number of theologians and others have dissented. In his *Practicing Catholic*, James Carroll discusses his relationship with his former teacher, Charles Curran:

Father Curran ... had given shape to my moral theology. And now, unlike the cowed Galileo, he was refusing to bow before a Church decree, to say, "It does not move." Instead Curran and the others contradicted the pope, declaring, "Spouses may responsibly decide according to their conscience that artificial contraception in some circumstances is permissible and indeed necessary to preserve and foster the values and sacredness of marriage" (Carroll, 2009: 189).

The fact that spouses are competent to decide based on their conscience the permissibility of contraception should be quite clear to Roman authority since that authority prefers to believe that all marriages are indissoluble, in spite of biblical statements to the contrary. For example, Matthew tells us that Jesus spoke against divorce but added, in deference to human weakness, "Not everyone can accept this teaching, but only those to whom it is given.... Let anyone accept this who can" (Mt 19:11-12). The Church, however, refuses to recognize the termination of a marriage by divorce, insisting that divorce does not end a marriage and that a divorced person who remarries is automatically excommunicated. It is interesting to note here that, although divorce is not tolerated, it is still required before an annulment can be

granted. Jesus, even though reluctantly, sanctioned divorce; the Church does not. In his *Vicars of Christ*, Peter De Rosa writes:

[It is when divorced Catholics apply to Rome to have their marriages *annulled* that the suspicion arises that the church allows divorce *under another name*. It is well known that many Catholic couples are being granted ecclesiastical annulments after, say, twenty years together and half a dozen children ... it looks as if the marriage was real enough; it is the annulment that is a fiction. In order to be free of a partner whom they no longer love, they are obliged to pretend that they were never married at all, that they have lived in sin all this while and their children are all illegitimate in the eyes of God. How can an ecclesiastical court declare such a profound reality a *nullity*? ... It suggests some grave defect in the law.... Moreover, even in the church, the idea is growing that nullities are divorces by another name (De Rosa, 1988: 361-2).

Church law forbids any use of artificial means of birth control, regardless of the situation in which a woman finds herself. She may be bereft of the financial means whereby another child may be supported; she may experience the psychological need for close intimacy with her spouse without being concerned about conception; and she may simply wish to avoid pregnancy on the grounds of personal choice or preference. In Pius XI's encyclical entitled *Casti Connubi* (*On Christian Marriage*, noted previously in this dissertation) he stated explicitly that every act of sexual intercourse must be open to the generation of life.

Any use whatsoever of matrimony exercised in such a way that the act is deliberately frustrated in its natural power to generate life is an offence against the law of God and of nature, and those who indulge in such are branded with the guilt of a grave sin (Pius XI, 1930: 9-10).

It seems clear then, that in the mind of this pope, any use of contraception during sexual intercourse is condemned. And since no pope has ever challenged that ruling – it has been corroborated by Paul VI in his *Humanae Vitae* as noted below – the decree stands.

In the early 1960s, following Vatican II, Paul VI convened a commission to examine the concept of artificial contraception. He brought together a number of lay persons and clergy in order to study the topic and to arrive at some decision regarding the matter.

Eventually, after several attempts to resolve the dilemma, the council brought forward its majority report which authorized the use of artificial means of birth control. A small minority report favoured retention of the traditional ban. But Paul VI, apparently fearing to contradict any statement made by a predecessor, (*Casti Connubi* by Pius XI for example), threw out the majority report and, in another encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*, proclaimed that artificial contraception would remain banned by the Vatican. James Carroll points out the disastrous affect of Paul VI's decision. In *Practicing Catholic* he writes, "*Humanae Vitae*, intended to be a bulwark of unchecked papal authority, destroyed it" (Carroll, 2009: 190). Carroll's definitive assertion is based on the fact that Paul's decree was virtually ignored, leading the way to the birth of a movement within the Church which began to question Rome's unilateral and arbitrary rules. The commission which he had entrusted with the deliberation on this topic consisted of experts in relevant fields as well as married couples. Nonetheless, he chose to ignore the majority report, stating in *Humanae Vitae*:

The conclusions at which the commission arrived could not, nevertheless, be considered by us as definitive, nor dispense us from a personal examination of this serious question; and this also because, within the commission itself, no full accordance of judgments concerning the moral norms to be proposed had been reached, and above all because certain criteria of solutions had emerged which departed from the moral teaching on marriage proposed with constant firmness by the teaching authority of the Church (Paul VI, 1968: 2).

The Catholic world had awaited a positive response from Paul VI regarding the use of artificial contraceptives. But the Catholic world was due for a disappointment.

Disregarding his own commission's majority report, he wrote in *Humanae Vitae*,

Nonetheless the Church, calling men back to the observance of the norms of the natural law, as interpreted by their constant doctrine, teaches that every marriage act (*quilibet matrimonii*) must remain open to the transmission of life (Paul VI, 1968: 4).

The question arises that if Paul VI was determined to preserve the traditional teaching, why he would convene a commission to review the teaching. In disregarding the recommendations of his own commission that artificial contraception be allowed, Paul VI, possibly through his fear of contradicting a former pope, fell victim to the adage

that the Vatican is immune from error. In so doing, also, he invited a backlash from the laity in the Catholic Church who chose to ignore this papal proclamation, relying on their own consciences and, in effect, evoking the principle of the *sensus fidelium*, that principle which authorized the laity to abide by their consciences rather than being controlled by papal injunction. This principle, although proclaimed by Rome, was never acknowledged by Rome in any significant instance. The dictum, *Roma locuta est, causa finita est*, has once again claimed superiority over *sensus fidelium*.

Bishop John Shelby Spong adds a relevant perspective to the discussion of papal inability to acknowledge errors effectuated by previous members of the papacy. In his *A New Christianity for a New World*, he writes:

Because the Church would not allow the new understanding ... [of the science] of Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo ... to challenge the church's "truth", he perished.... The church's successful attempt at silencing Bruno did not make Bruno wrong, as history has clearly demonstrated.... Periodically, the leadership of the church confesses its sins.... On the first Sunday of Lent in the year 2000, Pope John Paul II officially stated not that his Church had been wrong, but that some of his church's "sons and daughters" had made serious mistakes. It was probably as close to an admission of guilt as a church can come when it has confused its understanding of the world with the mind of the theistic God (Spong, 2001: 222).

Cardinal Cushing, although stating his own personal view that artificial contraception was unlawful, insisted, however, that his opinion not influence any politician against voting for the abolishment of any law contrary to the use of artificial means of birth control. He saw the use of such contraceptive devices as a matter which could be left to the conscience of the individual practitioner. James Carroll, in *Practicing Catholic*, writes, "Cushing's advice to Catholic legislators was explicit. If your constituents want this legislation, vote for it. You represent them. You don't represent the Catholic Church" (Carroll, 2009: 168). His view was not appreciated in Rome, however, but Rome, fearing the backlash which would result from requesting this popular cardinal's resignation, remained silent. Once again Rome acted in deference to its own agenda of survival.

Popes following in the footsteps of Paul VI have endorsed Paul's "irrefutable" statement concerning contraception, another indication of the fear inherent in every pontiff of disclaiming any teaching of a predecessor. In Philip Kaufman's *Why You Can Disagree and Remain a Faithful Catholic*, this author writes:

Humanae Vitae has not been accepted in the church and, at the 1980 Synod, the bishops were rebuffed in their effort to re-open the case. John Paul II continues to demand the encyclical's acceptance and insists that the issue is not open for discussion by theologians (Kaufman, 1991: 118).

John Paul II may have reluctantly addressed the issue of the legitimacy of accepting any pleasure derived from sexual intercourse – under certain conditions – but he was unable to accept the fact that millions of his followers have refused to accept Paul VI's verdict in *Humanae Vitae*. This positive statement by Catholics, placing their own conscience above Roman imperial dictates and demanding, even if unaware of the expression *sensus fidelium*, their right to live according to the dictates of their own consciences, has been continued under every papacy following not only Paul VI but following John Paul II as well – the pontificates of Benedict XVI and Pope Francis. It is possibly the beginning of the end of papal dominance.

5.7 Masturbation

In Western literature – beginning with Christian monasticism – masturbation remains associated with the chimera of the imagination and its dangers. It is the very form of unnatural pleasure that humans invented in order to exceed the limits assigned to them (Foucault, 1986: 140).

The above quote from Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality*, Volume 3, suggests the disdain which the practice evoked in society in general and the Catholic Church in particular. But regardless of the negativity associated with the act, the practice has continued throughout millennia. How many teenage boys and young men have been threatened with the pangs of hellfire for masturbation or, as some clerics have referred to the practice, self-abuse? Virtually every youth, after reaching the age of puberty, becomes conscious of his sexual potency, experiencing what he may consider sensory experience in the form of an erection. This natural, phenomenological occurrence is a

necessary component inherent in the animal kingdom, including the human race, a necessity for the preservation of the species. If the phenomenon were not a pleasant experience, a drive for sexual fulfillment of the sexual urgency, there would be little motivation for a couple to engage in sexual intercourse. But the urgency does exist and is, therefore, the means of ensuring the continuation of the human race.

The fact that the need for sexual expression, the need for an outlet for the pent-up physical need for orgasm, cannot be satisfied through the channels of marriage while the young man is too young for such a commitment, does not alter the Church's stand.

According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*:

By *masturbation* is to be understood the deliberate stimulation of the genital organs in order to derive sexual pleasure. "Both the Magisterium of the Church, in the course of a constant tradition, and the moral sense of the faithful have been in no doubt and have firmly maintained that masturbation is an intrinsically and gravely disordered action." "The deliberate use of the sexual faculty, for whatever reason, outside of marriage is especially contrary to its purpose" (John Paul II, 1946: 623).

John Paul's remarks in the Catechism above are taken from page five of *Persona Humana*, the encyclical authorized by Paul VI in 1975. The encyclical includes "the moral sense of the faithful" as one entity which has declared that "masturbation is an intrinsically and seriously disordered act" (Seper, 1975: 5). I find nowhere, however, that the "faithful" have ever been consulted on the issue, and further, there is no evidence that the "faithful" have ever participated in such designation.

The Church, in adding the phrase "for whatever reason" makes absolutely no allowance for age, marital status, or any other potentiality, such as the reluctance of one of the partners in a marriage. With regard to the adolescent, his lack of maturity does not in any way lessen the need for sexual expression and as a result the youth resorts to masturbation. According to the Church, however, always ready to denounce any sexual expression outside of marriage and any expression which is neither intended to transmit life nor capable of the transmission of life, condemns the practice. In any case, whether the young man relieves the sexual tension through masturbation

or not, the body itself will ensure that the excess semen is expelled from the body during nocturnal emissions, a point which trivializes the concept once proffered by some Church officials that masturbation results in a waste of semen. The condemnation of this natural practice is particularly heinous in light of the fact that so many of the clergy have molested both boys and girls with virtual immunity from prosecution by either the civil court or the *Code of Canon Law*. Hellfire for the boy who masturbates; another parish for the priest who defiles an innocent child.

The occurrence of masturbation has been a prominent feature in the sexual lives of young boys in particular throughout the centuries. In the Ancient Greek and Roman era, the practice was entertained as a normal one and positive attitudes regarding it were prevalent. Michel Foucault describes the “moral reflections” of the Greeks and Romans in his *The History of Sexuality, Volume 3*:

In all the moral reflections of the Greeks and Romans concerning sexual activity, when masturbation appears ... it is in a positive form: an act of natural elimination, which has the value both of a philosophical lesson and a necessary remedy (Foucault, 1986: 140).

This open and unconcerned attitude changed drastically over time as is evident in the repressive nature of seventeenth century apostles of restraint. Foucault, in his first volume of *The History of Sexuality* writes, “Educators and doctors combatted children’s onanism like an epidemic that needed to be eradicated” (Foucault, 1980: 42). The Victorian era continued the repressive behaviour of attempting to control the sexuality of the young. In *The Divinity of Sex*, Charles Pickstone, quoting Peter Gay from his *The Bourgeois Experience*, writes:

Peter Gay ... (wrote) to dispel some of the myths about Victorian ‘hypocrisy’ (retailing) some of the devices anxious doctors and parents employed to deter their children ... from the ‘vicious habit’ of masturbating (such as) mechanical restraints, metal contrivances, ... penile rings, (etc.) (Pickstone, 1996: 22).

As a contrast to attitudes such as that noted above, some more contemporary attitudes mirror the innocence and casual approach toward sexuality in the young as they reach the age of sexual potency. In *Sexuality and Catholicism*, Thomas Fox details

the nature of the sexual experience of a young Filipino boy, quoting from *Quest for the Grail* by Richard Rohr: “When a young Filipino boy can first get the seed there’s no shame associated with that. That first masturbation is a moment of glory and breakthrough” (Fox, 1995: 249). Fox continues the story, relating how the boy carries his seed in his hand to triumphantly prove his arrival at manhood. His peers are excited about his success but the triumph is short-lived with the arrival of an elderly Franciscan who admonishes the boy, telling him, “Go wash your hand and don’t come back” (Fox, 1995: 250). The boy’s reaction to the priest’s admonition is understandable and heart-rending. The boy says, “I could not understand. Why would that be displeasing? Why would the seed God put in our body be something I should be ashamed of?” (Fox, 1995: 250).

The boy’s question is an apt one. God said that everything he had made was good but the Catholic Church has a peculiar penchant for discovering what indeed is not good. This preponderance of antipathy toward sex is inherent in Roman Catholicism, to such an extent that this so-called evil surpasses all other faults. Richard Sipe in his *Sex, Priests, and Power*, affirms this concept. He says, “No other area of moral life, including murder, is treated with this same moral rigidity” (Sipe, 1994: 7) Even crimes of pedophilia have received considerably less Roman reaction. But with regard to virtually every other form of sexual activity, the Church follows blindly the teachings of Augustine.

5.8 Augustine

Augustine must not go on being ignored, as he is in Eastern theology, but he must not be spared virtually all criticism, as he is in some Western accounts; rather, a balanced judgment must be passed on him as the initiator of a new paradigm. For a paradigm shift never means just progress, but also gain and loss (Küng, 1995: 288).

The above quotation from Küng’s *Christianity: Essence, History, and Future*, is important because although some of Augustine’s ideas have been compromised by an anachronistic mentality he has served as the basis for considerable Christian

philosophy. Accordingly, with respect for his positive contributions to religion, his erroneous ideas, determined without the benefit of contemporary knowledge, must be acknowledged. To some extent Augustine was influenced by Stoicism, which, in the *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*, is defined as “a school of Greek philosophy emerging from the ‘porch’” (McKim, 1996: 270), where philosophers taught. It was popular in the Roman Empire: “Also, some Epicureans and Stoic philosophers debated with him (Paul)” (Acts: 17:18). “It emphasised ethics, harmony with nature, the suppression of emotions, and divine law. Its vocabulary influenced some New Testament writings of Paul” (McKim, 1996: 270).

Although this philosophy originated in the pre-Christian pagan world, probably under the influence of Aristotle, it expanded into the Early Church and influenced Augustine. The human body, in the mind of Augustine, was a negative entity, sinful and vastly inferior to the spirit. In his *The Catholic Church*, Küng writes:

He (Augustine) attempted to explain the sin of every human being from the biblical story of the fall of Adam, “in whom [instead of *after whose example*] all human beings sin.” That is a downright mistranslation of Romans 5.12. In this way Augustine historicized, psychologized, indeed sexualized Adam’s primal sin. For him, in complete contrast to Paul, it became original sin, which was determined sexually. For according to Augustine this original sin was transmitted to every new human being through the sexual act and the fleshly, that is, self-centered, desire (concupiscence) connected with it (Küng, 2003: 48-9).

Küng continues his explanation of Augustine’s misunderstanding of Paul. Augustine, Küng says,

... bequeathed to the whole Catholic Church of the West the doctrine of original sin ... and at the same time a fatal vilification of sexuality, the sexual libido. Sexual pleasure for its own sake (and not for the procreation of children) was sinful and to be suppressed – to the present day this remains the baneful teaching of the Roman pope (Küng, 2003: 49).

In spite of Augustine’s dismal understanding of human nature, the Church continues to acknowledge him as one of the foremost doctors of the Church. This is not intended to condemn Augustine, even though his teachings seem to reduce sexuality to little more

than concupiscence, since his teachings developed in an era which is considered to be less enlightened than our own. The error arises when the Church advocates his teachings as though they were uttered with the knowledge extant in contemporary pedagogy. In the realm of sexuality, his teachings, based on a Stoic rationality, remain suspect at the very least and utterly erroneous and egregious at the worst. Pleasure was denounced as sinful, and women, inferior to men, were the instruments of temptation. This concept was captured by Dennis Craig Smith in his *Naked Fear* when he wrote:

Pious propagandists have labored to tinker with the concepts of purity and cleanliness... They succeeded by making people feel the body was a temple of sin and filth. St. Augustine was trying to remind the flock of this "vile union" when he wrote, "We are born between feces and urine" (Smith, 2010:19).

