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Unitive Sexual Morality

A Revised Foundational Principle and Anthropology

Theologians who espouse the theology articulated in *Gaudium et spes* find in it a foundational principle for judging all human activity, including human sexual activity: the principle of the human person adequately considered. A reasonable question immediately arises: What does it mean to consider the human sexual person adequately? In response to this question, we first formulate a foundational principle of human sexuality; second, we expand on the morally significant dimensions of that principle; and third, we draw insight from these dimensions in our reconstructed definition of complementarity to formulate a comprehensive explanation of a “truly human” sexual act.

In this process we seek to offer an alternative to the primarily procreationist sexual anthropology in a more adequately considered unitive sexual anthropology. We do so with some trepidation, because sexuality is far from an unambiguous reality. Like all the human appetites, sexuality can be used for good, and then it is loving, unifying, and maybe procreative; or it can be abused for evil, and then it is unloving, divisive, and destructive of life. According to the American bishops, “the gift of human sexuality can be a great mystery at times,” but the acknowledgment of mystery does not free theologians or the Magisterium from

the task of attempting to penetrate the mystery and of determining the “nature,” meaning, and morality of sexuality and sexual acts in the context of human relationships.¹

Gaudium et spes articulates a fundamental principle with respect to the essential meaning of human sexuality and sexual acts.

[Conjugal] love is uniquely expressed and perfected through the marital act. The actions within marriage by which the couple are united intimately and chastely are noble and worthy ones. Expressed in a manner which is truly human, these actions signify and promote that mutual self-giving by which spouses enrich each other with a joyful and a thankful will.²

Our exegesis of this principle proposes a developed theology of the unitive purpose of human sexuality and sexual acts in a marital relationship, and inquires about sexual possibilities for persons other than the married heterosexuals *Gaudium et spes* and the tradition have in mind. The context of this latter consideration is not simply the physical acts themselves but the meanings of interpersonal relationship and the sexual acts that take place within this relationship. We also ask how sexual acts reach beyond the couple to impact their extended family and community.

We note, first, an important distinction between sexuality and sexual activity. This distinction is expressed well by the United States Catholic Bishops:

Sexuality refers to a fundamental component of personality in and through which we, as male or female, experience our relatedness to self, others, the world, and even God.

Sex refers *either* to the biological aspects of being male or female (i.e., a synonym for one’s gender) *or* to the expressions of sexuality, which have physical, emotional, and spiritual dimensions, particularly genital actions resulting in sexual intercourse and/or orgasm.³

Given our discussion in the previous chapter, we regret the implied equivalence of sex and gender, but sexuality is correctly described as intrinsic to the human person in whom there is no division between the physical and spiritual. This is an important recognition that banishes the dualism that has plagued the Christian tradition regarding human sexuality. Humans are created by God as sexual beings, embodied subjects whose spiritual and physical dimensions merge in a single being that expresses itself in a profound and holy manner in intimate human relationship and sexual acts. *Sexual* is an adjective that describes not only acts that human beings do but also the essential reality that human beings are. We can and may renounce sexual activity; we can never renounce our intrinsic sexual being.

The sexual drive has three personal meanings: it is pleasurable, relational, and potentially procreative. Scientific research has demonstrated that sexuality influences our personality, our brain activity, our understandings of self and other, and our relationships.⁴ It also provides us with a means of personal communication that is carried out intimately and bodily in sexual acts. For the past one thousand years, the Catholic tradition has insisted that just and loving marital relationships and the sexual acts that both express and nourish them are sacraments, symbols of the loving relationships between God and God's people and Christ and Christ's Church. A group commissioned by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops boldly asserts, indeed, that mutually pleasurable marital sexual acts are possibly the human experiences that most fully symbolize the loving communication among the divine Trinity, a statement that affirms the goodness of both human sexuality and fully human sexual acts.⁵

CONJUGAL LOVE AND SEXUAL INTERCOURSE

The foundational principle we have advanced needs explication. First, sexual intercourse is a unique expression and perfection of conjugal love. An individual's sexuality is expressed in and through daily interactions

with other human beings, not just spouses. Humans naturally relate as sexual beings. The term *intercourse*, frequently used as a euphemism for sex, literally means “communication or dealings between or among people.” In this sense we have human intercourse with many people throughout the day. Sexual intercourse, however, is a unique and particular expression of the communication-intercourse of our very being with a special loved one.

While Western culture and churches tend to give the sexual aspect of the marital relationship a disproportionate focus, studies show the following relationship between age and frequency per year of sexual intercourse of a married couple: age 18–29, 110.2 times; age 30–39, 86.2 times; age 40–49, 70.6 times; age 50–59, 54.5 times; age 60–69, 33.4 times; age 70+, 17.6 times.⁶ As these statistics make clear, even at a couple’s sexual peak, the time spent in sexual intercourse is proportionately minimal. This data is noted not to diminish the importance of sexual intercourse for the marital relationship, but to situate it in a more realistic context. As *Gaudium et spes* teaches, the act of intercourse is the perfection of conjugal love. It expresses and strengthens the interpersonal union between a couple, which is why, going back to St. Paul, the Church has recognized that abstaining from sexual relations for too long can be detrimental to the marital union.⁷ The marital relationship finds an essentially nurturing component in just and loving sexual acts that *procreate*, occasionally in a biological sense, always in the sense of creating life for the couple, their bonded relationship, their family, and their wider community. Just and loving sexual union creates and nurtures love, the very essence of Christian discipleship; it *makes love*, as we say in everyday language.

MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS OF HUMAN SEXUALITY

The sexual science of the twentieth century has taught us that human sexuality is multidimensioned. We deal now with its physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual, and relational dimensions.

Physical

We deal first with physical union, the obvious joining of bodies. In their treatment of human sexuality, Masters and Johnson explain four phases in the process of sexual intercourse. Phase one is the excitement phase, in which, for the man, the penis becomes erect due to the flow of blood into the penile tissues, and, for the woman, there is moistening of the vagina, enlargement of the breasts, and tensing of the muscles with increased breathing and heart rate. Phase two is the plateau phase, the entry of the penis into the vagina, further quickening of the heart rate and breathing, mounting erotic pleasure, and the appearance of a flush on both bodies. Frequently noted in this phase is the penetration of the female by the male; not so frequently noted, but true in every just and loving intercourse, is the welcoming envelopment of the male by the female. The male penetrates the female, not only physically but also psychologically and emotionally, and is physically enveloped by her; she, in turn, enters emotionally and psychologically into the male. In their intercourse they become, in very deed, a two-in-one-bodiness.⁸

Phase three, the climax, discharge of semen by the male and a number of orgasmic muscle spasms by the female, is the moment of greatest pleasure and ecstasy. This pleasure is, of course, quite individual, and it is part of the ambiguity of sexuality and sexual intercourse that in the climactic moments of orgasm, the act intended to be the giving of one person to the other throws each back on herself and himself in a solitude of pleasure. The act that is intended to be and is fully unitive is, at its peak moment, actually also divisive. Michel Foucault reminds us of the similarity the ancients saw between sexual orgasm and epilepsy, both moments of being most alone and vulnerable.⁹ This is but one instance of the essential ambiguity of sexuality and sexual activity; we call attention to others as this chapter unfolds. Phase four is the resolution phase, in which the couple relaxes and blood pressure and respiration return to normal.¹⁰ Though these four phases are not to be “used as a ‘check list’ against which to measure sexual performance,” every sexually active couple can, at least sometimes, identify them in their intercourse,

a natural fact that offers profound evidence for sexual “nature” as God intended it and for the “natural” pleasure of the sexual act that has been so suspect in Christian history.¹¹