This attitude is comparable to the teachings of Islam where women are considered temptresses to men and thus must cover virtually every part of the body. The ruling that women in the Catholic Church are unsuitable for ordination seems to support the Augustinian view that women are, after all, not only inferior to men, but somehow equated with evil and contamination. Sex is dirty and women are to blame. James Carroll in his *Christ Actually* writes concerning the views of Augustine:

Saint Augustine pairs the idea of Eve as temptress with the teaching that her sexual intercourse with Adam constituted the original sin. Through sex, humans are doomed, and the antidote to doom is the avoidance of women. Celibacy becomes the defining virtue for males (Carroll, 2014:329).

This sentiment is an obvious rejection of what Genesis teaches us about procreation. Genesis 1:28 reads, "God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it." Carroll has referred to Augustine's view of women in an earlier book entitled *Practicing Catholic*, writing:

The "patristic" emphasis on sexuality as the root of all evil, typified by Augustine, served to ... disempower the figure of Mary Magdalen ... so that her succeeding sisters in the Church would not compete with men for power, meshed with the impulse to discredit women generally. This was most efficiently done by reducing them to their sexuality, even as sexuality was reduced to the realm of temptation, the source of human unworthiness – "concupiscence" (Carroll, 2009: 158).

In contrast to the Roman Catholic view of sex, Hirsi Ali, in her book entitled *Nomad*, describes the healthy approach to sexuality taken by the Dutch. When a child asked questions concerning sex, the parents answered with honesty and candour. In *Nomad*, Ali writes:

(The parents) patiently and without panic described sex to the curious child, in detail, using books with very explicit pictures of the body. Dutch parents approached drugs and alcohol the same way.... All this education didn't stop some kids from experimenting with drugs or becoming accidentally pregnant, but the majority of the Dutch population has developed an extraordinary healthy approach to sex, drugs, and alcohol (Ali, 2010:158-159).

Nor should the fact that some Dutch children still fall into the trap of drug use or pregnancy evoke sentiments of revulsion since similar episodes of drug use and pregnancy occur in North America, Catholics included, and possibly on a far greater scale. The point is that sexuality for the Dutch is a natural phenomenon and not equated with evil, dirt, loathing, guilt, or fear.

With regard to sexual intercourse, even within a legitimate marriage, historically, the act was frowned upon. Sexual relations, according to Augustine, should be consummated solely for the purpose of procreation, and no pleasure was to be experienced. Augustine fails, however, to inform the reader of the methodology required for the disassociation of these two natural functions. Augustine admits that pleasure is involved in the act of sexual union. It seems quite obvious that if no pleasure were involved, the population of the earth would have petered out long ago. But Augustine, stating that if the man did experience any pleasure, then he committed only a venial sin, providing, of course, that the end of the sexual liaison was the only legitimate one, that is, for procreation. Apparently, according to Augustine, the man had the potency, the power, and the progeny; the woman acted upon was merely the vessel wherein the male seed would flourish and result in conception. As noted above, according to Augustine, in his *Christianity*, Küng writes, "Sexual pleasure purely for its own sake is sinful and to be suppressed" (Küng, 1995: 295). In the same book, Küng

writes concerning the teachings of Aristotle, which affected the thought processes of both Augustine and, later, Thomas Aquinas:

Aristotle asserts that in the procreation of a new human being the male is the sole active, 'procreative' part by virtue of his sperm (the *virtus activa*). By contrast the woman is the exclusively receptive, passive part, the receptive matter which merely makes available the disposition (*virtus passiva*) for the new person (Küng, 1995: 432).

Augustine's ignorance can be understood considering his lack of scientific knowledge. The contemporary Church, however, has little excuse for its anachronistic view of sexuality, basing its judgments and laws on Augustine's ignorance. For John Paul II, perhaps the ultimate in idiotic statements was expressed when he declared, even seriously, that a man could commit adultery with his own wife, a remark which brought derision on him, and a panic-like response by officials in the Vatican who attempted to solve the situation by implying that what John Paul said was not really what John Paul said. So much for Vatican diplomacy, duplicity, and dispatch. Nonetheless, in what he referred to as *Interpreting the Concept of Concupiscence* in one of his General Audiences on October 8th, 1980, he stated that:

The moral evaluation of lust (of looking lustfully), which Christ called adultery committed in the heart, seems to depend above all on the personal dignity itself of man and of woman. This holds true both for those who are not united in marriage, and – perhaps even more – for those who are husband and wife.... Adultery in the heart is committed not only *because* man looks in this way at a woman who is not his wife, but *precisely* because he looks at a woman in this way. Even if he looked in this way at the woman who is his wife, he could likewise commit adultery in his heart (John Paul II, 1980:1).

Since the law of the Church requires that only in marriage between a man and a woman is sexual expression acceptable, fear of retribution for such expression outside of marriage is the means by which control of its people is assured. For those who cannot or choose not to observe the teaching of the Church in this area, the Church provides a means of overcoming the guilt: confession – until, of course, nature beckons and the individual succumbs once again to his or her natural instincts. Once again, sex, fear, and control dominate the lives of Catholics, and the hierarchy once again ensures

the preservation of its power, authority, and control. This is not intended to minimize the healing and comforting affect of the sacrament of reconciliation; rather, it is meant only to question the laws which inhibit the natural pursuit of sexuality.

Control of sexuality has become the exclusive province of clerical domination. Just as the Church refuses to admit that witchcraft still dominates much of the life of Catholics in Africa, it refuses to acknowledge its own misuse of authority in sexual matters, a responsibility perhaps better left to the discretion of those who engage in its legitimate practices, legitimate meaning in situations in which there is neither coercion nor injustice. On these issues, John Allen, in his *The Future Church*, writes:

The Church's denial (of the use of witchcraft in Africa) 'only escalates the problem' ... (as does the) overemphasis of sexuality in official moral teaching, as well as an 'authoritarian, top-down Church government' (Allen, 2009: 37).

Augustine, and others since, have argued that prior to the "fall" in the "Garden of Eden" the act of sexual intercourse was conducted as a manner of will with no resource to the aspect of pleasure. It was only after the fall that humans experienced pleasure in the act of sexual expression. Not only did they experience no pleasure but the woman, receiving the seed, did not become pregnant. Still, the Church follows so much of Augustinian thought that until relatively recently the sexual aspect of marriage was seen as a necessary "evil" and the pleasure associated with the act was seen as something which should be merely tolerated.

It was only during the reign of John Paul II, within the realm of memory of many of us, that a secondary purpose of marriage, the pleasure principle, was accepted as a normal and even a moral event. But only, it must be remembered, if the initial and predominant purpose of the act was for the purpose of procreation. This seems to imply that a couple who has passed the age of fecundation must enjoy the act only as a secondary aim, and that the couple must engage in the act, still, only for the purpose of procreation. Since the Church has uttered no disclaimer for the injunction, it appears that that interpretation remains a part of the teaching regarding sexual intercourse.

But, as has been realized so often, when any pope – and this includes Doctors of the Church such as Augustine and Aquinas – utters any statement, no matter how far out of the bounds of logical reflection, no subsequent pope dares to contradict his predecessor. The reason for such timidity? Possibly a fear of loss of papal power and control, which is the main reason that sexuality has been burdened with so many pejorative assaults. Any incumbent pope must realize that should he express any aspersions on a predecessor, or contradict a previous pope's declarations, a subsequent pope may very well offer a pejorative reflection on him. Nevertheless, the reigning pope might acknowledge the antiquated and erroneous teachings concerning sexuality. The beliefs generated by Augustine, perpetuated by the hierarchical Church, and retained in contemporary Catholicism seem to be ineffective, outmoded, and offensive. Sex is both normal and moral. It is a God-given faculty, intended both for pleasure and procreation – in that order. The Church, however, would reverse that order. God created women and men and everything that he made was good, and since God commanded male and female to multiply, then sexual union, too, must be good.

Robert Goss discusses Augustine's outdated statements pertaining to morality and theology. In his book entitled *Jesus Acted Up*, Goss writes:

Augustine took the critical Stoic opposition of reason against passion, and he defined passion (*passio*) as a "commotion of the mind and contrary to reason." Thus, he believed that it was an inappropriate attribute for God.... For Augustine, sexual pleasure/desire was what carries original sin from generation to generation (Goss: 1993: 65-66).

Goss continues his "accolades" concerning Augustine's misunderstanding of both the book of Genesis in general and sex in particular as he quotes Michel Foucault in his *On Genealogy*. His reference encompasses the normal, unsolicited male response to sexual stimuli, and Augustine's equation with such an involuntary sensory experience as sinful in itself because not ordained by God. Perhaps the entire quotation warrants repetition here:

The famous gesture of Adam covering his genitals with a fig leaf is, according to Augustine, not due to the simple fact that Adam was ashamed of their

presence, but to the fact that his sexual organs were moving by themselves without his consent. Sex in erection is the image of man revolted against God. The arrogance of sex is punishment and consequence of the arrogance of man. His uncontrolled sex is exactly the same as what he has been towards God – a rebel (Goss: 1993: 66).

“The arrogance of sex is punishment”! Men in the time of Augustine as well as contemporary men would hardly agree with his appraisal. The idea that a man’s erection signifies rebellion against God is ludicrous. It seems unreasonable to equate sexual arousal, a significant aspect of the method by which God intended to populate the earth, with a revolt against God. God created mankind in his image, according to Scripture, and determined how fecundation and population renewal would occur. Are not the sexual organs with which mankind has been endowed not intended by the creator for the dual purposes of pleasure and regeneration?

When a theologian, considered great by the Church, can be so erroneous on this aspect of his theology, how can a Church which claims a unique position as guardian of the truth be so certain about any of Augustine’s teachings, particularly on those relating to sexuality? This is not intended to denigrate Augustine as a theologian in general – since he was not privy to contemporary knowledge – but should it not alert today’s Church Fathers to the distinct possibility that Augustine’s views may very well be suspect on virtually every aspect of his sexual philosophy? But, as noted earlier, the Church seems adamantly opposed to any form of contradiction pertaining to any teaching of previous popes or theologians. Even though the Church may modify its teachings in order to rectify the absurdity extant in previous declarations and edicts, and in consideration of contemporary knowledge, it does so only reluctantly and never states in precise language that an earlier teaching was in error. John Allen examines one specific area in which the teaching of the Church has changed. In his *The Future Church* he writes:

Saint Augustine defended capital punishment in *The City of God* in the fourth century. “Since the agent of authority is but a sword in the hand [of God], it is in no way contrary to the commandment ‘Thou shalt not kill’ for the representative for the state’s authority to put criminals to death,” he wrote. Aquinas followed Augustine in the thirteenth century in *Summa Contra*

Gentiles. “The civil rulers execute, justly and sinlessly, pestiferous men in order to protect the state,” he wrote (Allen, 2009: 429).

Pius XII seemed to be in agreement with Augustine regarding the righteousness and benefits of using the death penalty. Allen continues:

As late as September 14, 1952, Pope Pius XII echoed its logic. “It is reserved to the public power to deprive the condemned of the benefit of life, in expiation of his fault, when already he has disposed himself of the right to live,” the pope said (Allen, 2009: 429).

Allen continues discussing the changing sentiment as expressed by succeeding pontiffs. He writes concerning a statement made by John Paul II in *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* in 1992: “It did not ban capital punishment outright, but expressed a strong preference for ‘bloodless means’” (Allen, 2009: 430). Allen then points out an even more forceful statement made by John Paul in his 1995 encyclical *Evangelium Vitae* in which he wrote, “The only time executions can be justified is when they are required ‘to defend society’” (Allen, 2009: 431). Later, in January 1999, Allen writes, again concerning John Paul, “The death penalty is ‘both cruel and unnecessary.’ Human life must not be taken ‘even in case of someone who has done great evil’” (Allen, 2009: 431).

Regarding these obvious changes in doctrine concerning the death penalty, Allen notes that in 1990, Pope Benedict XVI stated that “Catholicism has witnessed a ‘development in doctrine’ on the death penalty” (Allen, 2009: 431). Thus it seems that the Church does indeed change its teaching over the centuries and even over the years. This change from advocating the death penalty to encouraging a more merciful viewpoint seems to be an entirely reasonable approach to dealing with convicted criminals, although many people today still advocate capital punishment for certain crimes. In any case, although the Church has updated its view of capital punishment it has yet to mention that previous pontiffs have been in error, based on contemporary thinking. Obviously contemporary standards of decency in this matter were non-existent in past years and centuries. Nevertheless, a change made in this one teaching alone seems to suggest that the Church does, in fact, change its teaching over time. There seems to be

no definitive statement by the Church forbidding the use of capital punishment but it does reflect a strong preference for its avoidance.

Several quotations from Scripture address views concerning capital punishment, no doubt affecting religious sensibilities throughout history. “You shall not murder” (Ex 20:13), and “If any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye” (Ex 21: 23). These quotes are contradictory but have been called upon to justify either the reluctance of taking life or the justification for capital punishment. The New Testament, however, which has been seen by some as the completion of the Old Testament, concerns the love of God as espoused by Jesus versus the avenging God of the Old Testament. The law of the Old Testament condemning the taking of life has been adopted, however, in contemporary society wherever the teaching of Jesus takes precedence over any law which extols the “eye for an eye” viewpoint. In any case, the Church has altered its stance so that where capital punishment was once acclaimed as legitimate is now seen by the Church as unnecessary and to be avoided. If a teaching can change in one area of doctrine, then it can change, it seems to me, in other matters, including those concerned with sexuality.

The following observations, which may seem almost blasphemous to ultra-conservative minds, is nonetheless, a central element to Augustinian critique. The male appendage, which may become distended whether consciously or unconsciously, in its erect stage, is indicative of a normal, physiological response to sensory stimuli. This response is innate and is the autonomous reaction under certain influences to which every normal male animal, including the human male, is subjected. According to the teachings of the Church, Jesus Christ was without sin. Jesus was, however, both fully God and fully man, (theologians of other religions may differ on this point). Küng, in his *Christianity: Essence, History, and Future*, acknowledges this two-fold essence inherent in Christ. “In Christ there was present nothing less than the Divine essence, ... [and] this equating with each other of the divine and the human in Christ...” (Küng, 1995: 714). However, if we accept that Jesus was a fully human being, then he must have experienced the

sexual bodily sensations to which every male animal is subjected. Following Augustine's view, however, an erection, even if unsolicited, is an affront against God. Surely Jesus did not portray an affront against God. Jesus was male, and, as such, experienced erections; the experience of an erection is an affront against God. Thus, if we follow Augustine's lead, we arrive at an impasse. This impasse is conceivable, however, only if the Church continues to resolve its sexual obsessions on Augustinian philosophy.

If we accept that Jesus was a fully human being, then he was a sexual being, endowed with every aspect of male sensuousness, sexuality, and uninvited but natural and normal experiences. But the Church, basing its reasoning on Augustine, deems sexuality to be more sinful than natural. Thus, in this bizarre manner of thinking, the Church retains the futility of rendering sexuality as evil in countless ways. It does not nor cannot dissuade many from engaging in the sexual experience of their choice but it does implant in many the belief that sex is evil, that one should feel guilty for experiencing sex, and that one should fear the spiritual aftermath of sexual experimentation. This fear, delivered by with religious fervour and experienced by countless Catholics, has the immediate and enduring result of magisterial control. As long as the Church can use sex as a weapon against its own adherents, then the Church will flourish as an authoritarian entity. The members who constitute the bulk of the Church membership will continue to exist in an atmosphere of subordination. This antiquated and erroneous Augustinian mentality stifles the Church and ensures that any application of John XXIII's *Agiornamento* is an unlikely occurrence.

5.9 Nudity

"And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed" (Gen 2:25). So Scripture tells us that nudity was normal and accepted. It was only after the "fall" that Adam and Eve became aware of their nakedness and experienced shame because of their naked bodies. "Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they

were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves” (Gen 3:7).

An interesting story, no doubt, is the myth of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. This depiction of the juxtaposition of nudity and shame has affected not only some religious bodies but has permeated virtually the entire world so that nakedness becomes at once dirty and sinful. The Augustinian view of the body as evil and sex as a necessary evil, to be used only for the purpose of procreation, has affected the Roman Catholic Church since its beginning 2000 years ago. Dennis Craig Smith in his *Naked Fear*, suggests that the inherent fear of sex has infiltrated the Catholic morality code and has been sustained since the time of Christ. Smith writes:

Whether it was Peter in 42 C.E., or Linus in 67 C.E, or ... Pius I in 140 C.E., or Innocent I in 401 C.E, or Pius X in 1903, the head of the Roman Catholic Church has, since its inception, held sovereignty over moral codes and dictated standards of behaviour for millions of individuals, members of the largest single body of Christians in the world (Smith, 2010:42).

Jesus, on the cross, was not clothed in a loincloth as pictures and crucifixes portray him. On the contrary, the Roman soldiers deliberately ensured that those whom they wished to put to death by crucifixion would endure, as well as the torture, the ignominy of personal nakedness, for the sexual organs were quite visible. But since the Church is so concerned about sexuality and the normal reactions to sexual excitement (it is relevant to recall the Augustinian equation of an erection as an affront to God) it tends to defame any sexual awareness or reactions with a sense of evil.

The very concept of nudity has been considered by Church Fathers as vile, in that nudity discloses those “secret” bodily parts which are included in human anatomy. Smith, in his *Naked Fear*, reminds us that both the male and female anatomies share at least one physical characteristic: both possess nipples. He asks, “Isn’t the nipple of a man and a woman anatomically the same, except on average, for size?” (Smith, 2010: 21). But we are reminded, also, of the unjustifiable and erroneous conclusion that the

woman is the source of evil in the world and it is she who tempts the man, causing him to sin.

In the darkest areas of Africa, South America, or Hawaii, the natives lived with naked impunity, visualizing the body as wholesome and normal. There was no need to conceal the genitals of either sex since the body was not perceived as evil nor were the sexual activities in which they engaged viewed as improper, unlawful, or sinful. That, however, was prior to the arrival of the Roman Catholic missionaries, who quickly “enlightened” the natives, impressing on their “heathen” minds the myth of the evil of both body and bodily functions. These “savages” had to be indoctrinated with the hard truth of sexuality: the body is evil; the exhibition of the naked body in real life is sinful; and such depiction brings shame, guilt, and fear, attributes which are necessary for the proper development of humanity and, as a corollary, for the membership in the Roman Catholic Church. Smith asks an intriguing question: “Why is our nakedness acceptable in art but not in the flesh?” (Smith, 2010: viii). Perhaps this question should be asked of those who may affirm this absurdity. There seems, however, to be no logical reason for the discrepancy and thus no answer is conceivable.

The natives in Hawaii, compelled to cover their nakedness, prevented from removing their clothes, fell prey to the illnesses brought by those who had come to save them, and, having no immunity, died by the hundreds. When they became drenched with rain, for example, and, unable to properly dry off owing to the ban on removing their clothing, they suffered the affects of diseases such as pneumonia, whereby scores of individuals died. Better in the mind of the missionaries to be clothed and dead than to be sinfully naked and alive.

In Elizabethan England, ladies of stature often dressed for the evening with one breast exposed. There was no need to cover the nipple or the areola, those parts which are anathema in contemporary society, even in the “dens of iniquity” in which young women dance for the pleasure of the male audience. The display of the female breast was a matter of custom for the elite but this partial nudity was unlawful for the

peasantry. Just as the natives in the jungles and paradise-like regions of the world were compelled to cover their nakedness, so too were the lower classes of females in France and England prohibited from such exhibitions which became lewd if performed by any but the upper classes of nobility. A breast of nobility – acceptable; a breast of the peasantry – condemned.

There lies, however, an exception to this rule, an exception which seems to convey duplicity in the minds of the modern world. When a popular geographical magazine portrays a naked “savage” in photography, the photo is accepted with little hint of indecency. These photos depict “savages”, after all, and so are accepted as integral to their inferior status. But if the photos have been viewed as inconsequential to the majority of adults in contemporary society, they have proven, as well, to be excellent sources of interest to countless numbers of young males who secretly study the photos with an interest which can only be envied by teachers who attempt to impart contemporary morsels of learning.

Sex and the sexual parts of the body have been held in contempt by the Church throughout Christian history. It is the most certain of concepts by which the Church can inspire fear, loathing, and control. We are permitted to watch television shows which portray murder, mayhem, and war, and vandalism of all kinds. But we must avoid viewing any explicit love scenes wherein active sexuality is portrayed.

Killing is acceptable but love-making is not. In both cases the human body is addressed, but the logic in this thinking is somewhat obscure. The Church teaches that virtually all sexual activity is sinful – save for procreation – and that the body parts which come into play are somehow dirty.

5.10 Celibacy

The Church denies its priests the privilege of marriage in order that they may dedicate themselves entirely to fulfilling the office of priest without the encumbrances associated with the married status. This discipline, however, was originally imposed by

the Church authority in order to ensure that any property over which a priest had control would not be bequeathed to any children but would remain the property of the Church. Michael Crosby in his *The Dysfunctional Church* notes this fact. Crosby writes:

The imposition of celibacy on the clergy would also stop decisively the passing of benefices from father to son. Instead, the power to pass on clerical power would be in the hands of another family, that controlled by the bishops and the papacy (Crosby, 1991: 72).

Such an obstacle does not exist today, however, so there is no logical reason for this enduring decree. In fact, although some members of the Church hierarchy blame the clerical abuse of minors by priests on factors such as homosexuality, the Jews, modernity, and other unfounded concepts, the real reason lies much deeper and is more closely associated with the demand for clerical celibacy.

The insistence by Church authority on mandatory celibacy denies the priest a normal and natural sexual life; this law ensures control of the priest's life by the Vatican. This resonates with overpowering authority, full compliance, complete obedience, and uncontested control. But this mandated clerical state is possible only because the clerics allow themselves to be controlled by their bishops and by Rome itself. It is as though the clerics wish to be controlled, wish to be treated as children, wish to defer the responsibility over their own lives to those in authority over them. Michael Crosby, in his *The Dysfunctional Church*, states this premise quite adequately. He writes:

The leaders' obsession with control is futile unless it is paralleled by the ministers' and members' equal obsession about being controlled or trying to change that control (Crosby, 1991: 203).

Donald Cozzens in his *Freeing Celibacy* discusses an exception to the apparent general acceptance of priests to the mandate for celibacy. He writes that while leading a workshop for Irish missionaries,

... mostly priests and sisters whose ministry took them to countries in Central and South America and to Africa, they spoke of the widespread lack of compliance to the law of obligatory celibacy – most of it undisguised, unhidden. Moreover they claimed that the practice of clerical concubinage is commonly

accepted by parishioners. Nor were bishops necessarily to be excluded from this practice (Cozzens, 2006: 50).

Despite this possible anomaly, probably the majority of the clergy do abide by their vows of perpetual chastity. Perhaps it is that law itself which is at fault. But when bishops are too timid to demand collegiality from Rome, there is little chance for lowly clerics to demand emancipation from forced celibacy. A cleric may very well expect that in his choice of the clerical state he will automatically resolve any matters concerning personal sexuality. Lisa Miller, in the February 2015 edition of *Newsweek*, reports on a written statement by a Roman Catholic nun, Marie McDonald. Miller writes:

In 1998 a Roman Catholic nun named Marie McDonald wrote a brief and painful summary of her concerns to her colleagues and superiors. It was labeled "strictly confidential." She was worried, she said, about the sexual abuse of nuns by Roman Catholic priests in Africa (Miller, 2015: 1).

This disconcerting disclosure seems to support the comments by Cozzens above and is a further indication for the need for a relaxation of the celibacy rule. It reinforces the idea, as well, that the vocation to the priesthood is not necessarily a vocation to the celibate state. The mandating of the two vocations as a single state is to denaturalize the concepts of both priestly status and sexuality. Tom Harpur, in his *Always on Sunday*, makes several observations regarding the futility and inefficiency of the Roman insistence on clerical celibacy. He notes several specific facts which emphasize this outdated and futile position upon which the Vatican demands obedience. His remarks seem to ring strikingly true:

(Enforced celibacy) is not working.... Compulsory celibacy for priests is not a core Catholic doctrine anyway.... Celibacy is hurting the ministry and mission of the Church.... Married clergy would bring to the Church a vast store of training and dedication, as well as the kind of insight into human relationships that can only be gained by personal experience (Harpur, 1988: 111-113).

How do we know that celibacy is not working? We need only consider the numerous examples of clerical misconduct as well as conduct which might be seen as a fulfilment of the natural expression of sexuality but which is considered, by the Church,

nevertheless, as misconduct. Not that the Church does much to chastise or punish those clerics who abuse children or act on their sexuality according to normal human expression.

The Church does admit that the rule of celibacy is not an integral factor involving faith. It is merely a rule of order by which the hierarchy controls its clerics. Although a priest provides, as part of his commitment to the clerical state, a promise to live according to the principle of celibacy imposed on him in conjunction with Holy Orders, he has accepted this requirement, perhaps, believing, as noted above, that Holy Orders will somehow extricate him from the inclination to sexual expression which surges within every human being. But the charism of sexual abstinence has been manifestly disregarded. Children have been sexually abused, priests have entertained sexual privileges normally expressed through marriage, priests have engaged in homosexual behaviour, and priests have, probably, appeased their sexual appetites through the normal expression of sexuality through masturbation. Nonetheless, the Church insists on compulsory celibacy, knowingly participating in the perpetuation of the myth of clerical sexual abstinence.

Enforced celibacy does nothing to enhance the effectiveness of clerics. The ministry of the Church requires that every member of the Church community receives the support and guidance which is provided for its members. But when one segment of the population is refused this succour, then a Christ-like ministry to the people is devastatingly lacking. The victims of clerical sexual abuse have been abandoned in the un-Christ-like behaviour of Church officials in demanding secrecy, in seduction through bribery, and in the disregard for the mental, physical, social, and spiritual life of the victims. But the priests themselves, men who have been denied their natural inclination to live their sexuality in committed, honourable, and honest relationships, are also left in a state of isolation, denied their innate need for fulfilment through sexual intimacy

5.11 Summation

It becomes obvious that the Roman Catholic view of sex is based on Augustinian reflection and philosophy. Virtually every use of the sexual faculty is sinful with the exception of sexual intercourse performed by a married couple with the main purpose ensuring the intention of fecundation. We have seen how both gluttony and lust are comparable in that both are necessary for the preservation and continuance of life. Pure sexual love is seen in the *Song of Songs*; the Augustinian anachronistic view of sexuality has become a hallmark of the Roman Catholic understanding of sexuality, concepts which have been adhered to even in relatively modern times under the papacies, for example, of Leo XIII, Pius XI, Paul VI, John Paul II, and Benedict XVI; and the concept of nudity has been explored beginning with the Garden of Eden fable, the crucifixion of Christ, and contemporary acceptance of nudity in art as opposed to nudity in life. With the papacy of Francis, the hope for a new era of appreciation for human sexuality may overcome the previous millennia of Augustinian negativity. However, to continue the discussion of the Church's contemporary pessimistic attitude, we shall consider in the following chapter how the Church's fear of sexuality reaches its pinnacle of phobic alarm as it encounters the reality of sexual orientation.

6.0 Homophobia

6.1 Introduction

The perfection of the effect demonstrates the perfection of the cause since a greater power produces a more perfect effect. But God is the most perfect agent. It follows that things created by him obtain perfection from him. To detract, therefore, from the perfection of creatures is to detract from the perfection of divine power (Thomas Aquinas: ScG, III, 69, Vol. III, p. 96, n. 2445) (Guindon, 1986: vii).

The above quotation from *The Sexual Creators* by André Guindon represents a definitive statement by a Doctor of the Church regarding the perfection of the created world and life within it. This chapter will pursue that concept with regard to homosexuality and the homophobia which infects the Church, whereby it insinuates that the perfection of God's creation is somehow bereft of that perfection.

Historically, homosexual actions have been seen as the vilest of sins. The Church, as has society in general, has viewed homosexual orientation as a chosen way of life: nurture rather than nature. The apparent misunderstanding of Scripture by many today would consider the sin of Sodom a sin equated with homosexuality rather than a sin of inhospitality. St. Paul's views on any kind of sexual expression were based on his belief that the "second coming" was immanent, and that mankind should observe celibacy.

Biblical liaisons are explored in this chapter, with specific reference to the love to which John alludes when he speaks in his Gospel of the "one whom Jesus loved", Ruth and Naomi, and David and Jonathan. In Early Christianity, any sexual relations were viewed as conducive to sinfulness, and the views of Aquinas seem anachronistic in view of contemporary knowledge. Finally, the Church has condemned homosexual acts as sinful and has considered both the act and the sexual orientation itself "intrinsically disordered". The analysis will begin with a discussion of the concept of nature as it pertains to homosexuality.

6.2 Nature

After all, attitudes are much more difficult to change than laws are, and the progress that has been made ... has actually made it clear, fundamentally, what we are fighting against are attitudes (Blumenfeld, ed. 1992: 63).

This quote from Blumenfeld's book entitled *Homophobia* expresses directly that attitudes are at the forefront of this unnatural perspective. Although the Roman Catholic Church is obsessed with sexuality in general, fearing that natural and inherent force in mankind, its draconian fear of homosexuality represents, perhaps, the apex of its unwarranted phobias. According to Byrne Fone in his *Homophobia: A History*, in the eleventh century a cleric by the name of Peter Damien attempted to convince Pope Leo IX that "sodomites" should be harshly punished. Leo did not acquiesce to Damien's demands in their entirety but, "in time, however, Damien's assertion that sodomy is worse than all other sexual sins became a commonplace of canon law" (Fone, 2000: 136). Fone continues:

When Ivo of Chartres (1041-1116) assembled his collection of canon law, he echoed Augustine's concept of unnatural intercourse, asserting that "to act against nature is always unlawful, and beyond doubt more flagrant and shameful than to sin by a natural use in fornication or adultery (Fone, 2000: 136).

The Church's irrational fear sanctions lesbians and gays for acting on their very natures, natures which have been bestowed on them without any concurrence on their part. John Boswell in his *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* continues this theme. He writes, concerning Augustine:

Although he [Augustine] refers to it [homosexual behaviour] as "against nature," he leaves no doubt that he means the individual human natures of the persons involved in such activity, who "corrupt and pervert their natures" (*corrumpendo ac pervertendo naturam suam*)" (Boswell, 1980: 151).

Nowadays there seems to be psychological consensus that homosexuality, like heterosexuality, is a normal condition extant within the psyche and the physical organism, a condition with which these persons have been endowed. Bishop Spong

speaks directly to this misunderstanding of homosexuality as an unnatural condition. In his *A New Christianity for a New World* he writes:

Those in the Christian Right still define homosexuality as a choice made by people who are mentally ill or morally depraved. [The Roman Catholic Church agrees at least with the latter argument.] ... This mentality is countered by the overwhelming medical, scientific, and psychological data, all of which suggest that homosexuality is more like left-handedness. It is a part of the very *being* of a minority of the human family and therefore it is something to which one awakens, not something one chooses to be (Spong, 2001:14).

The aphorism which refers to homosexuality as that which has been integrated into the individual through “nature, not nurture” is abundantly clear. But the Church insists on plaguing the gay person with platitudes about hating the sin while loving the sinner, determined in its misunderstanding of sexuality to refuse any recognition of the gay person’s natural right to enjoy sexual expression according to that nature with which he (or she) has been blessed. Julia Macarthur speaks to this very real phenomenon. In the *Chronicle Journal* she writes:

None of us, no matter what our sexual orientation or gender identity is, can change these things about ourselves, nor can we change these things about each other.... Talking about the diversity of human sexuality and gender benefits everyone. It reduces the amount of fear, violence, and hatred in the world, and it gives people who may feel otherwise isolated an understanding that they are not alone (Macarthur, 2015: A3).

It now seems acceptable in much of contemporary society – at least in the scientific and medical communities (and in some religious communities as well) – that homosexual orientation is not an acquired orientation but one which has truly existed at least from the time of birth and perhaps even within the womb from the very moment of conception. To coerce an individual to forgo all sexual activities is, in my view, to demean that person’s very nature and existence, seriously eroding that person’s mental, social, and personal being. John McNeil, author of *The Church and the Homosexual*, updated his original understanding of sexuality and procreation as explained by Aquinas. The author justifies his position by noting that Aquinas’ position is not supported by current scientific knowledge. He says:

I would, however, disagree today with the statement I made on page 168, that “a life of abstinence from all sexual experience ... remains a good prudential choice for the homosexual in today’s society.” The vast majority of people living out a life of abstinence do so for pathological reasons. Many have interiorized the homophobia of the surrounding culture and the Church and as a consequence hate and fear their sexual feelings (McNeil, 1993: 204).

In *The Future Church*, John Allen relates how Cardinal Arinze from Nigeria, speaking at Georgetown University, equated virtually every form of sexuality as deficient in one way or another. He said, “(The family) is scorned and banalized by pornography, desecrated by fornication and adultery, (and) mocked by homosexuality” (Allen, 2009: 24). Allen continues saying that “His (Arinze’s) apparent comparison of homosexuality to pornography and other ills prompted a letter of protest signed by over seventy members of the faculty (of Georgetown University)” (Allen, 2009: 24). In other words, many of the members of the faculty determined that the speaker’s vilification of homosexuality was not only offensive but in error. James Carroll, in *Practicing Catholic*, also explores the theme of denigrating homosexuality, equating it with sins such as that of pederasty. Carroll writes:

There is a difference between pederasty and homosexuality.... The Vatican has tried to blame homosexual priests for the problem, but ... we have seen repeatedly how sexual totalitarianism is a main mode of clerical power (Carroll, 2009: 230).