A unifying component of these various physical stages of the sexual act is pleasure. Sexual pleasure has always been morally suspect in the Catholic tradition, even though it is a natural and intrinsic part of sexual intercourse. Sexual pleasure is a good created by God and given as gift to humans. Like all gifts, it can be used for good or evil, and the abuses of pleasure and a morality based purely on pleasure, hedonism, are fully evident in the sociohistorical past and present. Such abuses, however, cannot and do not diminish the valuable and essential role of integrating pleasure as a natural component of human sexual morality. An essential component of a revised sexual ethical principle, then, we suggest, must be a deeper understanding of pleasure and its function in human sexuality, and the development of parameters for its responsible and moral expression. Such an investigation will discuss foreplay and other types of sexual intimacy leading to orgasm as legitimate moral expressions of sexual intimacy, and expand the parameters of traditional teaching that limits orgasm to heterosexual and vaginal intercourse.¹²

Emotional

A theology of the unitive must include the emotional dimension of human sexuality. Emotions, strong, generalized feelings with both physical and psychological manifestations, apprehend value and disvalue for each individual. They are forms of evaluative judgments, Martha Nussbaum argues, “that ascribe to certain things and persons outside a person’s own control great importance for the person’s own flourishing.”¹³ The evaluative judgment carried out by an emotion, we caution, is not yet the judgment of conscience we talked about in our prologue. In partial agreement with Nussbaum, therefore, we prefer to say that emotions are *proto-judgments*, preliminary apprehensions of value or disvalue, that become part of the data to be considered by conscience/2 before any final conscience/3 judgment is made. Emotions may be either positive

or negative. Positive emotions include love, joy, hope, humor, trust, happiness, and passion; negative emotions include hatred, sadness, despair, anxiety, distrust, anger, resentment, hurt, and dissatisfaction. In the act of just and loving sexual intercourse, there is a complex combination and expression of emotions that unite two separate persons into one coupled person, the *one body* of Genesis, in an act that can express love, vulnerability, healing, and comfort, and create wholeness or, on occasion, heal woundedness, neediness, anxiety, or brokenness. Either way, the sexual act reveals a wide spectrum of human emotions and brings out total vulnerability in both the positive and negative emotions. Analyzing human sexuality and the act of intercourse in terms of its emotional dimension entails reading the mystery of the wounded human in his or her ongoing search for flourishing and wholeness in intimate relationship.

Psychological

Emotions are a unique and particular expression of a person's basic and stable human identity, and the emotional and psychological dimensions of human sexuality are intimately related. Psychiatrist Jack Dominian presents an excellent synthesis of six psychological dimensions that illustrate the sexual act between a loving couple.¹⁴ First, through sexual intercourse a couple affirms each other's identity. The sexual act is symbolic in that when we become naked in front of another human person, we become totally and completely vulnerable. To make love in "a truly human manner" is both a mutual affirmation and a mutual unconditional acceptance of the other with all her and his physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual blessings and flaws. This affirmation and acceptance progresses through various stages. As we have indicated above, sexual intercourse is more frequent early in a marriage, and perhaps it is also more passionate. As the relationship develops and deepens over the years, the routine of sexual affirmation and acceptance may lose its novelty, attraction, and excitement, but this is not to be interpreted to mean that affirmation and acceptance cease. In reality, they increase as the couple comes to know and accept each other more profoundly and intimately

over time. While the novelty and excitement of sexual intercourse may diminish, the affirmation and acceptance of the person, a unique self created in the image and likeness of God and affirmed, accepted, and loved unconditionally, becomes more profound. Repetition may breed familiarity and a sense of routine, but it also deepens unconditional appreciation and acceptance of the other as he or she is.

Second, the sexual act reflects, affirms, and creates gender identity, a fundamental dimension of sexual identity. Gender is concerned with the socially constructed meanings of femininity or masculinity. It is determined not only by individual sexuality but also by culture, ethnicity, and rearing experience, and is expressed in actions, interactions, and social roles. Dominian describes this gender expression as a liturgy of exchange, a divine language, in which a couple communicates with each other through sexual desire.¹⁵ In the formation and development of sexual identity through a recognition and embodiment of gender roles, it is crucial that sexual activity be a form of loving, open, honest, and authentic human communication. If it is, then the act becomes humanly communicative at the deepest level; if it is not, then the same act can stagnate or even block future possibilities for communication and formation of healthy sexual identity. This is yet one more example of the essential ambiguity of human sexual activity.

Self-esteem is the third psychological dimension of human sexuality. Psychological studies indicate that one of the greatest threats to healthy human development, including sexual development, is poor self-esteem.¹⁶ The Christian tradition has not always done a good job of emphasizing healthy self-love. Jesus's great commandment is well known: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second is this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:28–34; Matt. 22:34–40, 46b; and Luke 10:25–28). Not so well known is the fact that there are *three* commandments in this latter text: love God, love neighbor, *and* love self. Typically, the Christian tradition has interpreted neighbor love as altruistic and agapaic, and self-love as egocentric and antithetical to the love of the gospel. This certainly *can* be the case, and the cultures of those

countries that emphasize radical individualism encourage egocentric love, but egocentric love is not the healthy self-love demanded by the gospel. Authentic self-love first affirms oneself as a self-in-God, good, valuable, and lovable, and then, in alliance with neighbor-love, turns toward the other and gives this good, valuable, and lovable self-in-God unconditionally to the other. As Aquinas might argue: no one gives what he does not have. If a man does not truly and fully accept himself, in both his wholeness and his brokenness, he can neither give himself fully to an other person nor fully accept the other person. So it is, too, with a woman.

Fourth, sexual intercourse is therapeutic and relieves distress. The human person is a psychosomatic unity, an intrinsic union of body and spirit. There is distinction between body and spirit in the human being, but there is no separation, and there is ongoing and constant dialogue between them. When a couple makes love, each person brings to that experience all the psychological burdens that accompany daily life, including worries about the relationship, possible conception, work, finances, and children. The act of sexual intercourse makes possible the suspension of those anxieties and worries, at least for the moment, and has a healing effect on the individual. This relief of distress, however, depends on the nature of the relationship. If the relationship is just, loving, committed, and honest, relief of distress is often an intrinsic component of sexual activity. If, however, the relationship is promiscuous, inauthentic, or dishonest, while the physical act can still suspend distress for the moment, the after-effects of that experience can cause greater distress, in the form of guilt, a sense of inauthentic or dishonest intimate communication, or objectification of the other.

Fifth, sexual intercourse is reconciling. There are no conflict-free relationships, not even in the most just and loving of marriages. Frictions, disagreements, and misunderstandings are all inevitable aspects of any human relationship, and any and all of these experiences can create hurt, distress, and general distrust of the other in the relationship. One is not likely to find couples who desire sexual intimacy at the peak of such quarrels, but intimacy comes after the resolution of the quarrel and

may be an intrinsic component of the resolution. Some couples claim that the best sex they have is after an argument. This is because sexual intimacy heals the wounds caused by the quarrel and reaffirms the bond and commitment that may have been threatened by it.