Later in this same book, Carroll sums up the Vatican’s authoritarianism in this regard by introducing an elegant but forceful adaptation of an aphorism attributed to Lord Acton. He notes that, “Absolute claims come to be enforced absolutely” (Carroll, 2009: 278). Once more, *Roma locuta est, causa finita est*.

6.3 Scripture

Scriptural passages from both the Jewish Bible and the New Testament make references to same-sex attractions, which, judged by fundamentalist Christians and ultra-conservatives in various communions including the Roman Catholic Church, condemn to hell those who are sexually active with someone of the same sex. But in

these instances, the interpretation of the passages is based on misconceptions which usually condemn those who practice active homosexual relations. Some passages from the Old and the New Testaments follow with interpretations which seem more closely to represent a definitive argument.

In Genesis 1:28, Adam and Eve are commanded to “be fruitful and multiply”. One may recall, however, that the entire concept of the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve, the tree of knowledge, the talking serpent, and God walking with Adam in the cool of the evening is strictly a mythological representation of what our early ancestors manufactured as a method by which they could attempt to understand their origin and the place of God and religion in their lives. (Some religious sects might disagree with the term mythological in this context.) Since, according to the story, there were only two people, and since they were of opposite sexes, then homosexuality was a non-issue. According to the story, God did not tell them to enjoy their multiplication exercises either, but neither did God suggest that they should not enjoy the experience, an enjoyment which is natural to the experience of sexual intercourse but which the Catholic Church has frowned upon until relatively recently. In any case, no mention of homosexuality was proclaimed.

The entire story of Sodom and Gomorrah is, again, a mythical representation of natural occurrences by which the cities were eventually destroyed.

The men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house; and they called to Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, so that we may know them” (Gen 19: 4-5).

But let us for a moment acquiesce to the fundamentalist claim and allow that the facts as presented in the Bible represent historical events. Here, once more, the usual interpretation is faulty. Let us examine the words of Scripture as well as the times in which the “event” took place. The expression “to know someone” in the biblical sense means to engage in sexual relations with another person. But, since the would-be

perpetrators of the act were men and since those whom they intended to violate were men, then we are talking about a homosexual experience.

But it seems that this is where the error in interpretation is usually made. It was not the sexual act which concerned Lot, since he offered his daughters to the townsmen, perfectly at ease with the potential sexual assault which Lot knew would follow, but the fact that these men were his guests and to allow them to be mistreated in any way by the townsmen would be an act of inhospitality. Better in the mind of Lot that his daughters should be violated for the sexual pleasure of the townsmen than that his guests should be treated inhospitably. Just as the very concept of Lot's decision to offer up his daughters is remote from contemporary sensibilities, so too was the concept of homosexuality then considered unlawful or sinful. The concept of sexual orientation was unappreciated in that culture so that the act of defiling the visitors would not have been considered a homosexual act as it might be today but would have been an encroachment on the laws of civility and hospitality. This idea, however, may be challenged by theologians of various faiths. Mary Douglas in her *Purity and Danger* demonstrates that the rules laid down in Leviticus are assertions of the regularity and consistency which God required of his people. Any departure from the norm would be an anomaly. For example, "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination [perversion]" (Lev 18: 22). Douglas writes, "The word 'perversion' is a significant mistranslation of the rare Hebrew word *tebhel*, which has as its meaning mixing or confusion" (Douglas, 1966: 54). In this understanding of the demand that Lot provide them with his visitors for their pleasure would not be considered an act of homosexuality but an act of "perversion" in which the normal heterosexual expression would be violated by the sexual assault on Lot's male guests.

Another interpretation suggests that the homosexual act was condemned not as such but that heterosexual men who committed the act were at fault. Garry Wills in *Papal Sin* notes that several authors have come to this conclusion. He writes:

The major claim by Bailey, (*Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition*), Boswell, (*Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*), and McNeil, (*The Church and the Homosexual*) was that Saint Paul's condemnations of homosexuality were not directed at the homosexual orientation itself, an "inversion" not yet discovered, but against heterosexuals committing the "perversion" of homosexual acts. Biblical scholars remain unconvinced on this point (Wills, 2000: 196).

In the Old Testament two statements are of relative importance here. "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination" (Lev 18: 22), and "If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination" (Lev 20: 13). In these two instances, the concept of sexual orientation was unknown. The sin which was considered an abomination was the failure of using their sexual faculties for the purpose of begetting children in order to ensure the continuation of the race. This, too, may be challenged by some theologians, but for the purpose of this dissertation I will accept this interpretation. C. M. Ward, in the May 2014 edition of the *Prairie Messenger*, writes regarding the interpretation of Scripture:

Though not all will agree ... there is ample room within the Christian faith to question whether certain passages were meant literally or are to be taken as allegory, metaphor, or simply poetry. There is no sin in doing so, in my mind ... so long as a person is seeking the knowledge of a closer understanding of God. ... If that life [the life one chooses] is one of love and compassion, outgoing concern and sacrifice for others, and the genuine seeking of the closer walk with the Creator, then there is little to argue over how a passage is read and construed (Ward, 2014: 8).

Just as the use of the sexual faculties in a way which ignored the need to foster offspring, the many laws in vogue at the time are not considered applicable to contemporary society. Some of these are as follows: "You shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed; nor shall you put on a garment made of two different materials" (Lev 19:19); and from Deuteronomy, "A woman shall not wear a man's apparel, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment" (Deut 22: 5); and "You shall not wear clothes made of wool and linen woven together" (Deut 22: 11). Nevertheless, contemporary fundamentalist society in general and the Roman Catholic Church in particular still

continue to select from a list of Scriptural prohibitions those practices which involve the sexual faculties.

Molech was an ancient false god whom the Israelites were forbidden by God to worship. The penalty for anyone who offered his offspring to Molech was condemnation to death by stoning. If a man were to commit adultery, both he and his partner were to be put to death. If a man were to marry a woman as well as her mother, all of them were to be burned to death. If a man were to have sexual relations with an animal then both he and the animal would be put to death. If a man were to have sexual relations with his wife while she is having her period then both of them would be cut off from their people. All of these commandments purportedly from God are found in detail in Leviticus 20: 2-18. Other proscriptions, also from Leviticus 19 are: “you shall not round off the hair on your temples or mar the edges of your beard. You shall not ... tattoo any marks upon you” (Lev: 27-28).

It seems evident here that to trim your sideburns is an offence against God, to have tattoos applied to your body is also taboo, to plant two kinds of seed together is forbidden, as it is unlawful to wear any garment which is made of two materials. If all of these taboos were avoided for the purpose of not offending God, then, perhaps, it might be reasonable to consider homosexuality unlawful. But, even though these non-sexual prohibitions are not considered unlawful in our contemporary society, the diatribe against homosexuality is a dominant passion within Christianity in general and within the Roman Catholic Church in particular – as well as in Islam. Scripture, as we have seen, mentions the penalty associated with various acts of sexual expression. For example, as noted above, Leviticus tells us that “If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death” (Lev 20: 13).

6.4 Homosexual Liaisons

Biblical sources describe several relationships between individuals, relationships which may be identified as homosexual attractions. It is never clear whether or not these

relationships were sexual, but neither is there any proof that they were not. According to Scripture, a special love did exist between Jesus and one of the disciples, probably John, and noted only in the Gospel of John.

6.4.1 Jesus and John

These occurrences are, “One of his disciples – the one whom Jesus loved – was reclining next to him [at table, which was the custom]” (John 13:23); “When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside ...” (John 19: 26); “So she (Mary Magdalene) ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them ...” (John 20: 2); “That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, ‘It is the Lord’” (John 21: 7); and “Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; he was the one who had reclined next to Jesus at the supper” (John 21: 20). I do not suggest that this was a homosexual relationship between Jesus and John but, again according to Scripture, a very deep love did exist between them. John McNeil corroborates this view in his *The Church and the Homosexual*. He writes:

Christ had an extraordinary ability to meet the individual as a unique person.... Christ manifested the ability to encounter the person with understanding and love.... The point I am trying to make here is, obviously, not that Christ was a homosexual – any more than he was a heterosexual in the usual significance that the cultural context gives that designation – but, rather, that he was an extraordinarily full human person and an extraordinarily free human being (McNeil, 1993: 146-7).

The point to be made here is neither that Jesus was or was not a homosexual but that he had the capacity to love others unconditionally and with extreme depth. But whether or not his sexual attractions were for different or same sex persons, is immaterial since in the minds of many today both different-sex and same-sex relationships are normal, genuine, and holy. The problem transpires when the Church – and other sources – understand same-sex attractions and practices as abnormal, sinful, and “intrinsically disordered”. This seems to suggest that what God created was not, in fact, entirely good. Raymond-Jean Frontain is genuinely appreciative of the varieties of sexual experience. In *Gay and Lesbian Literary Heritage*, he writes:

The relationships of David and Jonathan, of Jesus and John the Beloved Disciple, and of Ruth and Naomi have authorized same-sex relationships. Indeed, the Bible has proved to be one of the richest and most creative sources of challenge to the gay and lesbian literary imagination, as well as one of the most powerful tools of self-validation (Frontain, 1995: 92).

In instances of other same-sex attractions depicted in the Bible examples of celebrated love extant between two people indicate an extremely close attraction and attachment to one another. Explorations of these instances follow.

6.4.2 Ruth and Naomi

Ruth, the daughter-in-law of Naomi, after the death of Naomi's husband and son, refused to leave Naomi. The older woman suggested that Ruth should return to her own former clan. Scripture identifies the love and loyalty between the two as Ruth responds to Naomi's exhortations:

Do not press me to leave you
Or to turn back from following you!
Where you go, I will go,
Where you lodge, I will lodge;
Your people shall be my people,
And your God my God.
Where you die I will die –
There will I be buried.
May the Lord do thus and so to me,
And more as well,
If even death parts me from you! (Ruth 1:16-17).

Whether or not the affection between the two women was of a sexual nature, there is little doubt about the affection between them. Certainly the affection was of great depth since "Ruth clung to her." Frontain discusses the possible homoerotic nature of the relationship between the two women. He writes:

Ruth's refusal to desert her mother-in-law Naomi during her worst distress – and particularly her oath that "wither thou goest, I will go: and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God" (Ruth 1: 16) – makes The Book of Ruth the biblical narrative most immediately available to lesbian interpretation. Jeannette Foster, for example, reads the Ruth narrative as "a masterly portrait of a somewhat passive young woman, twice playing the heterosexual role with success, but dominated by another

love at least as compelling as that for the men she successively married” ... The Book of Ruth is so touching *because* of its subtle depiction of a “devotion” seemingly “unconscious of its own deeper significance” (Frontain, 1995:97).

Frontain’s analysis of the relationship between the two women is interesting in that it neither acclaims nor denies the possible sexual attraction. The point is that a deep love did exist between the two.

6.4.3 David and Jonathan

Numerous writers have written about the love suggested between David and Jonathan.

Colin Spencer in his *Homosexuality in History* writes:

The most ecstatic prose of the Old Testament is contained in the Song of Solomon and in the description of the love shared by David and Jonathan. The Song is a hymn to sensual sexuality, and transcends gender. Later priestly editors may have deleted the sex from Saul’s love for David and his for Jonathan, but they could not erase it all (Spencer, 1995: 63).

Saul, the king of Israel, became jealous of the successful exploits of David and became angry with his own son Jonathan, who refused to do anything against David whom he loved.

The soul of Jonathan was bound to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.... Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. Jonathan stripped himself of the robe he was wearing, and gave it to David (1 Sam 18: 1, 3-4).

When Jonathan stripped himself in the presence of David, since no undergarments would have been worn in that era and clime, Jonathan became naked, an act which would probably not have been done normally unless there was a sexual relationship between the two. Although the text does not state explicitly that sexual relations occurred between the two, it seems possible that it did. Later when Saul planned to kill David, the two lovers met realizing that in order to avoid being put to death, it was necessary for David to leave Jonathan.

David rose from beside the stone heap and prostrated himself with his face to the ground. He bowed three times, and they kissed each other, and wept with each other; David wept the more (1 Sam 20: 41).

The addition of the phrase, “David wept the more”, could be a euphemism which suggests that when they kissed, David experienced a sensual arousal. After their parting, Jonathan was killed in battle. When the news came to David he was greatly distressed over the death of his lover and intoned a lamentation in honor of his beloved:

I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan;
Greatly beloved were you to me;
Your love to me was wonderful,
Passing the love of women (2 Sam: 26).

John Boswell in his *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* writes:

Increased familiarity with and tolerance of gay people and their feelings by persons who were not themselves gay is nowhere more poignantly illustrated than in the use of the theme of David and Jonathan by Peter Abelard.... In his sixth *planctus* he explored with great sensitivity and feeling the nature of the love between the two men. Whether or not he intended to portray the relationship as sexual, he certainly used erotic vocabulary to invest it with pathos. [A portion of the poem follows]:

More than a brother to me, Jonathan,
One in soul with me ...
How gladly would I die and be buried with you!
Since love may do nothing greater than this,
And since to live after you
Is to die forever:
Half a soul is not enough for life....
I can still my lute,
But not my sobs and tears: ... (Boswell, 1980: 238).

Boswell adds a final thought concerning the love between David and Jonathan. He writes:

The love between David and Jonathan ... became the biblical counterpart of the pagan Ganymede as a symbol for passionate attachment between persons of the same gender (Boswell, 1980: 252).

The situations discussed above concerning possible homosexual liaisons suggest that the Bible itself has been a basis for explicit homoerotic literature throughout the ages and has introduced a depth of conflict between liberal and conservative elements

within religious communities. Nevertheless, in 2 Samuel, the author wrote that the love between the two “surpassed the love of women” as noted above. Frontain notes a positive result of this confrontation between liberals and conservatives. He writes:

But whether the Bible is seen as promoting the acceptance or the repression of homosexuality, its most important function historically has been to place homosexuality into discourse and, by its ambivalence and seemingly conflicting traditions, to keep it under discussion (Frontain, 1995: 100).

Frontain’s analysis seems a fitting and responsible way in which to conclude this section of this thesis, yet a mention of how the Greeks and Romans viewed same-sex attractions and practice is worth noting. These civilizations were less restrictive and condemning than the Church. These early Mediterranean societies normally condoned active homosexuality, perhaps considering the sexual activity of homosexuals as unmanly but rarely resorting to either punishment or rejection. Still, a distinction was made between the active and the passive player in the sexual exercise. The former was deemed superior to the latter, who was considered somewhat effeminate. In battle, however, both partners were viewed in positive terms. The Romans had a “lovers’ battalion” in which each of the partners fought fiercely both to keep his lover safe and perhaps to prove himself courageous to his partner. *Homosexuality in Greece and Rome*, 2.14, quotes Plutarch (*Life of Pelopidas*, 18-19), who writes:

But a battalion joined together by erotic love cannot be destroyed or broken: its members stand firm beside one another in times of danger, lovers and beloveds alike motivated by a sense of shame in the presence of the other (David Leitas, trans., 2003, 18-19).

If homosexuality is a thorn in the flesh for religious fundamentalists, it was not a problem for the warriors of ancient Greece and Rome.

6.5 Early Christianity

In early Christianity, sexual relations were sometimes frowned upon since they were considered conducive to sinfulness. Christ had died and the members of the Church expected his imminent return. In this regard Paul cautioned his listeners:

For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from fornication; that each

one of you know how to control your own body in holiness and honor, not with lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; ... For God did not call us to impurity but in holiness. Therefore whoever rejects this rejects not human authority but God, who also gave his Holy Spirit to you (I Thess 4: 2-8).

This is an interesting teaching by Paul, a teaching which the Church has too often upheld as a means of becoming more spiritual. What the Church seems to forget, however, is that Paul was living under the delusion that Christ's return was imminent, an unrealistic fact even then since Jesus is reported to have established the fact that the Kingdom of Heaven resides within each of the disciples. The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible interprets Jesus' teaching by having him say, "For, in fact, the kingdom of God is within you" (Lk 17: 21).

Sexual orientation was neither understood nor even conceived. Thus, for any legitimacy in sexual relations, only that which emanated from the relationship between legitimate spouses could be deemed acceptable. The Catholic Church has significantly extended this concept with the additional requirement that intercourse would be practiced only for the purpose of procreation. Since homosexual relations could not meet these stringent standards, then such sexual activity was condemned. Byrne Fone addresses this issue in his *Homophobia: A History*. He quotes from Pseudo-Phocylides, first century B.C.E. He writes:

Jewish writers increasingly advocated celibacy, asceticism, and sexual abstinence, even going so far as to rewrite the Ten Commandments to prohibit both non-procreative sex with one's wife and homosexual behaviour (Fone, 2000: 87).