Finally, sexual intercourse is a profound act of thanksgiving or eucharist. The embodied nature of the human person binds him or her to bodily expression which is best exemplified, though by no means limited to, verbal language. Beyond verbal language there is body language, and beyond body language there is ritual language, symbolic actions with socially approved meanings. Couples can say to each other "I love you," or "I thank you," or "I forgive you," and in the spoken words they are reaching to meanings far beyond the words. They can say the same things in socially approved actions, by looks, by touches, by gifts, and in all of these actions they are similarly reaching far beyond the actions to express love, forgiveness, reconciliation, affirmation, thanksgiving. In the physical action of sexual intercourse, an action as symbolic in the West as any spoken word, they express all these things in the most profound and total way available to an embodied human being, namely, through the completely unmasked and therefore totally vulnerable body. They say to each other, in the words of the ancient Anglican wedding ritual, "with this *body* I thee worship." They say, that is, in the etymological meaning of the word *worship*, I ascribe worth to you and to us, and for this worth I give thanks.

Couples who are Catholic cannot help but link this moment of sexual thanksgiving for human relationship with that liturgical thanksgiving for divine relationship they call Eucharist.¹⁷ "This is my body which is given for you," Jesus says to his disciples at the Supper.¹⁸ "This is my body given for and to you," lovers say to each other in the act of intercourse. In both the Supper and the sex, the body and the person synonymous with it are vulnerable, even broken, but both body and person are given in love to the other, trusting that they will be received in love and handled with care. In the Supper, both past and present, the Body of Christ is given to be eaten; so too are the bodies of the truly human lovers in sexual intercourse. Adrian Thatcher points out, legitimately, that "many of the

intimacies of love-making are fairly literally an eating of the body of the person one loves. Kissing, especially deep kissing; the use of the tongue in caressing and stimulating; biting, sucking, and nibbling; these are all patently ways in which we eat the bodies of our lovers.”¹⁹ The central theological point here is a very Catholic one. The God incarnate in the Christ who gives his body in the Supper for the salvation of all is the same God incarnate in the lovers and their act of mutual self- and body-giving for the salvation of their relationship. In Catholic theology, the one ritual is as sacramental of God as the other, which is why both Eucharist and marriage are listed among the Catholic sacraments.

Spiritual

The relationship of communion between the three persons of the Trinity provides the model for every genuine human communion, and the grace of the Spirit enables each and every believer to share this communion with a loved other through a multitude of actions, including sexual actions. *The* characteristic of marriage, distinguishing it from other forms of friendship, is that it is expected to be an exclusive sexual relationship. From what we have explained in this section, it is not difficult to conclude that the communion between spouses expressed in the sexual intercourse that characterizes marriage is also a sacrament of the divine communion. That is precisely what the Catholic Church intends when it teaches that marriage is a sacrament.

The act of sexual intercourse allows humans a unique insight into the love shared within the Trinity. In intercourse there is the unconditional gift of self to the other and the unconditional reception of the other's gift of self in return. Such mutuality, reciprocity, and unconditional acceptance reflect the total self-surrender within the Trinity. “It is our capacity to love and be loved,” Gallagher notes, “that *makes* us most God-like.”²⁰ The love, including the sexual love, shared by a couple in relationship draws them together into communion, and this shared communion reflects the communion of the Trinity, draws them closer to God, strengthens their relationship, and overflows into all their

other relationships. Most profoundly, this sexual communion always procreates new life, just as the loving communion between the Father and Son yields the Spirit. Even in cases where biological procreation is neither possible nor desired for legitimate reasons, their sexual union procreates and enhances the couple's life in communion in imitation, and as sacrament, of the divine Trinity, the infinite source of gracious and loving communion.

Relational

Spirituality is all about relationship. So, too, is human sexuality, grounded in relationship with God, with neighbor, and with self. Human sexuality is a gift from God that draws us toward interpersonal communion. It is an intrinsic, mysterious dimension of human beings that draws individuals out of self and toward another. "Sexuality is a dimension of one's restless heart, which continually yearns for interpersonal communion, glimpsed and experienced to varying degrees in this life, ultimately finding full oneness only in God, here and hereafter."²¹ In and through human sexuality and relationships humans seek to become whole and holy. This relational gift is at the core of human identity and allows humans to enter into communion with God and one another.

Relationship with the gospel "neighbor" takes several forms. First, and primarily, neighbor is the spouse or intimate other. Sexual acts are the most intimate communion between two people; in them two individuals become physically and personally a coupled one. Catholic tradition refers to this relationship in terms of a covenant and a communion of persons and limits this covenantal communion to marriage between a man and a woman.²² A second close neighbor is family. God's gift of sexuality provides women and men with the desire to unite as a couple and to create, nurture, and educate new life out of their union, thereby creating family. The Catholic Church correctly describes family as the "original cell of social life" and the "domestic church," a relational community of partnered life and love.²³

Neighbor also extends to the human family and community beyond the domestic church. Discipleship is an all-encompassing relational reality, embracing even enemies.²⁴ Too often in history Catholic moral theology has focused on the individual's acts and their impact on the individual's relationship with God, while neglecting the broader social implications of those acts. For instance, whereas magisterial teaching has focused on the separation of the unitive and procreative dimensions of the sexual act as the basis for condemning artificial reproduction, some moral theologians have focused more on the social justice issues of using such technology in terms of cost and the use of limited medical resources.²⁵ (We develop this point in chapter 6.) This shift in focus is especially relevant in sexual ethics. Too often, sexual and social ethics are seen in isolation from each other, each utilizing its own methodology and having its own point of reference. Whereas the Magisterium's sexual ethics tends to focus on acts and absolute norms that guide individuals and married couples, its social ethics tends to focus on the complex network of interrelationships that constitute a community and general principles to guide these interrelationships toward the common good. Sexuality as a relational concept challenges us to more fully integrate its individual and communal moral dimensions.

Finally, human sexuality is a unique gift to each individual that summons everyone to recognize, accept, appreciate, and integrate the gift in the Christian task of drawing closer to God in Christ and neighbor. History demonstrates beyond doubt that, with the exception of an intellectual and abstract acknowledgment that sexuality and sex are good because they are created by a good God, much of the Christian tradition has not appreciated the goodness of this gift practically and concretely. This lack of appreciation for the gift of human sexuality in its various forms has created a great deal of guilt and self-loathing, with the unfortunate consequence that people sometimes live out their sexuality in unhealthy ways. Perhaps this is truer nowhere than in the case of men and women with a homosexual orientation who feel personally rejected by the Church in what Jordan refers to as the "rhetoric

of moral management.”²⁶ This rhetoric is grounded in exclusion and is evidenced in the Magisterium’s designation of homosexual inclination as “objectively disordered,” a designation that inhibits many gay and lesbian Catholics from revealing their sexual orientation.²⁷ Negatively labeling them as “objectively disordered” does not facilitate homosexuals’ integration of their sexuality. Sexuality is intimately related to our attraction to other persons, to love, and to committed relationships. For this natural attraction to be nurtured and manifested in responsible relationships, it must be accepted and integrated in a healthy manner. It may be true that no human person has fully integrated his or her human sexuality, but Christians still need to be conscious of and critically reflect upon perspectives that, consciously or unconsciously, frustrate the personal acceptance and integration of sexuality.

These dimensions of the sexual person—physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual, and relational—explain the foundational principle for human sexuality contained in *Gaudium et spes* and reflect a holistic sexual anthropology. Our final task in this chapter is to draw out the logical implications of this principle for morally evaluating *Gaudium et spes*’s “truly human” sexual act. To do so, we will have recourse to the concept of complementarity and the virtues of chastity, love, and justice. Combined, our foundational principle, truly human sexual acts, complementarity, and the just-mentioned virtues expand the possibility of moral sexual acts, which is currently limited in magisterial teaching to reproductive acts between married heterosexuals, to include nonreproductive homosexual and heterosexual acts.

We begin our excursus on the truly human sexual act with a look at the virtue of chastity, the central virtue guiding human sexuality throughout Christian tradition. We complete it with the virtues of justice and charity.

CHASTITY

Chastity is a virtue that facilitates the attainment and integration of authentic human sexuality. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* provides

a succinct definition. Chastity is “the successful integration of sexuality within the person and thus the inner unity of [the hu]man in his [and her] bodily and spiritual being. Sexuality, in which [the hu]man’s belonging to the bodily and biological world is expressed, becomes personal and truly human when it is integrated into the relationship of one person to another.”²⁸

Chastity, then, is the authentic integration of a person’s sexuality into human relationship and the practical living out of that relationship in fidelity and commitment to another person. In our citation of the *Catechism’s* definition of chastity, we intentionally left out the final clause of that definition. As stated, the focus is on integrating one’s sexuality bodily and spiritually, but the final clause limits this integration to heterosexual relationships: “in the complete and lifelong mutual gift of a man and a woman.” There is a tension between this final clause and the opening clauses. As is now accepted in the scientific community and stated in the *Catechism* and other magisterial documents, homosexuals do not choose their condition or orientation; it is a result of physiological (nature) and social (nurture) factors.²⁹ As such, what does it mean for a homosexual person to integrate his or her sexuality? Does it require celibacy, or is there the possibility of a moral expression of sexual activity between two people of the same sex given the criteria for a theology of the unitive that we are developing? The *Catechism* does not equate chastity for the homosexual person with celibacy.³⁰ On the basis of our theological principle, persons of a homosexual orientation may live a life of chastity within a monogamous, just, loving, committed relationship subject to the same moral guidelines used to morally evaluate a heterosexual nonfecund relationship. We will expand on this in chapter 5.

The above definition of chastity has profound implications for what it means to express our sexuality and sexual acts in a manner that is truly human. Sexuality is a gift from the creator God to facilitate men’s and women’s task of becoming fully human in and through interpersonal relationship. Humans seek both wholeness, sometimes called human flourishing, and holiness in their journey toward becoming fully integrated, relational, loving persons. This requires them to embrace

their sexuality, to seek to develop and perfect those dimensions that facilitate its authentic development, and to resist whatever frustrates this development. In a world of original, personal, and social sin, this is not an easy project. The world humans inhabit, however, is not only a world of sin; it is also a world of abounding grace. It is a world into which the Father of all has sent his Son to be incarnated, making it thereby essentially holy. It is a world into which the Son has sent the Spirit-Paraclete to lead it into all truth. It is a world in which that Spirit roams freely, bestowing gifts of all kinds on all men and women of goodwill.³¹ It is a world in which the search for full humanity, and therefore also for God, is pursued sexually by both heterosexuals and homosexuals, and therefore any search for the truly human must include both these groups.

TRULY HUMAN AND COMPLEMENTARITY

The rest of this chapter focuses on two important and related terms, “truly human” and “complementarity,” that have recently been introduced into the discussion of sexual morality in the Catholic tradition.³² *Gaudium et spes* declared that the sexual intercourse in and through which spouses symbolize their mutual gift to each other is to be “in a manner which is *truly human*.”³³ The sexual act, the Council intended, is to be a deliberated and intentional act, not just an act that a person does without any responsible discernment. Unfortunately, the Council offered no definition of what it meant by “truly human.”

The CDF’s *Considerations regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions between Homosexual Persons* (CRP) has recently sought to clarify the meaning of “truly human sexual acts.” It first states that homosexual unions lack “the conjugal dimension which represents the human and ordered form of sexuality,” and then articulates the principle that “sexual relations are human when and insofar as they express and promote the mutual assistance of the sexes in marriage and are

open to the transmission of new life.”³⁴ This is the unitive-procreative principle that, in the twentieth century, became the foundational principle for all Catholic sexual teaching. According to this principle, truly human sexual acts are acts within marriage that are simultaneously unitive of the spouses and open to procreation, and only such acts are judged to be truly human. CRP uses the term *sexual complementarity* in relation to this principle, which includes parenting and the education of children and, on this foundation, defends heterosexual marriage and condemns homosexual unions. The term *complementarity* has appeared only relatively recently in magisterial sexual teaching, in Pope John Paul II’s *Familiaris consortio* (1981).³⁵ Its types and implications for defining truly human sexual acts have yet to be fully explored. In the next section we investigate and critique several types of complementarity to advance its understanding and its implications for the “truly human” sexual act. Before proceeding to that discussion, however, we must first confront a common feminist argument against the very use of the word *complementarity*.

Feminist theologian Barbara Hilker Andolsen, for instance, opposes the word because it is tainted “by its close association with justifications for [patriarchal] gender inequality.” Such gender inequality, she points out, has been shown to be “part of the gender ideology of the [European] bourgeois family since the seventeenth or eighteenth century.”³⁶ We are in complete agreement with Andolsen that the idea of complementarity has been used to perpetuate gender inequality to the detriment of women, not only in the European tradition of the past two hundred years but also in the John Paul II–inspired Roman Catholic tradition of the twentieth century. For that reason, we would like to abandon both the idea and the word. That, however, would leave both idea and word in the Catholic tradition unchallenged and unreconstructed. We prefer to accept both idea and word from the Catholic tradition and seek to purge it of every suggestion of either gender or sexual inequality. That we do in the following sections with our idea of sexual orientation complementarity.

Sexual Complementarity: Biological and Personal

There are two general types of sexual complementarity in the CDF's document, biological and personal, with subtypes within each (table 2.1). The definition of what constitutes truly human sexual acts depends on how biological and personal complementarity are defined in themselves and in relation to each other. We will consider each definition in turn.

BIOLOGICAL COMPLEMENTARITY:
HETEROGENITAL AND REPRODUCTIVE

Biological complementarity is divided into what we label *heterogenital* and *reproductive complementarity*. The CDF describes heterogenital

TABLE 2.1 Types of Sexual Complementarity in Magisterial Teaching

<i>I. Biological Complementarity</i>	
<i>Title</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Heterogenital Complementarity	The physically functioning male and female sexual organs (penis and vagina)
Reproductive Complementarity	The physically functioning male and female reproductive organs (testes and sperm, ovaries and ova) used in sexual acts to biologically reproduce
<i>II. Personal Complementarity</i>	
<i>Title</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Communion Complementarity	The two-in-oneness within a heterogenital complementary marital relationship created and sustained by truly human sexual acts
Affective Complementarity	The integrated psychoaffective, social, relational, and spiritual elements of the human person grounded in heterogenital complementarity
Parental Complementarity	Heterogenitally complementary parents who fulfill the second dimension of reproductive complementarity, namely, the education of children

complementarity this way: "Men and women are equal as persons and complementary as male and female. Sexuality is something that pertains to the physical-biological realm."³⁷ Heterogenital complementarity pertains to the biological, genital distinction between male and female. The mere possession of male or female genitals, however, is insufficient to constitute heterogenital complementarity; genitals must also function properly. If they cannot function complementarily, as they cannot in either male or female impotence, neither heterogenital nor reproductive complementarity is possible, and in that case canon law prescribes that a valid marriage and sacrament are also not possible.³⁸ Though heterogenital complementarity is the foundation for reproductive complementarity, the two are to be carefully distinguished, for while the Magisterium teaches that a couple must complement each other heterogenitally, it also teaches that, "for serious reasons and observing moral precepts," it is not necessary that they biologically reproduce.³⁹ Infertile couples and couples who choose for serious reasons not to reproduce for the duration of the marriage can still enter into a valid marital and sacramental relationship. In light of this teaching, Pope Paul VI's statement that "each and every marriage act must remain open to the transmission of life" is *morally* ambiguous in the cases of infertile couples, couples in which the wife is postmenopausal, and couples who practice permitted natural family planning with the specific intention of avoiding the transmission of life.⁴⁰ Gareth Moore correctly notes that "vaginal intercourse which we know to be sterile is a different type of act from vaginal intercourse which, as far as we know, might result in conception."⁴¹