In the early years of the Church the ideals of Stoicism were prevalent in many areas of society. Within some factions of the Church this meant renunciation, either totally or partially, of sexual relations, an idea which led to total abstinence of intercourse even for the purpose of procreation. Some young men, committed to Stoic philosophy, freely offered themselves for medical castration. Matthew alludes to this practice. He writes concerning Jesus' words to his disciples:

For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others, and there are eunuchs who have

made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let anyone accept this who can (Mt 19: 12).

The pagan custom of continence prevailed, not only in Early Christianity, but it has been prescribed by the Church Fathers throughout the centuries, and even in contemporary Catholicism is the concept of abstinence from sexual relations held in high esteem. Only since Vatican II has the Church acknowledged that pleasure derived from sexual gratification is legitimate but still only as a corollary of the intent to procreate. Gratification through homosexual relationships is always viewed as deficient and sinful.

In the May 2014 edition of the *Prairie Messenger*, C. M. Ward writes:

When I speak of legalism I talk from first-hand experience, having known the clutches of a very controlling and manipulative church for over two decades. This approach to spirituality, that of an authoritarian body or individual seeking to maintain utter control over the minds of the followers, is one of the greatest roadblocks to God there is.... It actually hides what these souls need behind a façade of fear and the threats of punishment (Ward, May, 2014: 8).

Ward's comments are relevant not only here in this discussion of homosexuality, but also in the discussion of the nature of authoritarianism as discussed in Chapter Two of this dissertation.

6.6 Sin

From the sixth century through the ninth, the papacy attempted, with considerable success, to enforce its central rule over all Christendom. In the matter of what it considered sexual sins, the Church developed a number of penitentials. These penitentials prescribed for priests both the methods of hearing confessions and what was considered the relevant punishment or penance to be attributed to each sin. The confessor relied on a number of psalms in order to evoke the confession and to ascribe appropriate penalties. Sin was considered a serious illness of the soul which required confession and penance, and homosexual sins were considered more harmful than any other.

But, we may ask, is homosexuality ever wrong? As with heterosexuality, it is wrong when the action involves degradation, enforcement, coercion, or enslavement of a child or an adult, actions which are not only inappropriate in contemporary civilized society as it has been in the past, but is both unlawful and immoral. It is not the act of homosexual genital contact which bears the mark of iniquity; it is the unjustified infliction of harm on others. This concept seems to be a viable one in contemporary society.

Some writers and theologians have seen homosexuality as an affront to the purity laws extant in Israelite society and described in detail in Deuteronomy 22. In that vein Marcus Borg in his *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time* reminds us that:

The shattering of purity boundaries by both Jesus and Paul should also apply to the purity code's perception of homosexuality. Homosexual behaviour should therefore be evaluated by the same criteria as heterosexual behaviour (Borg, 1994: 59).

It appears that, in the view of the Church, homosexuality has been placed in a category of its own: sinful, unnatural, and inherently disordered. The Church objects not only to most forms of sexuality but places homosexuality at the apex of its disdain. In the view of the Church homosexuality is the most heinous of sins. But the prophet Ezekiel suggests another view regarding the Sodom affair. He writes to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, chastising them for their sins which are greater, he says, than the sins of Sodom:

This was the guilt of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy. They were haughty, and did abominable things.... Samaria has not committed half your sins; you have committed more abominations than they, and have made your sisters appear righteous by all the abominations that you have committed (Ezek 16: 49-51).

In reading the above quotation and the entire passages which relate to the three cities of Jerusalem, Samaria, and Sodom, Ezekiel is using the names of the cities to criticize the inhabitants. It is obvious that he refers to sins of inhospitality as the most serious crime of the three cities, noting that Sodom bears the least of the guilt. Nor does he

mention or make any reference to homosexuality. Defining homosexuality as a sin and attributing it to Sodom seems to be an invention of Christianity, an invention which has been responsible for countless years of injustice perpetrated on homosexuals for claiming their natural essence.

The Psalms encouraged the penitent to contemplate the joy inherent in forgiveness, and inspired the sinner to beg God for the healing which only God could provide. The Psalms encouraged sinners to discern their affliction and to beg for cleansing and forgiveness. The psalms inspired sinners to recognize their complete dependence on their creator and benefactor and encouraged them to aspire to Divine Redemption, recognizing that their enemies were not only their companions, but, even more specifically, their own explicit thoughts and actions which had led them into a state of sinfulness.

These penitentials required the confessor to probe deeply into the sexual sins of the penitent, requiring that the penitent relate to him virtually every aspect of the sin in question. This method of interrogation required the penitent to indulge in a revisiting of every sexual sin of which he was accusing himself, be it a thought, a word, or an act, and it required him to discuss the nature of each sin, the number of times each was committed, and whether it involved a solitary action or actions performed with others. But no matter the kind of sexual sin committed or its frequency, nothing was deemed so repugnant as sins involving homosexuality.

Colin Spencer, in his *Homosexuality in History*, provides an insight into the penitentials in use between the end of the sixth century and the beginning of the eleventh. He writes:

... a new branch of Christian moral literature came into being – the penitentials. These were handbooks of punishments for offences to be used as a guide for confessors.... A glance at these Christian penances shows us more clearly how the church viewed homosexuality. Four to eight per cent of the rules concern homosexual offences.... Homosexual interfemoral intercourse rated forty days and mutual masturbation thirty days.... In seventh-century Ireland ... homosexual acts among boys are discussed in the Penitential of Cummean. And in another Irish Penitential, Finnian, boys who experimented with anal sex had

to undertake two years of penance.... Oral sex ... merited greater severity. "Let him who puts semen in the mouth do penance for seven years," declared Theodore of Canterbury.... [But] The recommended penances vary so much according to the country, the time and the author, that it is difficult to extract an overall picture of the effect such literature had. What does not change is the matter-of-fact acceptance of homosexuality as a common occurrence throughout Christian Europe (Spencer, 1995: 107-9).

Details relating to all sexual sins, but particularly those which involved homosexuality, ranged in seriousness depending on the age of the perpetrator, the frequency of the act, and the degree of passive or active involvement. These penitentials, with which every confessor was obliged to familiarize himself, considered the relative seriousness of varying homosexual activities including whether the particular activity resulted in orgasm and the "vessel" which received the semen, that is, the hand, the mouth, intra-femoral, or the anal cavity. This reliving of sexual activities in such prodigious detail may have had a sensual effect on both the confessor and the penitent. To delve so deeply into such venereal delights without experiencing sexual tension on the part of the confessor or penitent seems unlikely. Still, the Church demanded that this re-enactment of the sexual activities through intimate dialogue continue, and it did so for many centuries.

In his *Homophobia*, Byrne Fone relates how a cleric in the early eleventh century denounced homosexual acts and demanded that Pope Leo IX treat those guilty of such practices to be severely punished by invoking canon law which, however, he deemed even less stringent than what the sexual activities demanded. His demands, however, were even more drastic than what the pope would condone. His views, as noted by Fone, include the following recommendations:

He (Damien) cites the death penalty exacted by Leviticus, urging that clerical sodomites ought to do penance for fifteen years if not for life, and ought to be beaten, spat upon, bound in chains, imprisoned, and starved. (Although) the pope did not accede to Damien's harsh demands ... in time, however, Damien's assertion that sodomy is worse than all other sexual sins became a commonplace of canon law (Fone, 2000: 136).

In another example of the Church's denigration of same-sex alliances, Fone explains how canon law has been affected by historical agendas:

When Ivo of Chartres (1040 – 1116) assembled his collection of canon law, he echoed Augustine's concept of unnatural intercourse, asserting that "to act against nature is always unlawful, and beyond doubt more flagrant and shameful than to sin by a natural use in fornication or adultery" (Fone, 2000: 136).

By the fifteenth century, the censorship of active homosexuality still held a place of priority in Florence. In *Forbidden Friendships*, Michael Rocke relates how a special group called *The Officers of the Night* was instituted in order to investigate and punish those who engaged in homosexual activities. These punishments varied, however, according to the social status of the individuals involved, with greater fines imposed on the wealthy who, however, were usually able to avoid public humiliation. Those who had few financial resources were fined less stringently but such fines were still a serious imposition on the poor. But in all cases it was deemed essential to ensure that the "culprits" who engaged in homosexual relations experienced fear of being fined, of being ridiculed, or of having a jail sentence imposed. This pejorative application of "justice" directed toward homosexuals was in no small way the result of centuries of Church influence. In *Forbidden Friendships*, Michael Rocke writes:

If despite every sort of punishment these men are still not restrained, at least some might control themselves, and perhaps those defiled by such ignominy will not do it so openly; and if out of a thousand sodomites the authorities punish even one well, all of them experience fear. Although this crime may not be completely prevented, they may in part be contained (Rocke, 1996: 84).

It is noticeable in the above extract that the underlying theme which may restrain those who would engage in homosexual activity is fear. Fear has been used throughout the ages as a method of control, a method of instilling in the populace that sentiment which is intended to convey to them that a power more powerful than they is existent. Fear, then, used not only as a device of behaviour control, ensures, as well, the retention of power and authority of the few, the clerics who wish to control the masses.

This fear of sexual relations without any possibility of creating new life remains a dominant theme within the hierarchy of the Church. In his *AIDS, Gays, and the Catholic Church*, Professor Richard Smith notes the Church's fearful aversion to sexual pleasure. Smith notes the position of the Church here as he writes, "Sex for the sake of pleasure or of love is excluded from the construction of sexuality" (Smith, 1994: 20). Smith continues with an expression of disapprobation by Thomas Aquinas, whose philosophy will be discussed in the following section of this dissertation. Smith writes:

St. Thomas Aquinas, drawing from Aristotle, would thus assert that procreation is the natural *telos* of sex, and that homosexual behaviour is a lustful indulgence in venereal pleasure since it does not issue in human procreation (Smith, 1994: 20).

6.7 Aquinas

Uta Ranke-Heinemann in her *Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven* writes:

Thomas holds that the other most seriously sinful – because they are unnatural – vices, worse than incest, rape, and adultery, are masturbation, bestiality, homosexuality, anal and oral intercourse, and *coitus interruptus* (*Summa theologia* II/II q. 154 a. II) (Ranke-Heinemann, 1990: 197).

Once again the Church selects from a Doctor of the Church those statements which the Church feels are of contemporary importance, as it does with selections from the Bible. To consider rape a lesser evil than masturbation seems not only ludicrous but shows once more a disdain for women, since, of course, when a man rapes a woman the sexual act is normally open to procreation, the singular most important fact in the mind of the Church when dealing with sexual activity. Homosexuality, too, is included with those other crimes against procreation. Any attempt by the Church to justify or to make plausible the proclamations which it sends out regarding sexuality seems not only deficient in reason, lacking in soundness and moral justification, but arbitrarily chosen from the writings of the Church and erroneously interpreted biblical sources. But it is necessary to stress, even at the expense of repetition, owing to the gravity of the situation and the nescience of Aquinas, how anyone can possibly suggest that masturbation is a greater evil than rape. It seems ludicrous to believe that a body

which claims possession of truth can judge an act of personal gratification which harms no one, to be a greater sin than the rape of a woman! And yet this Church does just that.

Aquinas, like Augustine before him, sees women as mere helpmates to men and lacking in virtues common to men, such as the ability to form immeasurably deep friendships. Still, both rejected any form of sexuality between two members of the same sex. Nor was Judaism ambivalent to homosexuality, which it judged harshly. Not only did Christianity adopt this derogatory view of homosexuality but introduced lethal punishment for what was considered a serious crime against nature and against God with the extreme punishment of burning at the stake.

Christianity adopted Judaism's revulsion for homosexuality and ... tried to eradicate homosexuals.... "They are to be condemned to pass from life to death by fire." ... The only thing Catholicism has in common with homosexuality is ... (its) contempt for women (Ranke-Heinemann, 1990: 323).

Aquinas saw only two possibilities for sexual relations: procreation or lust. and thus could not consider any variations from his own narrow viewpoint. As John McNeill points out in his *The Church and the Homosexual*:

There is no mention ... of a third possible motive for venereal acts, whether heterosexual or homosexual, besides either lust or procreation – namely the possibility that they might be an expression of genuine interpersonal love (McNeill, 1993: 97).

The Church, based on Aquinas' limited understanding of sexuality, sees active homosexuality as perversion, an acquired rather than an innate condition. He failed to realize and therefore to understand and accept that the expression of sexual love, whether in heterosexual or homosexual relations, was the natural culmination of the love relationship experienced between two partners. John Boswell in his *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* notes the opinions expressed by both Augustine and Aquinas. He writes:

Augustine admitted that no married person of his acquaintance engaged in intercourse solely for the purpose of procreation ... and yet procreation, he insisted, was the only truly moral use of sexuality. (Saint Thomas Aquinas did

not even consider that it was procreation but “the legitimacy of the offspring” which was the “chief good of marriage”) (Boswell, 1980: 165).

As a result of the teaching of Aquinas, the Church has maintained his less than complete understanding of sexuality. Although the Church has, reluctantly, in recent years, acknowledged that sexual relations do provide benefits to a loving couple beyond procreation, it still insists that any sexual union must be open to procreation. With such determination homosexuality must forever remain unnatural, unlawful, and unrequited.

Aquinas, in developing his argument against active homosexuality was, in fact, acquiescing to the fear and to the repugnance expressed by the society of his time. But even Aquinas believed that some persons were naturally homosexual, although this was an unnatural state. John Boswell touches on this subject. He writes, “Aquinas was quite prepared to accept Aristotle’s belief that homosexual inclinations were innate and therefore ‘natural’” (Boswell, 1980: 261).

Still, his understanding of human biology was not only incomplete but radically deficient and inaccurate. He believed that the seed produced by the male was the only vital ingredient in the development of a human being, and that the woman’s only role was to act as a receptacle wherein the child could develop. His understanding of women was as faulty as his understanding of the process of human reproduction. The woman was, to him, something less than a man, an inferior person. John McNeill in his *The Church and the Homosexual* writes concerning Aquinas’s view of the value of women vis-à-vis that of men. He writes:

We must place Thomas’s treatment of homosexuality in the context of his treatment of women and of sexuality in general. Woman, he held, was “the inferior workman who prepares the material for the skilled artisan, the male” (*Summa Theol.* III, q. 32,4). He theorizes that since every child born should be male ... there must be some etiological explanation for the birth of the inferior female.... He quotes the Philosopher (Aristotle) to the effect that “a moist south wind helps in the generation of females, while a brisk north wind helps in the generation of males” (*Summa Theol.* I, q. 99, 2). Thomas’s attitude toward women is best expressed when he says of Eve: “She was not fit to help man

except in generation, because another man would have proved more effective help in anything else” (*Summa Theol.* I, q. 92, I.) (McNeill, 1993: 95-96).

With regard to homosexuality itself, Aquinas tends to agree with Augustine. McNeill writes further on this issue:

Concerning human sexuality in general, Aquinas ... agrees with Augustine’s Stoic view that all sexual pleasure is the result of sin (*Summa Theol.* I, q. 98) ... Aquinas deals with the subject of homosexuality in the course of his treatise on the cardinal virtue of temperance.... Any act which is not consistent with the proper end of venereal acts, namely the generation and education of children, necessarily pertains to the vice of lust (McNeill, 1993: 96).

In short, Aquinas’s understanding of human biology seems deficient. But the Church, leaning heavily on the premises expounded by him, still considers homosexual acts evil because they do not allow for the procreation of children. However, the Church, in its wisdom, has accepted arguments made by Aquinas even though these arguments are not based on scientific intelligence. While the Church accepts one teaching of Aquinas, it fails to accept others. Although the Church no longer accepts the belief expressed by Aquinas that the woman is inferior to the male and that her only role is to nurture the seed deposited within her body by the male, it still accepts teachings which assist in its control of the laity and to compel obedience by expressing the evil consistent with any activities upon which it frowns. Although the Church may no longer see the woman as inferior to the male, the experience of women throughout history and within contemporary Catholicism, vis-à-vis the Church hierarchy, is, at least subtly, derogatory today, in areas, for instance, of their acceptance into the clerical state.

6.8 Church Attitude

Although the distress expressed by David for the loss of his lover suggests that their love was indeed a sexual one, the Church does not acknowledge the normalcy of homosexual love or the legitimacy of its experience. A document written by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops entitled *Always Our Children* implies a close and loving relationship between the bishops and homosexuals. This perceived affinity, however,

fades when those same “children” choose to express their innate humanity through active sexuality. They are condemned as “inherently disordered”. The relationship between the bishop and the priest under his charge is one of a father and son, a familial affiliation as well, but here the similarity ends. When a priest exploits a child for personal sexual gratification, his bishop simply removes him from that particular situation and reassigns him to another jurisdiction where once again he can engage his predilection for sex with children. This seems to suggest an unconscionable dichotomy on the part of the Church authority – unconscionable, duplicitous, and depraved. As James Carroll points out in *Practicing Catholic*, “The vast majority of bishops protected the priests instead of the children” (Carroll, 2009: 232).