Potentially reproductive and permanently or temporarily nonreproductive heterosexual acts, then, are essentially different kinds of acts. What about heterosexual nonreproductive acts and homosexual acts, if anything, distinguishes them? Since both are nonreproductive, it cannot be their nonreproductivity. It can be only that the former exhibit heterogenital complementarity and the latter do not. Grounding potentially reproductive and permanently or temporarily nonreproductive heterosexual acts in heterogenital, rather than reproductive, complementarity

raises two sets of questions. First, it raises questions about the morality of other types of nonreproductive heterosexual acts, such as oral or anal sex, which are permanently nonreproductive even though heterogenital complementarity is present. Second, the Magisterium's claim that homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered because they are closed to the transmission of life can be challenged, for permanently nonreproductive heterosexual acts are as biologically closed to the transmission of life as are homosexual acts. From a strictly reproductive point of view, nonreproductive heterosexual acts *may* have more in common with homosexual acts in terms of personal complementarity and relationality than with reproductive heterosexual acts. There is no doubt that homosexual acts do not exhibit heterogenital or reproductive complementarity, but it still remains to be seen whether they exhibit personal complementarity.

PERSONAL COMPLEMENTARITY: COMMUNION,
AFFECTIVE, AND PARENTAL

The CDF also refers to sexuality on the "personal level—where nature and spirit are united." We refer to the personal level of sexuality as *personal complementarity*, which can be divided into several subcategories.

Communion Complementarity

Communion complementarity in the marital relationship is "a communion of persons is realized involving the use of the sexual faculty."⁴² The male and female genitals, penis and vagina, contribute to the realization of a communion of persons in marriage expressed in truly human sexual acts. The CDF implies, however, that without heterogenital complementarity, communion complementarity is not possible. "There are absolutely no grounds for considering homosexual unions to be in any way similar or even remotely analogous to God's plan for marriage and family. Marriage is holy, while homosexual acts go against the natural moral law. Homosexual acts 'close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved.'"⁴³ Such assertions are made with

no supporting scientific evidence. We set forth abundant evidence to the contrary in chapter 5.

Affective Complementarity

This type of complementarity is at the crux of magisterial teaching on sexual complementarity, because it intrinsically links biological and personal complementarity. Citing the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the CDF asserts, without adducing any proof, that affective complementarity is lacking in homosexual acts. It does not clarify here what it means by affective complementarity, but we can glean some insight from another magisterial source. The CCE teaches that, “in the Christian anthropological perspective, affective-sex education must consider the totality of the person and insist therefore on the integration of the biological, psycho-affective, social and spiritual elements.”⁴⁴ Since affective sex education seeks to integrate all the elements of the human person, affective complementarity must similarly seek to integrate them in a truly human sexual act. Important questions for magisterial understanding of affective complementarity are how it understands these elements in the individual person, in the person in relationship, and in a truly human sexual act.

Pope John Paul II claims that “even though man and woman are made for each other, this does not mean that God created them incomplete.”⁴⁵ Each individual has the potential to be complete by integrating the biological, psychoaffective, social, and spiritual elements of affective complementarity. Claiming that men and women are complete in themselves seems to respond to the concerns expressed by some theologians that the idea of complementarity implies that celibate religious or single people are somehow not complete and lack something in their humanity.⁴⁶ Second, when he moves from individual to couple, even though man and woman are “complete” in themselves, John Paul argues that “for forming a couple they are incomplete.”⁴⁷ He further notes that “woman complements man, just as man complements woman. . . . Womanhood expresses the ‘human’ as much as manhood does, but in a different and complementary way.”⁴⁸ We must ask, however, where the incompleteness and the need for complementarity reside in an individual that is complete

in himself or herself but is incomplete for forming a couple. Where in the human person does this incompleteness exist that needs complementing by the opposite sex? John Paul responds, "Womanhood and manhood are complementary *not only from the physical and psychological points of view*, but also from the *ontological*. It is only through the duality of the 'masculine' and the 'feminine' that the 'human' finds full realization."⁴⁹

Kevin Kelly accurately notes that "ontological complementarity maintains that the distinction between men and women has been so designed by God that they complement each other, not just in their genital sexual faculties but also in their minds and hearts and in the particular qualities and skills they bring to life, and specifically to family life."⁵⁰ The masculine and feminine complement each other to create a "unity of the two," a "psychophysical completion," not only in sexual acts but also in marital life.⁵¹ Finally, beyond heterogenital complementarity for the purpose of reproduction, John Paul's claim of affective complementarity leaves ambiguous and undeveloped *how* these elements are integrated in a truly human sexual act. To summarize: in magisterial teaching on affective complementarity, the affective (biological, psychoaffective, social, and spiritual) elements are strictly divided according to gender and comprise essential male and female human natures; only when they are brought together in marriage and sexual acts is the human couple complete.

There are two important points to note in John Paul II's and the Magisterium's explanations of affective complementarity. First, there is an intrinsic relationship between heterogenital and personal complementarity, between body and person (heart, intelligence, will, soul).⁵² Second, given the Magisterium's teaching on the immorality of homosexual acts, it is clear it regards heterogenital complementarity as a *sine qua non* for personal complementarity in truly human sexual acts. Without heterogenital complementarity, the other elements of affective complementarity in the sexual act cannot be realized.

Several points need to be made regarding the claims that God created individuals complete in themselves but incomplete when they come to form a couple and that this incompleteness is made complete through the (biological, psychoaffective, social, and spiritual) affective

complementarity of male and female. First, to claim that a person is complete in himself or herself indicates that the person is complete biologically, psychoaffectively, socially, and spiritually, at least when the person is in relationship with God and neighbor. Second, while it is clear that male and female complete one another biologically in terms of genitalia for reproduction, it is not clear how they are incomplete and complete each other psychoaffectively, socially, and spiritually. John Paul II claims, "It is only in the union of two sexually different persons that the individual can achieve perfection in a synthesis of unity and mutual psychophysical completion."⁵³ Biological, psychoaffective, social, and spiritual elements of the human person are ontologically, that is essentially, divided along masculine and feminine lines, however, without justification, save that they are said to be God-given from the very beginning.⁵⁴ It is reasonable to question, however, whether the psychoaffective, social, and spiritual elements are essentially divided along gendered masculine and feminine lines and find completion only in male–female unity.⁵⁵ Besides genitalia, what are the "feminine" affective elements a man lacks, and what are the "masculine" affective elements a woman lacks?

There are gender stereotypes in magisterial documents. Femaleness is defined primarily in terms of motherhood, receptivity, and nurturing, and maleness is defined primarily in terms of fatherhood, initiation, and activity.⁵⁶ With the exception of biological maternity and paternity, the claim of ontologically or essentially gendered psychological traits does not seem to recognize the culturally conditioned and socially constructed "nature" of gender and does not adequately reflect the complexity of the human person and relationships. Within individuals and relationships, psychoaffective, social, and spiritual elements are not exclusively "natural" to either gender *per se* but may be found in either gender, may vary within a relationship, and may express themselves differently depending on the relational contexts.⁵⁷ Psychoaffective, social, and spiritual traits are variously distributed among males and females and are not intrinsic to either's "nature" prior to socialization. For instance, some males are more nurturing than some females, and some females more dominant and analytical than some males. These traits also vary within relationships in

which there may be two dominant people or two nurturing people. Do we want to claim in these cases that these two people do not complement each other? The “masculinity” and “femininity” of the nonbiological elements are largely conditioned and defined by culture and are not essential components of masculine and feminine human nature mysteriously creating a “unity of the two.”⁵⁸ The further claim of essential difference between male and female whereby the male and female find psychoaffective, social, and spiritual completion in one another only in marriage is entirely unsubstantiated by any scientific evidence.

Since there are reasonable grounds for questioning the Magisterium’s claim that affective complementarity entails certain psychoaffective, social, and spiritual elements essential to the male and female and strictly divided on gender lines and, further, that these can be realized only in heterosexual marriage and heterosexual acts, the absolute claim prohibiting homosexual acts because they lack affective complementarity is substantially weakened. While homosexual persons cannot realize the biological element of affective complementarity (heterogenital and reproductive complementarity), it remains a question whether or not they can realize its personal elements. Granted, there is an important sense in which affective complementarity integrates the biological and personal elements in a truly human sexual act. We believe, however, that the Magisterium’s account relies primarily on heterogenital complementarity, entails an incomplete, if not distorted, vision of gender, and neglects an adequate consideration of the experiential and relational dimensions of human sexuality.⁵⁹

Parental Complementarity

Parental complementarity argues against same-sex unions based on the claim that, “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. . . . Allowing children to be adopted by persons living in such unions would actually mean doing violence to these children.”⁶⁰ The Congregation provides no scientific evidence, here or elsewhere, to substantiate its claim that

homosexual unions are an obstacle to the normal development of children. There is, however, abundant evidence to the contrary, as we shall elaborate in chapter 5. This social-scientific data supports the established claim that communion and affective complementarity between the parents greatly facilitate both parental complementarity and the positive nurture of children.⁶¹ Given this evidence, the question of whether parental complementarity is as essentially linked to heterogenital complementarity as the CDF claims is unavoidable. Parental complementarity, however, does serve to remind us that truly human sexual acts have public implications beyond the couple's private act of sexual intercourse, and that intercourse that leads to conception and adoption both demand long-term caring, nurturing, and authentic familial and social relationships.

INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HETEROGENITAL AND PERSONAL COMPLEMENTARITY

Though heterogenital complementarity is necessary in magisterial teaching to realize a truly human sexual act, it is not sufficient. Heterosexual rape and incest take place in a heterogenitally complementary way, but no one would claim they are also personally complementary. Truly human complementarity is not either/or—either heterogenital complementarity or personal complementarity—but both/and, heterogenital and personal complementarity together. The magisterium correctly posits an essential relationship between biological (heterogenital and possibly reproductive) and personal (communion, affective, and parental) complementarity, but there is a misplaced prioritization of heterogenital over personal complementarity in the absolute moral prohibition of homosexual acts. In addition, there is a misplaced emphasis on reproductive complementarity in the prohibition of nonreproductive sexual acts between heterosexuals.

Important questions for the theological understanding of truly human sexual acts are whether or not there can be such acts without heterogenital complementarity and whether or not there can be such acts that are nonreproductive sexual acts. First, is heterogenital complementarity the primary, foundational, and *sine qua non* component of

truly human sexual acts, or must genital and personal complementarity be more thoroughly integrated to found a truly human sexual act? If the latter is the case, then might a just and loving homosexual act fulfill the criteria for a truly human sexual act? Second, even though nonreproductive heterosexual acts may not fulfill reproductive complementarity, does that mean that, ipso facto, they violate personal complementarity, cannot fulfill the criteria for truly human sexual acts, and are thus morally wrong? We approach these questions via what we call *sexual orientation complementarity* and *holistic complementarity*.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION COMPLEMENTARITY AND TRULY HUMAN SEXUAL ACTS: A RECONSTRUCTED COMPLEMENTARITY

An important psychosocial dimension of the human person, and therefore of the sexual human person, is the person's integrated relationship to self. To be truly human, a sexual act must be integrated with the whole self. The CCE asserts what is widely taken for granted today, namely, that sexuality "is a fundamental component of personality, one of its modes of being, of manifestation, of communicating with others, of feeling, of expressing and of living human love. Therefore it is an integral part of the development of the personality and of its educative process."⁶² The Congregation goes on to cite the CDF's *Persona Humana* and its teaching that it is "from sex that the human person receives the characteristics which, on the biological, psychological, and spiritual levels, make that person a man or a woman, and thereby *largely condition his or her progress towards maturity and insertion into society*."⁶³ If it is true that a person's sexuality and sexual characteristics largely condition her or his insertion into society, and we agree that it is true, then the question naturally arises about the "nature" and meaning of what is called today sexual orientation, that dimension of human sexuality that directs a person's sexual desires and energies and draws him or her into deeper and more sexually intimate human relationships. To define "truly human" sexual acts, we must first understand sexual orientation.

The meaning of the phrase “sexual orientation” is complex and not universally agreed upon, but the Magisterium offers a description. It distinguishes between “a homosexual ‘tendency,’ which proves to be ‘transitory,’ and ‘homosexuals who are definitively such because of some kind of innate instinct.’” It goes on to declare that “it seems appropriate to understand sexual orientation as a *deep-seated* dimension of one’s personality and to recognize its *relative stability* in a person. A homosexual orientation produces a stronger emotional and sexual attraction toward individuals of the same sex, rather than toward those of the opposite sex.”⁶⁴ Guided by Robert Nugent, we define sexual orientation as a “psychosexual attraction (erotic, emotional, and affective) toward particular individual *persons*”⁶⁵ of the opposite or same sex, depending on whether the orientation is heterosexual or homosexual. Sexual orientation is produced by a mix of genetic, hormonal, psychological, and social “loading.”⁶⁶

Concerning the genesis of homosexual and heterosexual orientations, the bishops note what is agreed on in the scientific community, namely, that there is as yet no single isolated cause of a homosexual orientation. The experts point to a variety of loading factors—genetic, hormonal, psychological, and social—from which with high probability the orientation derives and develops. There is a growing agreement also in the scientific community that sexual orientation, heterosexual or homosexual, is a psychosexual attraction that the person does not choose and that she or he cannot change.⁶⁷ In addition, since homosexual orientation is experienced as a given and not as something freely chosen, it cannot be considered sinful, for morality presumes the freedom to choose. This judgment is not to be understood as a claim that, according to the Magisterium, a homosexual orientation is morally good or even that it is morally neutral, for elsewhere it teaches that “this inclination . . . is objectively disordered,” that it “is a more or less strong tendency ordered toward an intrinsic moral evil”; that is, homosexual acts that flow from the orientation are always immoral or intrinsically disordered.⁶⁸ The Magisterium teaches that homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered because “they are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to

the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity.”⁶⁹ Heterosexuality is the norm against which all sexual acts are to be judged.

The Magisterium condemns homosexual acts because they do not exhibit heterogenital and reproductive complementarities, and, because they do not exhibit these biological complementarities, it further notes, they are incapable of realizing personal complementarity, regardless of the *meaning* of the act for a homosexual couple. Since the sexual act is frequently closed to reproductive complementarity, sometimes permanently in the case of infertile couples and postmenopausal women and sometimes temporarily for fertile heterosexual couples, heterogenital complementarity is established as *the* litmus test for determining whether or not a sexual act can fulfill personal complementarity and thus be “truly human.” There is no doubt that truly human sexual acts necessarily include personal complementarity, but, for the Magisterium, personal complementarity is not sufficient for a truly human sexual act. Heterogenital complementarity is the primary, foundational, *sine qua non* condition for what defines a truly human sexual act. Since homosexual acts lack heterogenital complementarity, they can never be truly human.