Fundamentalists of both Roman Catholic and non-Catholic denominations insist on the comprehensive denunciation of homosexual activity. Numerous laws, particularly in the Old Testament, no longer hold universal sanction. To claim biblical inerrancy regarding the selection of laws which command compliance in contemporary society is problematical at the very least. Who has the authority to determine which biblical laws are defunct and which are still valid today? Even the Catholic Church, which does not claim full biblical inerrancy (the Roman Church affirms its own inerrancy through infallibility and the possession of the fullness of truth) still affirms selective commandments. One command, however, which seems to be acknowledged by virtually all fundamental Christians, is the law pertaining to the opposition to homosexual relations. It seems to be a great advantage for Christians who have been endowed with wisdom that they are able to either abrogate or affirm selected precepts.

Even sexual relations within a legitimate marriage were deemed acceptable only in the pursuit of begetting offspring. Pleasure, however, as we have seen, even in a legitimate relationship was viewed as inducing a state of sinfulness. If legitimate sexuality, then, was deemed acceptable only for the purpose of procreation and avoidance of concupiscence, then homosexuality, which would fail to satisfy these purposes, would

naturally be condemned as illegitimate, unproductive, and sinful. It has taken the Church virtually 2000 years to set aside its phobia regarding sexuality, reluctantly granting that the pleasure factor inherent in sexual intercourse is acceptable, provided, of course, that pleasure is of secondary import. The Church, for the most part, still does not understand that sexual relations of any sort are entered into primarily because of the pleasure factor; the intention to beget offspring represents in the predominance of cases only a very small percentage of the intent of the couple involved. The Church seems to be naïve in believing that sexual relations between a couple ceases when pregnancy occurs. Regarding homosexual relations, how long will it take for the Church to set aside its addiction to homophobia? Another 2000 years is much too long.

Gnosticism, which viewed the body as a natural entity as opposed to a spiritual one, saw the body as somehow sinful in itself, and this concept seems to prevail in some form and to some degree in contemporary Christianity, not least in Catholicism. Ute Ranke-Heinemann, a Catholic theologian, suggests that the contemporary Church should drastically revise its position with reference to Jesus' teaching on divorce.

“And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another commits adultery.” His disciples said to him, “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.” But he said to them, “not everyone can accept this teaching but only to those to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let anyone accept this who can” (Mt 19: 9-12).

Ranke-Heinemann suggests that this quotation from Mathew had become an argument for celibacy. She writes:

And it is high time for the pope and all the Church's celibates to realize that after eighteen hundred years of error they can now bury their favorite passage on celibacy and the single life, and recognize that reading for what it is: a biased misinterpretation by the Gnostics. Celibacy is based on a misunderstanding (Ranke-Heinemann, 1990: 49).

Ranke-Heinemann makes an interesting observation, but unfortunately the Church with its medieval mind-set is unlikely to accept her diagnosis of this particular illness crippling the Church today. It is much easier, it seems, for the Church to find faults and failures in the lives of its communicants than to admit errors of its own.

Augustine, whose teachings may have represented common sense in his era, but which have become anachronistic to the norms of contemporary society, has exerted a strong influence on the Church throughout history. As a result of his teachings, the Church, even if it is reluctant to admit it, still seems to believe that the clerical state is superior to any other state, no doubt owing to the proposed and supposed nature of the state of celibacy – proposed, because it requires celibacy for its clergy, supposed, because so many of the clergy have been unable to remain true to their vows of chastity.

The second state is that of single celibacy, followed by celibacy in marriage, and then a couple's use of sex provided they adhere to the teachings of the Church regarding such matters as avoidance of contraception. This has influenced the Church's teaching down through the ages and even today. *Coitus interruptus*, anal sex and oral sex are all considered sinful; therefore homosexual union also becomes a sinful act.

Homosexuality is placed at the pinnacle of the hierarchy of sexual misconduct, with legitimacy for such an orientation being limited to strict celibacy. Even then, the orientation is viewed as flawed, or, as described in *Persona Humana*, is "intrinsically disordered". This "disordered" status includes not only the state of the homosexual orientation itself but any homosexual sexual acts committed by the homosexual person. *Persona Humana* reads in part as follows:

In the pastoral field, these homosexuals must certainly be treated with understanding and sustained in the hope of overcoming their personal difficulties and their inability to fit into society. Their culpability will be judged with prudence. But no pastoral method can be employed which would give moral justification to these acts on the grounds that they would be consonant with the condition of such people. For according to the objective moral order, homosexual relations are acts which lack an essential and indispensable finality.

In Sacred Scripture they are condemned as a serious depravity and even presented as the sad consequence of rejecting God. This judgement of Scripture does not of course permit us to conclude that all those who suffer from this anomaly are personally responsible for it, but it does attest to the fact that homosexual acts are disordered and can in no case be approved of (Paul VI, 1975: 5).

An examination of the wording of the document, I believe, is in order. The term “these homosexuals” certainly seems to be a pejorative expression, suggesting that “these” are somehow outside and alien to Christian society. The suggestion that it is hoped that homosexuals may overcome their difficulties is not only offensive but duplicitous as well. It is not homosexuals who must overcome their difficulties but the Church which needs to refrain from causing them difficulties through their pejorative language and unfair assessment of their very humanity. The idea that homosexuals do not fit into society is not only absurd but abusive in the extreme. Church officials seem to forget that countless contributions to society have been made by homosexuals. By referring to their “culpability” is already to find them guilty. The proclivity of the hierarchy of the Church to indict homosexuals for their culpability in other matters is portrayed by Carroll in *Practicing Catholic*. He writes:

There is a difference between pederasty and homosexuality, and, in accounting for the priest abuse crisis, the distinction must be insisted on. The Vatican has tried to blame homosexual priests for the problem, but its roots sink deep in the Catholic sexual imagination itself. We have seen repeatedly how sexual totalitarianism is a main mode of clerical power, an organizing principle of the institution (Carroll, 2009: 230).

With regard to the blame assigned to homosexuals, Carroll refers to a document issued by Benedict XVI. Carroll writes:

In 2005, Vatican investigators interrogated seminarians at all U.S. seminaries, focused especially on rooting out homosexuals. In the same year, after Ratzinger’s election as pope, a document he had supervised was published forbidding men “with deep-seated homosexual tendencies” from being ordained to the priesthood. For gays, it would no longer be enough to be celibate. They could not be priests (Carroll, 2009: 349).

With reference to the concept of “finality” as noted in *Persona Humana* above, how indeed, do homosexual acts “lack an essential and indispensable finality”? Since an essential part of sexual activity is the fulfillment of sexual desire and need, it does, in fact, suggest an essential element. Regarding the word “finality”, surely an expression of sexuality, whether through heterosexual or homosexual engagement in sexual activity, is achieved through the normal expulsion of seminal fluid. Finally, with reference to the Church document, the expression “suffer from this anomaly” is a complete misunderstanding of homosexuality. Homosexual persons who are not intimidated by either bigots within society or Church official condemnations neither suffer nor consider themselves an anomaly. In fact, they are more likely to be thankful for their homosexuality and the freedom and happiness which results from their own acceptance of their own sexual nature.

The appeal to Scriptural condemnation, as noted earlier in this thesis, seems to be a serious misinterpretation of the Scriptural passages concerned. The word “depravity” as used in *Persona Humana* is another example of the pejorative consideration of homosexual persons. How can it be said that homosexual activity is “the sad consequence of rejecting God”? It is not the homosexual who has rejected God; it is the Church which has rejected the homosexual. How can the Church, in one breath, say, in accordance with Scripture, that what God has made is good, and in the next breath state emphatically that one part of God’s creation is in an “intrinsically disordered” condition? Such a statement is equivalent to censuring God for God’s error. To state that “all those who suffer from this anomaly are not personally responsible for it” is to suggest that some are. This is a submission, then, that homosexuality is derived from culture, not nature. Finally, by referring to the condition of homosexuality as an “anomaly” is to state that it is an abnormality, once more accusing God of incompetence in creation.

The quotation from *Persona Humana* states in part that “homosexual acts are disordered”, suggesting that the acts alone are disordered, leaving the perpetrators of

the act unscathed by Vatican denunciation. However, as *Persona Humana* became notorious, the belief that perhaps the inclination itself to homosexuality was either passive or even virtuous became acclaimed. This obviously threatening interpretation afflicted the Vatican sensibility to such a degree that it feared that any movement in the direction of easing the stress on the disordered designation would be detrimental to the overall endeavour to ensure that the very concept of homosexuality remained unjustified. In order to rectify the breach in the definition of “intrinsically disordered”, another document was required to settle the matter once and for all. Accordingly, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, (CDF) issued a follow-up letter entitled *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church On the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons*. In the letter, the following excerpt was included:

The Congregation took note of the distinction commonly drawn between the homosexual condition or tendency and individual homosexual actions. These were described as deprived of their essential and indispensable finality, as being “intrinsically disordered”, and able in no case to be approved.

In the discussion which followed the publication of the Declaration, however, an overly benign interpretation was given to the homosexual condition itself, some going so far as to call it neutral, or even good. Although the particular inclination of the homosexual person is not a sin, it is a more or less tendency ordered toward an intrinsic moral evil; and thus the inclination itself must be seen as an objective disorder.

Therefore special concern and pastoral attention should be directed toward those who have this condition, lest they be led to believe that living out of this orientation in homosexual activity is a morally acceptable option. It is not (Bovone, 1986: 1-2).

Thus the CDF has ensured that everyone understands that both the condition and the genital behaviour of the homosexual person are “objectively disordered”. Denouncing pleasure for the sake of procreation still permeates the thinking of Vatican purists. Moreover, since homosexual relations do not result in procreation, homosexual sex is denounced as dysfunctional and immoral. From the teachings of the Fathers of the Early Church to present day Catholicism, homosexual relations have been condemned. Contemporary Catholicism still affirms its belief that sexual sins are more serious than

any other kind of sin, and homosexuality retains its place at the nethermost part of iniquity.

One of the Church's oppositions concerns the adoption of a child by a gay couple. The reason given by the Church authorities is that a child requires a situation wherein that child will be raised by and have access to two parents, one of each sex: a father and a mother. But once again the declaration by the Church is sustained only in circumstances which are in accord with Church teaching. In a document published by the CDF entitled *Considerations Regarding Proposals To Give Legal Recognition To Unions Between Homosexual Persons*, Cardinal Ratzinger, with the approval of John Paul II, wrote:

As experience has shown, the absence of sexual complementarity in these unions creates obstacles in the normal development of children who would be placed in the care of such persons. They would be deprived of the experience of either fatherhood or motherhood. Allowing children to be adopted by persons living in such unions would actually mean doing violence to these children, in the sense that their condition of dependency would be used to place them in an environment that is not conducive to their full human development. This is gravely immoral and in open contradiction to the principle, recognized also in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, that the best interests of the child, as the weaker and more vulnerable party, are to be the paramount consideration in every case (Ratzinger, 2003: 4).

The words in the document, "As experience has shown" seem to be an unproven statement, utilized by the author to infer credence and authority in order to ensure compliance by the faithful. The fact is, however, that in my research, at least, there are no examples of lived experience which would support such a thesis. This, however, leads to another concern, a concern to which the Church apparently is immune. When the actions of a priest, either by rape or consensual sex with a woman, results in pregnancy and birth, the child is normally relegated to an orphanage, usually run by nuns. In such a case, the child is raised by women alone, so that no father figure is involved. Yet the Church, in its wisdom, somehow fails these children of illicit clerical sex, denying them the very rights which it demands for other children. This purports to be nothing less than one more instance of duplicity rampant within the halls of Catholic

Christendom. Finally, in a more contemporary expression of the condemnation of same-sex marriage, Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone fought unsuccessfully for the passage of Proposition 8, the 2008 California referendum that defined marriage as between one man and one woman. Dan Morris-Young writes in the May 22nd edition of the *National Catholic Reporter*:

The Cordileone-authored faculty handbook statement [on same-sex marriage] has had that effect (hurting or diminishing gay persons), notably by employing usage such as “intrinsically evil”, “grave evil”, and “gravely evil”.... Therapists will tell you that ... some kid is going to kill himself because he has been told he is gravely evil (Morris-Young, 2015: 15).

6.9 Summation

We have seen in this chapter how the Church magnifies the concept of homosexuality so that not only are the acts themselves but also the homosexual orientation itself are seen as “intrinsically disordered”. We have shown, also, how the misunderstanding of Sodom has created a mythical interpretation in which Sodom is equated with homosexuality rather than the more probable association with the sin of inhospitality. Certain biblical liaisons have been explored suggesting that those liaisons were not only free of sin but representations of a purity of love hampered neither by prejudice nor hatred. The following chapter, the conclusion, will consider the views which are in opposition to the thesis inherent in this dissertation, and I will offer challenges to these oppositional views.

7.0 Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter will consider antithetical arguments in opposition to the thesis extrapolated in this dissertation; the refutation of the opposing arguments; and the conclusion suggesting that authoritarianism and fear are indeed inherent in the polity of Roman Catholicism, two attributes of the Church which affect the dysfunction within it. The denial of the existence of an authoritarian rule within the Church is noted and the conclusions drawn from this position are shown to be both false and futile. The failure of leadership to engage in serious debate concerning Church practices is shown to be an aspect of authoritarian rule. The failure of the Church to honour the Principle of Subsidiarity as it reflects the micro-management of even minor aspects of Church life is examined. The denial of the existence of a pyramid structure in Church governance is countered by actual facts suggesting otherwise. Collegiality, endorsed by Rome, is seen as a fictional perception, the absence of which leaves bishops powerless and, to some extent, ineffective. The lack of freedom in Marxism is compared with the lack of freedom in the Church. Celibacy and the priesthood are considered as two unrelated charisms, charisms which are not unified. The inability to enforce the principles inherent in *Humanae Vitae* is seen as a direct assault against the arbitrary authoritarian edicts emanating from the Vatican. The homophobia inherent in the Church leadership is discussed as an affront to freedom and a precursor of fear. Finally, same-sex marriage and the adoption of children by same-sex couples are examined in order to discover to what extent the arrangement is detrimental to children. In addressing these issues, it is the purpose of this dissertation to prove that authoritarianism and fear are indeed aspects of dysfunction in the Church.

7.2 Expression of Authoritarianism

Perhaps the most extravagant claim in opposition to the central thesis inherent in this dissertation is that taken by George Weigel in his *The Courage to Be Catholic*. In discussing charges made by what he considers Catholic dissenters who claim that “the

sexual abuse and episcopal leadership failure was due to “authoritarian structures of the Catholic Church” he writes:

It was said, for example, that the crisis was a crisis of celibacy. It was not. It was said that the crisis was due to the Catholic Church’s “authoritarian” structures. But the Catholic Church’s structure is not authoritarian (Weigel, 2002: 36).

Weigel continues his response to those who claim that the Church is an authoritarian structure, stating that “The problem with this argument is that the Catholic Church is not an authoritarian institution, nor are its leaders authoritarians” (Weigel, 2002:42).

Weigel suggests, in defence of his claim, that an authoritarian fails to provide an adequate explanation for the commands by which he controls his subjects. This is no doubt an accurate representation of anyone who holds authoritarian power. What Weigel seems to ignore, however, is that in any number of instances, the leaders of the Church do fail to provide adequate explanations. It is one thing to state that a reason is provided to strengthen the argument for a certain rule or command, but it is quite another to state an argument which is convincing on its own merits. For example, when Paul VI issued his infamous *Humane Vitae* which prohibited the use of contraceptive measures during sexual intercourse, ruling against the findings of his own commission, he made it clear that his own personal judgment would supersede all other considerations. Within the document he wrote:

The conclusion at which the commission arrived could not, nevertheless, be considered by us as definitive, nor dispense us from personal examination of this serious question (Paul VI, 1968: 2).

The problem with Weigel’s attempt to absolve the Church from its designation as an authoritarian structure is that he seems to falter in his understanding of authoritarianism. As stated in Chapter Two of this thesis, according to Webster, “authoritarianism favors blind submission to authority” (Webster, 2001: 77). Further, it states that “it relates to a concentration of power in a leader or elite not constitutionally responsible to the people” (Webster, 2001:77). This is made manifestly

clear in John Paul's statement concerning the ineligibility of the admission of women to the priestly state. In *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* he writes:

Wherefore, in order that all doubt may be removed regarding a matter of great importance, a matter which pertains to the Church's divine constitution itself, in virtue of my ministry of confirming the brethren (cf. Lk 22:32) I declare that the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and that this judgment is to be definitively held by all the Church's faithful (John Paul II, 1994: 2-3).