We suggest that the needed complementarity for a truly human sexual act is *holistic* complementarity that unites people bodily, affectively, spiritually, and personally under the umbrella of a person’s sexual orientation. Heterogenital complementarity is needed for possible reproduction, but it is not needed for the sexual, affective, spiritual, and personal connection between two people that the recent Catholic tradition acknowledges as an end of marriage equal to procreation.⁷⁰ Though they cannot exhibit heterogenital complementarity, there is extensive anecdotal and empirical evidence that homosexual individuals can exhibit this holistic complementarity. We shall explore this evidence in detail in chapter 5.

Orientation complementarity reconstructs the Magisterium’s definitions of affective and genital complementarity and situates genital complementarity under the umbrella of personal complementarity. First,

orientation complementarity cannot espouse the Magisterium's heterogenital point of departure for affective and personal complementarity, for sexual orientation underlies and is more foundational anthropologically than heterogeneity. As we have seen, for the Magisterium the point of departure for affective complementarity is an essential unity between the biological (heterogenital) and the personal that can find completion only in heterosexual marriage and conjugal acts. The definition of affective and personal complementarity is the "unity of the two," in which the masculine and feminine affective elements (biological, psychoaffective, social, and spiritual), which for forming a couple are incomplete, find completion in heterogenitally complementary reproductive type sexual acts. In our model, the point of departure for affective complementarity is not the *genital* but the *sexual human person* of either a homosexual or a heterosexual orientation. The definition of affective complementarity in truly human sexual acts is not John Paul's the "unity of the two," that is, the male and the female, but the unity of two *persons*, in whom the affective elements (biological, psychoaffective, social, and spiritual) complement one another.⁷¹ In the case of persons with a homosexual orientation, these acts will be male–male or female–female; in the case of persons with a heterosexual orientation, these acts will be male–female.⁷²

Orientation complementarity also requires us to redefine heterogenital complementarity in relation to affective complementarity. Severing the male–female essential complementarity of the affective elements includes the genitals. No longer is heterogenital complementarity the foundational *sine qua non* for personal complementarity. In a truly human sexual act, the genitals are at the service of personal complementarity, and they may be male–male, female–female, or male–female, depending on whether the individual person's orientation is homosexual or heterosexual. Our principle of holistic complementarity, which includes sexual orientation complementarity as one of its types, embraces the entirety and complexity of the human person and reconstructs genital complementarity to be in dialogue with, and totally at the service of, personal and orientation complementarity. The genitals may be said to be complementary

when they are used in a truly human sexual act that realizes personal, psychoaffective, social, and spiritual complementarity.

Truly human sexual acts are to be morally evaluated, not simply as isolated acts, but only in the context of this complex orientation, personal, and genital interrelationship. When we shift the foundation for a truly human sexual act from heterogenital complementarity to holistic complementarity—an integrated orientation, and personal and genital complementarity—the principle for what constitutes a truly human sexual act can be formulated as follows.

A truly human sexual act is an act in accord with a person's sexual orientation that facilitates a deeper appreciation, integration, and sharing of a person's embodied self with another embodied self. Genital complementarity as understood within the context of orientation and personal complementarity is always a dimension of the truly human sexual act, and reproductive complementarity *may* be a part of it in the case of fertile, heterosexual couples who choose to reproduce. Reproductive complementarity will not be a possibility in the case of homosexual couples (or temporarily or permanently infertile heterosexual couples), but genital complementarity, understood in an integrated, embodied, personal, orientation sense, and not just in a biological, physical sense, will be. This personalist interpretation of genital complementarity, which contextualizes the physical genitals as organs of the whole person, allows us to expand the definition of a truly human sexual act to embrace both heterosexual and homosexual nonreproductive acts.

The Magisterium teaches that only marital, reproductive sexual acts are truly human sexual acts. In explaining its condemnation of masturbation, for example, it notes the following: "... the deliberate use of the sexual faculty outside normal conjugal relations essentially contradicts the finality of the faculty. For it lacks the sexual relationship called for by the moral order, namely the relationship which realizes 'the full sense of mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of true love.' All deliberate exercise of sexuality must be reserved to this regular relationship."⁷³ Mutual masturbation, anal sex, and oral sex all lie outside the parameters of this definition, do not realize the finality

of the sexual faculties, and therefore cannot be truly human or moral. This statement invites comment and critique, and, on the basis of this critique, we expand the concept of a truly human sexual act to include nonreproductive sexual acts, both heterosexual and homosexual.

First, masturbation, both individual and mutual couple masturbation, and other nonreproductive sexual acts “[contradict] the finality of the faculty.” In this statement there is a clear parallel with Aquinas, who comments that some external acts are disordered in themselves, “as happens in every use of the genital organs outside the marriage act.” “The end of the use of the genital organs,” he continues, “is the generation and education of offspring, and therefore every use of the aforementioned organs which is not proportioned to the generation of offspring and its due education is disordered in itself.”⁷⁴ What are we to make of Aquinas’s and magisterial statements on the finality or end of the genital organs? Aquinas’s emphasis on the primary end of the genital organs for the procreation and education of children, since the promulgation of *Gaudium et spes*, no longer holds true. The procreation and education of children *and* the union between the spouses are equal ends of marriage; there is no longer a Catholic hierarchy of ends. The magisterium now defines the “finality of the faculty” of the sexual organs in terms of *both* the procreation and education of children *and* the union between the spouses in every sexual act.

We must also note Aquinas’s limited understanding of human biology in relation to human sexuality and reproduction. The female ovum was not discovered until the 1850s. Prior to its discovery, the commonly held belief was that the male seed was solely responsible for generation; the female merely provided the fertile ground or field for the male seed, a true homunculus, or little man, to develop into a fully fledged human being.⁷⁵ To spill the seed, or little man, anywhere it could not develop properly—on the earth, in a mouth, or in an anal orifice—for instance, was regarded as murder, and murder was always judged to be a serious moral evil. As we know now from contemporary biology, both the male sperm and the female ovum are necessary to provide the forty-six chromosomes that make up the human genome. The tradition’s erroneous

understanding of human biology and reproduction allowed it to make inaccurate claims about what is “natural.” While magisterial teaching now recognizes the facts of human reproductive biology, it still continues to assert exclusively the natural finality of the sexual organs.

Is it the case, however, that reproduction is the natural finality of the sexual organs? Reproduction may be achieved via a human act of sexual intercourse, but the act of reproduction itself is not a human act; it is achieved through a determined biological process. If reproduction were inescapably the natural purpose of the sexual act, then all reproductive-type sexual acts would have the possibility of realizing this purpose. Infertile women and men continue to have sexual intercourse, but their act is inescapably nonreproductive. All human beings have *sexual* organs, but not all human beings have *reproductive* organs; that an organ is sexual does not necessarily mean that it is also reproductive. Clearly, with permanently infertile couples, the term “open to the transmission of life” is morally ambiguous at best, morally meaningless at worst. It is far from clear, therefore, that the sexual organs have the “natural finality” assigned to them.