John Paul's directive that his word must be accepted by all Catholics is in itself a repudiation of Weigel's insistence that the Church Fathers do not demand acceptance of their commands. Weigel wrote:

An "authoritarian" is someone who makes someone else do something purely as a matter of wilfulness: You do this because I say so. An authoritarian does not give reasons for his or her decisions or commands.... That is not the way the Catholic Church works (Weigel, 2002: 42-43).

Weigel's contention that "this is not the way the Catholic Church works" has, I believe, been repudiated by the two examples above concerning the papacy. Weigel continues his remarks visiting the concept of power. He writes:

Intellectually ill-formed priests contribute, overtly or inadvertently, to the notion that every issue in the Catholic Church is really an issue of power, when, in fact, the serious issues being contested in the Church are all issues of truth (Weigel, 2002: 168).

Unfortunately, the author fails to justify his remarks concerning the fact that those prelates who disagree with him are "ill-formed". That his interpretation of the truth as taught by the Magisterium is somehow superior to more liberal interpretations seems to be a somewhat extravagant claim, and shows, perhaps, a degree of a sense of superiority. Weigel suggests that:

The remedies include seminaries securing faculty members who are unimpeachably orthodox, ... [and] it is not a matter of intellectual repression but of common sense (Weigel, 2002: 168-9).

These comments by Weigel seem to overlook the fact that during the terms of two ultra-orthodox leaders in the recent past (John Paul II and Benedict XVI), the Church suffered its arguably most severe crisis ever experienced by the Catholic Church. These leaders were either unprepared or misguided in their response – or lack of response – to the crisis of infidelity and outright sexual aggression perpetrated on the indefensible, as well as their inglorious response to the bishops’ incompetence in dealing with the crisis. When an archbishop, noted earlier in this thesis, can contend that a debate is not tenable if debaters hold opposing views, it seems rather inane to assume that “it is not a matter of intellectual repression but of common sense”.

Ratzinger himself commented on this precise issue. Weigel said:

Bishops had a responsibility to create room in the Church for serious “intellectual disputation”.... Bishops also had “to be ready to learn and to accept correction.” First and foremost, however, bishops had to remember that they were the guardians and teachers of an authoritative tradition – a liberating tradition that freed as well as bound those who accepted the risks and the adventure of Catholic faith (Weigel, 2002: 89-90).

In Bill Donohue’s *Why Catholicism Matters*, he notes that “The Catholic university was ... a venue for creative thinking” (Donohue, 2012: 5). If it was, that moment of positive intellectualism has been eroded by the authoritarian and restrictive structure within the Catholic Church. In *Why Catholicism Matters*, the author states that “The system [The U.S. government] works because it takes for granted that too much power in the hands of any single source spells the death of liberty” (Donohue, 2012: 20). Donohue could not have uttered a truer fact. But, without realizing it, he has inadvertently condemned the Catholic Church for this same travesty. John Paul’s insistence that what he says is sacrosanct is conclusive evidence of Donohue’s remark. Donohue presses his point by making reference to John Paul II. He writes:

He [John Paul II] sees acceptance of truth as an essential condition for authentic freedom: “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free”.... “Because there can be no freedom apart from or in opposition to the truth, ... the defense of the absolutely essential demands of man’s personal dignity must be considered the way and the condition for the very existence of freedom” (Donohue, 2012:66-67).

These words from John Paul's *The Splendor of Truth* are an important and expedient affirmation of the words of Jesus to his disciples as written in John 8:32. But the truth cannot be determined by one man alone. Pius IX condemned modernity; Paul VI condemned contraception; Cardinal Ratzinger condemned Hans Küng for asking a question; and John Paul II forbade even questioning the ruling against female ordination. The Church has affirmed both collegiality and the *sensus fidelium* but has failed to honor the expression of either. In these cases and in many more, the Church has failed to celebrate the "essential demands of man's personal dignity".

Donohue extols the "principle of subsidiarity" in his *Why Catholicism Matters*. He writes, "Where Pius broke new ground was in his enunciation of the principle of subsidiarity" (Donohue, 2012: 107). In his 1931 encyclical entitled *Quadragesimo Anno*, an encyclical which he based on the encyclical by his predecessor, Leo XIII, entitled *Rerum Novarum*, Pius XI outlined the rights of workers vis-à-vis employers. These social encyclicals were landmark declarations of important and vital social political statements. One of the major declarations enshrined within the document was the following:

Just as it is gravely wrong to take from the individuals what they can accomplish by their own initiative and industry and give it to the community, so also it is an injustice and at the same time a grave evil and disturbance of right order to assign to a greater and higher association what lesser and subordinate organizations can do... Therefore, those in power should be sure that the more perfectly graduated order is kept among the various associations, in observance of the principle of "subsidiary function," the stronger social authority and effectiveness will be the happier and more prosperous the condition of the State (Pius XI, 1931: 18-19).

This concept which condemns assigning to higher associations that which can be done by lesser and subordinate organizations has come to be known as "the principle of subsidiarity". Unfortunately, the Church, especially since the time of Pius XI, has tended to ignore the concept as it applies to the Catholic Church. Local bishops were quite able to work with the nuns in the United States, for example, without the interference and psychological violence committed against those orders of nuns by the

Vatican. Another issue concerns the appointment of bishops throughout the Church.

The document continues:

The first and immediate apostles to the workers ought to be workers; the apostles to those who follow industry and trade ought to be from among them themselves (Pius XI, 1931: 33).

This reflection seems to suggest that men called to the episcopacy be men from within the diocese, men who have been chosen by the people, rather than men who have been chosen by Rome and parachuted into a particular diocese. Donohue uses the first statement above, from the encyclical, to credit the Catholic Church with sound social proclamations. They are indeed strong messages, urging justice for the masses. But he fails to note that the Church has neglected to adopt its own principle within the Church itself. The Church is a self-proclaimed state. As such it is subject to the same admonishments by which it exhorts other states throughout the world.

7.3 Subsidiarity and Pyramidal Structure

Weigel, in his *Freedom and Its Discontents*, also speaks of the principle of subsidiarity.

He writes:

There are, to be sure, reasons to be surprised by the contemporary Vatican's aggressive defense of human rights, and by Pope John Paul II's endorsement of democracy as the form of government that best coheres with the Church's vision of "integral human development" ... On the other hand, key themes in classic Catholic social ethics – personalism, the common good, and the principle of subsidiarity – seem not merely congruent with democracy but pointed positively toward the evolution of liberal democratic forms of governance (Weigel, 1991: 25).

This sounds like an enlightened approach by the pope as it relates to the governance of states and the defense of human rights. But the pope has failed to include in the pursuit of these goals the state of which he himself is personally involved – the Roman Catholic Church. Nor does Weigel admit to this serious omission in Church governance by John Paul. Weigel, with reference to Komonchak's *Subsidiarity in the Church*, continues: "because it [subsidiarity] is rooted in the metaphysics of the person, it

applies to the life of every society” (Weigel, 1991: 36). Since the Catholic Church is indeed a society, it seems apparent that the freedom extolled by both John Paul and Weigel includes the Church. As is abundantly clear, however, the principle, in practice, does not incorporate the Church. The Catholic Church appears to disdain regarding itself as any sort of “society”!

With regard to Ratzinger’s remarks noted earlier, they seem somewhat ingenuous. He too, was a bishop and he, as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, denied Hans Küng the freedom to express his opinion on infallibility, an opinion which was, in reality, a question. The so-called “authoritative tradition” had its genesis in the mind of Pius IX as recent as the middle of the nineteenth century. Ratzinger’s treatment of Küng in terminating Küng’s right to teach as a Catholic theologian certainly contradicts the direction to the bishops of the world in which he stated that the bishops “had to be ready to learn and to accept correction.” Ratzinger, a bishop himself, conveniently excused himself from this exhortation.

Weigel makes an astounding statement when he says:

Contrary to the familiar stereotype, the Catholic Church is not structured like a pyramid, in which everything is decided at the apex and everyone down the pyramid – bishops, priests, nuns, laity – simply falls into line (Weigel, 2002: 117).

Let us consider this statement at various levels within the Church. To begin, no cleric may be consecrated as a bishop without the express acceptance of the pope. Nor had the two popes noted above selected any men for the episcopacy who were liberal-minded regarding Catholicism. Bishop Oscar Romero received no support from the Vatican in his attempt to support the peasants of his country, persecuted as they were by their own government and the industrial magnates led by the government of the United States. This failure on the part of the papacy was owing to the fact that they feared that the “option for the poor” was merely an arm of communism. When Fr. Tissa Balasuriya interpreted the Virgin Mary as a unique figure in the women’s

liberation movement, he suffered excommunication. In the foreword to *Mary and Human Liberation*, by Balasuriya, Radhika Coomaraswamy writes:

To elicit notions of women's liberation from Mary's life is therefore a natural path for men and women working for women's liberation within the Christian faith (Balasuriya, 1997: viii).

Balasuriya, as previously noted, was rewarded for his genuine affection for the Church by excommunication. In *The Pope's War* by Matthew Fox, the author quotes an observation by Balasuriya himself. Fox writes:

What does it mean to condemn thinkers? Balasuriya observes: "There is a widespread fear among Catholics when they deal with ... the CDF. As a result ... everyone becomes stymied. There is a sort of 'holy fear', a kind of religious reign of terror, with threats of hell, excommunication and exclusion. These psychological weapons are used to frighten people, as the threat of torture was in the past by the Inquisition.... Where there is love, there is no fear" (Fox, 2011: 164).

In *The Trial of Pope Benedict*, the author, Daniel Gawthrop, writes on this same theme, noting that Balasuriya's book "sold only a few hundred copies in the four years before Ratzinger excommunicated Balasuriya. After that, it sold in the thousands" (Gawthrop, 2013: 125). Gawthrop notes that Balasuriya became a kind of celebrity owing to the fact that the Vatican had punished him for expressing his views. Although Balasuriya was eventually re-admitted to the fold, he was obliged to make concessions to the Vatican bureaucracy. Like Galileo, Balasuriya suffered the ignominy of intellectual persecution and the denial of his right to publish his thoughts.

In *Why Catholicism Matters*, Bill Donohue discusses the Galileo fiasco. He writes that "Galileo's towering ego got the best of him; he made unverified claims that led even the scientists of his day to wince" (Donohue, 2012: 14). Donohue neglects to note that Galileo was ahead of his time and that the scientists who "winced" did so out of their own ignorance since they had not yet understood or accepted Galileo's claims. Then Donohue seems to contradict himself. His inference that Galileo's claims were erroneous is negated by his own words. He writes that "in any event, a century later all

of Galileo's works were published, and in 1741 Pope Benedict XIV granted them an imprimatur" (Donohue, 2012: 14). So much for Galileo's ignorance!

When the U.S. nuns persisted in their service to the poor and marginalized they were forced to endure the ignominy of a three year "investigation" of their various orders. Bishops, priests, nuns, and laity all fall under the pinnacle of papal power which Weigel claims does not exist. It has been stated, quite correctly, that "the Church is not a democracy." In spite of this fact, however, the pope himself is elected through a democratic process. But that is where democracy in the Church ends.

Thomas Fox writes in the June 17th, 2015 edition of *Prairie Messenger* with reference to the sacramental vision of Eugene Kennedy. He writes:

He distinguished, however, between widespread Catholic ideas of top-down, "do as I say" authority – which, he wrote, is misguided authority, more akin to "authoritarianism" – and true authority, which "authors" life.... Kennedy wrote that authority models we still see so much in the church today are unworkable leftovers from an earlier age (Fox, 2015: 15).

The above quotation, stated by one priest in admiration of another, represents a denial of Weigel's "the Church is not an authoritarian structure" mentality. Weigel had written:

Ill-formed priests contribute ... to the notion that every issue in the Catholic Church is really an issue of power, when in fact the serious issues being contested in the Church are all issues of truth (Weigel, 2002: 168).

But are they? The contention that "the Catholic Church does not have the authority to ordain women" is not a viable proposition. It lacks integrity and historic veracity.

Women were definitely ordained at least as deacons in the Early Church. Popes in the past have vilified Jews, confining them to ghettos; they have denounced modernity; they have ridiculed and ruled against proven scientific facts; and they have mismanaged the clerical sexual abuse crisis. Weigel insists that what the Church insists on "is not a matter of intellectual repression but of common sense" (Weigel, 2002: 169). Is it common sense to admonish bishops "not to inform civil authorities of sexual

predators among their priests”? Is it not an example of intellectual repression when a theologian is denounced for suggesting that the concept of infallibility is a matter worthy of discussion and re-interpretation? Weigel, once more, falls on his sword in a futile attempt to re-invent the Church in a manner by which the errors and extravagances of Church are minimized or eliminated altogether. Finally, for Weigel, he claims that:

It is the responsibility of every Catholic to advance the thorough reform of the Church according to the teaching of Vatican II as authoritatively interpreted by Pope John Paul II (Weigel, 2002: 200).

Certainly Weigel is correct in his assertion that Catholics have a duty to advance the reform of the Church. But, as we have seen, on multiple occasions, John Paul’s interpretations become edicts based on power and on the coercive and dictatorial nature of his pontificate.

Collegiality – or lack of it – in Church governance is often a topic of discussion both within and between two groups of Catholics – liberal and conservative. In his *The Future of Catholicism*, Michael Coren writes:

Collegiality ... is all too often a euphemism for an attack on Papal authority itself. Those who want radical changes in the future Church are convinced – and probably quite rightly – that this could be achieved only if the Church of the next generation is made more democratic, which means communal, which means liberal. It’s not going to happen (Coren, 2013: 138).

Perhaps Coren is right, but if the Catholic Church is doomed to a position of diminishing authority and fewer communicants; it will be a Church which still places authoritarian rule above the legitimate hopes for a more communal and democratic Church. This Church, smaller and addicted to the pre-Vatican II paradigm, fits well into the hope and the intention of the now retired former pope, Benedict XVI. Benedict was unable to consider a Church which would experience a metamorphic change, a Church which would overcome its addiction to clericalism, authoritarianism, and ancient routines. Pope Francis may, however, astonish ultra-conservative elements within the Church as he continues to liberalize and modernize the functions of Church.

According to Donohue, “The Church believes in freedom of choice, but it does not approve of everything done in the name of liberty” (Donohue, 2012: 17). The difficulty with this interpretation, however, rests in the realm of who determines what is done in the name of liberty. Certainly this analogy is inadequate to resolve the question. When women feel they have been called to Holy Orders and the Church denies them the opportunity to respond to this call, the Church has determined what lies in the realm of freedom of choice and the dimensions of liberty. When a couple marry after a previous failed union, the Catholic member of the new union is denied access to the sacraments. When an individual follows his or her innate desire to express the God-given gift of sexuality with someone of the same sex, that person, too, is denied the benefits of the Church’s sacramental life. Thus the freedom of choice succumbs to the Church’s determination of liberty. Both the principle of subsidiarity and the *sensus fidelium* are repudiated.

7.4 Authority by Default

The corporate model – the pope as chief executive officer of the international conglomerate Catholic Church, Inc., and the bishops as local branch managers – was rejected by the Second Vatican Council. Vatican II tried to explain the relationship of pope and bishops through the concept of “collegiality” – the bishops’ corporate responsibility for the world Church – while at the same time teaching that that collegiality is always exercised with and under the leadership of the Bishop of Rome, the head of the college (Weigel, 2002: 119).

This extract from Weigel’s *The Courage to be Catholic*, is a valid interpretation of the concept of collegiality as proposed by Vatican II. Weigel adds that it will take time to actualize the relationship between the papal primacy and the bishops’ jurisdiction. Certainly, under the leadership of John Paul II and Benedict XVI, there seems to have been no movement whatsoever in the direction of shared governance. Collegiality has never been further from the governance of the Church than under these two pontiffs. The requirement of bishops to report to the Vatican every five years to give an account of their diocesan management hardly suggests collegiality; it more aptly describes a situation in which the bishops appear before the pope as students before teachers.

Under the leadership of the two popes mentioned above, any bishop who strays from the path of ultra-conservative dogmatism will suffer rebuke and chastisement. Since this is more a rarity than an actual practice, it suggests that bishops dare not contravene the edicts and commands of the pope. An example of bishops' wishes to allow married men to become priests where the scarcity of priests is a dominant feature of certain dioceses is a case in point. The bishops see a need, but the pope does not. The pope wins the debate. There is no collegiality. Weigel suggests:

The bishop must answer to Christ, the Good Shepherd, for the well-being of the flock entrusted to him.... He is not simply a local branch manager, exercising orders devised at the top.... Too many bishops in the United States seem to see themselves as men whose primary tasks are administrative and bureaucratic, rather than evangelical, pastoral, and catechetical (Weigel, 2002: 30-31).

Weigel is certainly correct here. The bishops are absolutely answerable to Christ and they are not "simply a local branch manager exercising orders devised at the top". What Weigel misses is the fact that the bishops operate under a veil of intimidation from the top. This intimidation reaches into every diocese, and the bishops, who have become pawns of the "emperor" in Rome, live in an atmosphere of fear – although they would deny this – but nevertheless they do act in accordance with the demands of the Vatican. When the Canadian bishops, for example, are denied the freedom to develop a change in liturgical texts according to "good" English, Rome has inflicted on them its own version of a liturgical translation which follows wording devised by scholars whose first language is not English, resulting in a stiff and awkward translation. This example of micro-management regarding such a miniscule point and the apparent inability of the bishops to demand autonomy even in this, seems to ensure that they dare not demand autonomy in more pressing matters such as ordaining married men.

When Archbishop May, speaking for other U.S. bishops, suggested that "Authoritarianism ... was deeply suspect in the United States" (Weigel, 2002: 98), Ratzinger responded with the accusation that "the difference between authoritarian

imposition and authoritative teaching was, at best, badly blurred” (Weigel, 2002: 98).

Weigel reports further on Ratzinger’s views:

The contemporary world, rightly searching for freedom, had mistakenly identified freedom with wilfulness – with doing things “my way.” That mistake had led to a false impression, which had led in turn to an identity crisis for the bishops. The false impression was that *any* authoritative teaching was a partisan move in a power game (Weigel, 2002: 88-89).

The difficulty with Ratzinger’s analysis is that, in fact, Rome itself is to blame for the blurring of the concepts of authority, authoritarianism, and wilfulness. The bishops are quite aware of the maxim concerning Vatican pronouncements: *Roma locuta est, causa finita est!* Ample examples exist to substantiate this aphorism. One example should suffice: John Paul’s assertion that to even discuss the possibility of the ordination of women was prohibited. Weigel’s subsequent comment serves only to mitigate his concept of authority. He writes:

It is the responsibility of every Catholic to advance the thorough reform of the Church according to the teaching of Vatican II as authoritatively interpreted by Pope John Paul II (Weigel, 2002: 200).

This comment introduces a valid point initially but the concept is soon degraded with the inclusion of the expression “as authoritatively interpreted by Pope John Paul II.” Once again Weigel seems to ignore the fact that when one individual, answerable to no human entity, uses his legitimate authority in an authoritarian manner, justice and collegiality convert to despotism. An imminent danger for the Church is revealed in further words written by Weigel. He writes:

Those most capable of leading the reform of the Church in the United States in the decades ahead will often be men ... whose priesthood has been formed in the image of John Paul II and whose episcopate would follow a similar model (Weigel, 2002: 208).

The Church does not need more authoritarian leaders whether in the Vatican or the individual dioceses. Bishops must exert leadership, certainly, but in a collaborative manner in conjunction with the needs, the aspirations, and the involvement of the

members of their communal families. In a similar manner, these same bishops need to demand a spirit of communal dialogue with the Vatican oligarchs.

Ratzinger, in a composition extracted from *The Essential Pope Benedict XVI*, entitled *Truth and Freedom*, writes: “Anyone who might get in its [Marxism’s] way is a foe of freedom, because, after all, he is interfering with the free expression of opinion” (Thornton, ed., 2007: 344). This is true of Marxism but, unfortunately, the same indictment can be levied at the Roman Catholic Church itself, a charge which Benedict XVI would hardly acknowledge. Two blatant examples are John Paul II’s insistence that what he stated concerning women’s ordination was not open for discussion; and Benedict’s (as Ratzinger) dismissal of Hans Küng from his status as a Catholic theologian for daring to question the concept of infallibility.

7.5 Sexuality

In *The Essential Pope Benedict XVI*, responding to the question of priestly celibacy, Ratzinger writes that, “The point is that someone ought really to accept it freely” (Thornton, ed., 2007: 121). The difficulty here lies in the fact that anyone who enters the priesthood accepts the reality of celibacy without the freedom of choice. A candidate for the priesthood may believe that through the ordination process he will obtain graces by which celibacy will become a non-issue. However, this has not been the case, as numerous men have left the priesthood in order to marry. The call to the priesthood is not necessarily a call to celibacy. By eliminating this priestly/celibate cohesion the Church would not only free its priests from this outmoded inseparability but would solve, to some extent, the abandonment of the priesthood, and as a result, alleviate the dire consequences of a shortage of priests. This certainly would be a step in the direction of ensuring adequate service rendered to the laity.

In his *The Courage to be Catholic*, George Weigel writes:

It was often said during the break-out of the crisis [the sexual abuse scandal], that celibacy is merely a “discipline” with no innate connection to the priesthood.... Both the theology and the history were seriously awry on these points (Weigel, 2002: 39).

Michael Crosby disputes Weigel's contention that "the theology and the history were seriously awry". In his *The Dysfunctional Church* Crosby writes:

Another way of gaining papal control over church governance involved wresting control of church offices from clerics themselves.... The imposition of celibacy on the clergy would also stop decisively the passing of benefices from father to son. Instead, the power to pass on clerical power would be in the hands of another family, that controlled by the bishops and the papacy.... At the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 celibacy became mandatory throughout the Western Church.... The legislation was based on discipline rather than dogma (Crosby, 1991: 72-73).

Although no papal document admits to requiring celibacy so that mere priests would lose control of property rights in favour of popes and prelates, this appears to be a legitimate thesis. In any case, no papal document has refuted the claim that the imposition of the rule of celibacy is, in fact, "discipline rather than dogma".

Finally, one other statement by Weigel must be confronted. He writes that "A priest cannot be a man for others if he lives as others often live" (Weigel, 2002: 185). Weigel here is referring to the celibate priesthood. But his statement seems to cast aspersions on the countless religious ministers of other denominations, men (and women as well), who have been and are married and serve their parishioners in a Christ-like manner, attending to the spiritual needs of their flocks, and making themselves available to support, to succour, and to sustain them in times of difficulties and sorrows. These pastors are there as well in times of rejoicing and sharing the love of Jesus Christ.

In *The Courage to be Catholic*, Weigel refers to the popular and widespread dissent from the restrictive exclusion of the use of contraceptives inherent in *Humanae Vitae*. The author proposes that clergy were even more adamantly opposed to the restrictions than lay Catholics. This may be so, but this, even more than if the clergy were not involved, seems to support the idea that contraception be allowed. But even Rome itself was less impassioned about the clerical support for contraception than the leadership of certain local dioceses.

Priests of the archdiocese [of Washington] joined the public dissent against the encyclical.... The penalties imposed by Cardinal O'Boyle ... included suspension from the active ministry.... The Vatican's Congregation for the Clergy ... recommended that Cardinal O'Boyle lift the sanctions (Weigel, 2002: 68-69).

Even Cardinal Ratzinger, in responding to a question concerning the sinfulness experienced by some parishioners, responded that:

I would say that those are questions that ought to be discussed with one's spiritual director, with one's priest, because they can't be projected into the abstract (Thornton, ed., 2007: 125).

Humanae Vitae, however, makes the avoidance of the use of contraceptives mandatory. It is not left to the discretion of the individual pastor. Thus a contradiction seems to hover over the contraception controversy. Unfortunately, however, there has been no official statement from Rome legitimizing individual pastoral response to the dilemma. The question arises concerning the possible departure of communicants from the life of the Church, believing themselves sinners in this regard by the Church. With no intent to avoid the use of contraceptives, they may feel unable to participate in the sacramental life of the Church. The solution is obvious. The *sensus fidelium* has adamantly opposed the teachings of *Humane Vitae* and the Church mandate – a teaching probably in error – has been ignored by a vast majority of Catholics. Unfortunately, the Church has never admitted error and is not likely to do so in the foreseeable future.

Coren, in his *The Future of Catholicism*, quotes from Paul VI's *Humane Vitae*:

The discipline [avoidance of contraception] which is proper to the purity of married couples, far from harming conjugal love, rather confers on it a higher human value. It demands continual effort.... Such discipline bestows upon family life fruits of serenity and peace, and facilitates the solution of other problems (Coren, 2013: 81).

Paul VI, no doubt, meant well when he resolved to countermand the findings of the Commission he himself had initiated. However, his personal unfamiliarity with conjugal relations left him virtually ignorant of the love expressed within the confines of sexuality, a deficiency which the married couples on his Commission were unlikely to

experience. Paul does not explain how “the discipline bestows upon family life fruits of serenity and peace”. Certainly, if a couple is already burdened with the responsibilities of raising a family, there is likely to be little “serenity and peace” knowing that through their sexual expression, another child may very well result. In addition to the *sensus fidelium* by which a preponderance of couples have determined to ignore Paul’s exhortations in this matter, Benedict XVI has stated that “those are questions that ought to be discussed with one’s spiritual director,” (Thornton, ed., 2007: 125). It seems, in view of this clarification, and the fact that numerous couples have ignored the ban, *Humanae Vitae* has become ineffectual. It would appear, then, that it would have been more appropriate for Paul to accept his Commission’s findings.

7.6 Homophobia

The prohibition of discrimination can be increasingly transformed into the limitation of the freedom of opinion and religious liberty. Very soon it will not be possible to state that homosexuality, as the Catholic Church teaches, is an objective disorder in the structuring of human existence (Thornton, ed., 2007: 329).

This quote from the writings of Benedict XVI is indicative of the current teaching of the Catholic Church concerning homosexuality. Certainly Benedict believes that his judgement is correct and he does not intend to destroy those who are endowed with homosexual orientation. Nonetheless, he is doing just that. He fails to recall that Scripture tells us that everything God made is good and there was no mention in that Scriptural passage of an exception in the case of homosexuality. It should be noted here, however, that possibly the original creation of God became distorted as a result of whatever “the fall” represents.

Unfortunately many homosexual persons, believing themselves despised by both God and the Church, have taken the only refuge which they considered possible: suicide. The mental anguish endured by homosexuals who, owing to Church teaching, have considered themselves outcasts and sinners, has been a heavy burden even for many of those who have refrained from taking their own lives. Until the Church accepts that

homosexuality itself is normal, and that homosexual persons are endowed with their own God-given form of sexuality, the continual practice of condemnation against homosexual orientation and the concomitant anguish experienced by homosexual persons will continue.

This negative attitude toward homosexuality is echoed by George Weigel in his *The Courage to be Catholic*. Quoting from *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* he writes: “A homosexual orientation is a ‘disordered’ affection, a spiritual dysfunction” (Weigel, 2002: 161). In my view, a view dismissed by Roman Catholic authorities, it is in fact the Church that is dysfunctional rather than homosexual persons. Jesus Christ welcomed everyone into his fold, completely, and without reservations. The Church, unfortunately, at least at this time, fails to do so, insisting that homosexual persons as well as Catholics who have remarried without an annulment are unworthy to receive the body and blood of Christ.

Although Pope Francis uttered a now famous phrase regarding homosexuality, asking simply “Who am I to judge?” official Church teaching has not changed. Michael Coren in his *The Future of Catholicism* writes:

This stance (opposition to same-sex marriage) is not going to change under the new pope.... Pope Francis opposed its [Argentinian government’s] same-sex marriage legislation. “What is at stake,” he said, “is the identity and survival of the family: father, mother, and children. What is at stake are the lives of so many children who are discriminated against in advance, deprived of the human maturation that God wanted to give them with a father and mother (Coren, 2013: 19).

While this pope has given indications that his papacy will see a development of a more inclusive Church, his opinion expressed above does little to support that claim. He fails to mention that there is no indication that children raised by same-sex couples suffer any damage to their physical or psychological being. Children raised in orphanages lack paternal guidance and there is a lack of evidence supporting any claim that they have suffered as a result. Perhaps exceptions to this statement arise when one considers the nature of the suffering endured at the hands of nuns who attempted to erase any

vestiges of aboriginal inheritance and influence, and priests who have violated the innocence of these children. Coren continues, citing Pope Francis' description of gay adoption as a form of "discrimination against children". He writes:

His comment that gay adoption represented a form of "discrimination against children" even led Argentine president Cristina Fernández de Kirchner to respond that the remarks suggested "medieval times and the Inquisition" (Coren, 2013: 20).

Coren, of course, sides with the pope on this question, but neither has he provided evidence of a resulting maladjustment of children so raised. Bill Donohue in his *Why Catholicism Matters* refers to the Church's stance concerning the dignity of all persons. He writes:

The Catholic Church believes in faith and reason; the pursuit of truth; the human dignity of every man, woman, and child; a culture of life; natural rights and natural law (Donohue, 2012: 174).

In general terms, Donohue seems to describe accurately the Church's concern for all mankind. Unfortunately, however, there are apparent anomalies extant within the actual practice of Church officialdom. With regard to reason, it is only in the latter part of the last century that Galileo's reasoning was acknowledged; the "pursuit of truth" by Hans Küng's question concerning Infallibility was met with harsh criticism; and the failure of bishops to protect the children who suffered at the hands of the priests who molested them hardly supported the "dignity" of "every child". In a further comment, Donohue writes:

A strong case can be made that justice demands that society confer a privileged position on marriage traditionally defined; no context better serves the well-being of children than to have them raised by their father and mother (Donohue, 2012: 264).

It rings authentic to state that children raised by parents of both sexes are better served and this may well be true in consideration of the differences each parent is able to provide. One difficulty, however, lies in the fact that regardless of the make-up of

the married couple, some children are subjected to abuse by alcoholic parents or by incompatible and quarrelling couples.

Finally, on this topic, Michael Coren in his *Heresy* writes:

Same-sex couples do not constitute families in the normative sense, and that when science is exploited to give such people children it is a wrong and immoral use of science (Coren, 2012: 212).

It is true that families constituted by same-sex couples are not the normal and ordinary composition of a family. However, because such families are fewer than families constituted by heterosexual couples, this in no way prove the inefficiencies of same-sex families. Such reasoning, it seems to me, would authenticate the idea that left-handed individuals are less successful than those who are right handed.

7.7 Summation

The Roman Catholic Church must experience a dynamic paradigm shift by which authoritarianism gives way to the true authority based on the love of Jesus Christ. Clericalism must give way to equality among all members of the Church. Fear and intimidation must be replaced by joy and encouragement. A paradigm shift is the imperative reality if the Roman Catholic Church is to endure in a manner which will ensure that the Church will survive as a reliable and functionary entity in which all members are included in the freedom requested by Jesus Christ that “all might be one”, and that “the truth will make us free”.

This thesis has attempted to prove, successfully, I believe, that authoritarianism and fear have promoted dysfunction in the Church. The failure of the Vatican establishment with its curial micro-management style has inhibited the growth and maturation of the Catholic Church and has floundered in its attempt to enforce complete and overpowering control. This system has facilitated the continuance of clericalism, the impotence of the episcopacy through the lack of collegiality, the silencing of dissidents, the rejection of the *sensus fidelium*, and extreme micro-management throughout the dioceses of the world. Misogyny, homophobia, and emphasis on sexuality with its

culture of clerical celibacy have resulted in a deficiency in some geographical areas of clerical presence, and have facilitated the sexual abuse of children.

Legitimate authority is authorized by God. Authoritarianism, however, is an authority which has usurped legitimate authority, and is often rendered even more illegitimate by its inherent secrecy and fear. John XXIII, having begun changing the Church into a more Christ-like institution, had his effort stymied by the ultra-conservative papacies which followed his own. Recently, however, Pope Francis has resurrected the hope that the dream of John XXIII will come closer to fruition. This dream can be realized by a Church whose leadership begins to acknowledge the right of individuals to participate in the development of a newer, more vital, and holier institution. Some of the possible avenues which could facilitate this paradigm shift include the concepts noted below. There is no easy way of accomplishing this change but the effort must be made. This is a Christian Church; it is, therefore, an unavoidable necessity to return to the democratic beginning where the spirit of the living God is omnipresent through Jesus Christ

Perhaps the most singular aspect of the leadership is to move beyond the fear of scandal by admitting errors of the past, including those errors committed by previous pontiffs. The *sensus fidelium* must not only be acknowledged as one of the tenets of the Catholic Church but must be accepted as a powerful tool in the development of a more enlightened Church. The promotion of dialogue and debate within the Church as a whole as well as in educational institutions and in the input of theologians must be encouraged. The concept of infallibility must be challenged and a new way of understanding it must evolve. The appointment of bishops must begin by the promotion of leaders within each diocesan area, a selection begun by the communicants themselves. Also, the practice of parachuting bishops into a given diocese from other areas must be discontinued. Misogyny must end and women should be allowed full participation in all areas of Christian life. The contrived unity

between celibacy and the priesthood should be eliminated and homosexuality, homosexual unions, and same-sex adoptions need to be acknowledged as legitimate.

These ideas do not portend to comprise a complete list of proposed changes, but they are included with other ideas which require close attention. The most important change, however, lies in these words of Scripture:

Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free” (John 8: 31-32).

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