There are three senses in which one could claim a natural finality for the sexual organs. The first is the purpose given them by “nature”; the second is the purpose given them by human beings’ use of those organs; the third is the purpose given them by the “moral order” or divine law. The first purpose we have already addressed. While “nature” can be interpreted in a purely biological sense, in the sense of Aquinas, tradition, and current magisterial teaching, it is more accurately understood in terms of what facilitates overall human well-being or human flourishing. To claim that nonreproductive sexual acts are “unnatural” or “against nature,” one must prove that such acts, by definition, frustrate human well-being or human flourishing. This leads to the second claim of the finality of the sexual organs, the meaning human beings give to this finality. Sexual organs do not have a single purpose; they have many purposes. The penis, for example, is responsible for both the evacuation of liquid waste and sexual intercourse that may or may not

achieve reproduction. In sexual acts, it may also serve other purposes, the giving of pleasure, for instance, the relieving of tension, the celebration and enhancement of intimacy between two lovers, whether or not the particular sexual activity is capable of achieving reproduction. All of these purposes have meaning for human beings and may or may not facilitate human flourishing, depending on the meaning of this particular sexual act for this particular couple.

To counter these humanly assigned finalities of the sexual organs, one may respond with the third argument for finality; namely, even if people attach different meanings to sexual acts, there is an order established by God that determines the correct finality of the sexual organs, and this finality is reproduction. Reproductive complementarity, therefore, is an intrinsic meaning of the sexual act. Numerous questions may be posed to this claim. Why do we need to claim that God created a particular body part for a particular purpose? Cannot a particular body part have multiple purposes, as indicated above? If we do accept a God-given purpose, what are the reasons we may not act against it? Is to act against a God-given finality always morally wrong, or simply less than ideal? If it is simply less than ideal, is it accurate to claim that although reproductive sexual acts are ideal sexual acts, nonreproductive sexual acts cannot facilitate human flourishing? There are many acts we do that are less than ideal, such as eating, sleeping, or exercising too much or too little, but we do not, on that account alone, judge them immoral.

Is a “truly human” sexual act synonymous with an ideal sexual act? This would seem to set an unreasonably high standard for any act of sexual intercourse that must necessarily entail a reciprocal “total personal self-giving” between the couple.⁷⁶ This total self-giving would entail in each and every sexual act all those dimensions of human sexuality explored above—biological, emotional, psychological, relational, and spiritual—and any experienced married couple will tell you that the requirement of “total personal self-giving” in each and every sexual act is simply not real. It is nothing but ideology posing as reality. Is it possible

that what was judged traditionally to be the single God-given purpose of sexual organs be expanded to include other God-given purposes discerned on the basis of human experience and conscientious and faithful reflection on that experience?⁷⁷

All of these are important questions that need to be investigated. If after such an investigation, however, we were to come to the (unlikely) conclusion that there is undoubtedly a single God-given purpose for sexual organs, would we then have to conclude logically that the God-given purpose is exclusive of all other sexual activity, or could it be inclusive of other sexual activity? Could we not, in other words, claim that on occasion the sexual organs could still be used for other purposes? Indeed, the organs are frequently used for other purposes deemed perfectly moral, for instance, among infertile couples. There is no possibility of achieving the reproductive finality of the organs in these infertile sexual acts, but the acts always have the potentiality to affirm and enhance personal complementarity and human flourishing. The same is true with regard to nonreproductive acts. Though they cannot realize reproductive complementarity, nothing precludes them *per se* from realizing personal complementarity. Marital experience shows that such sexual acts, rather than being destructive of human flourishing, may actually facilitate it. The experience of the married shows beyond doubt that it is never a question of either successful reproduction and therefore human flourishing or nonreproduction and therefore human diminishment. The judgment of whether or not a particular sexual act is moral is to be determined, as all moral judgments are to be determined, on the basis of its impact on human flourishing within the context of a particular interpersonal relationship. We have outlined this basis as a truly human sexual act that evinces holistic complementarity.

The foundation for our definition of a truly human sexual act and its moral evaluation rest, then, not primarily on heterogenital or reproductive complementarity, but on the integrated relationship between orientation, personal, and genital complementarity. Given that complex dialogical relationship, it remains to ask whether or not a particular

sexual act facilitates or frustrates the partners' human flourishing, their becoming more affectively and interpersonally human and Christian. We agree with Stephen Pope: "Interpersonal love is here the locus of human flourishing," and we are now able to offer a definition of complementarity.⁷⁸ Complementarity is a multifaceted quality—orientational, physical, affective, personal, and spiritual—possessed by every person, that draws him or her into relationship with another human being, including into the lifelong relationship of marriage, so that both may grow, individually and as a couple, into human well-being and human flourishing.

HOLISTIC COMPLEMENTARITY, TRULY HUMAN SEXUAL ACTS, AND SEXUAL NORMS

In light of the various types of complementarity explored in the foregoing, a truly human sexual act must be an authentic integration and expression of holistic complementarity as set forth in the following diagram.

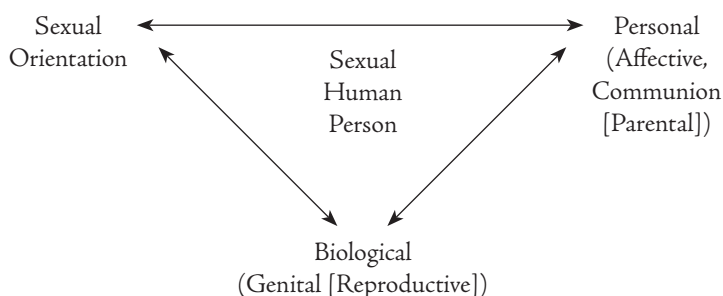


FIGURE 2.1 Holistic Complementarity

Holistic complementarity includes orientation, personal, and biological complementarity, and the integration and manifestation of all three in just and loving, committed sexual acts that facilitate a person's ability to love God, neighbor, and self in a more profound and holy way.

Just and Loving Truly Human Sexual Acts

The careful reader will have noticed our consistent specification that to be truly human, sexual activity, heterosexual or homosexual, must be not only in accord with holistic complementarity but also *just and loving*. The words “just and loving” must be explained. The search for moral judgment in sexual matters today frequently ends with the vapid claim that sexual activity is moral when it is loving. That judgment is vapid because it is usually devoid of content. We agree with Farley that “love is the problem in ethics, not the solution,” and it is the problem to the extent that it is contentless.⁷⁹ Our task here is to give it content. We begin with an ancient definition: to love is to will the good of another.⁸⁰ Love is an activity of the will, a decision to will and to seek the good of another human being. True love, as every lover knows, is ec-static; that is, in love a person goes out of herself or himself to another self who is absolute and unique in herself or himself. That there are two absolutely unique and yet like selves in any loving relationship introduces the cardinal virtue of justice, “the virtue according to which, with constant and perpetual will, someone renders to someone else her or his due rights.”⁸¹ If asked what justice has to do with sexual acts, we respond that, since sexual acts are between two, equal personal selves, justice has everything to do with them.⁸²

One characteristic, perhaps the greatest characteristic, of a modern person is her or his equality with every other person. For Christians, that equality takes on a deeply religious character, because it is believed to be the very plan of the God who created *‘adam* male and female, blessed them, and named them together *‘adam*.⁸³ A sexual act that is just and loving will seek the good of equality for, and will render all the rights flowing from equality to, both partners. Any sexual act that involves inequities—of power, social or economic status, or level of maturity, for example—will be ipso facto not truly human. Flowing from the personal character of equality is the related personal character of freedom. A sexual act that is just and loving will render the rights associated with freedom to the other partner and will seek the good of freedom for

both partners in the act. That will mean, in the concrete, that a just and loving sexual act will require the free consent of both partners and that any sexual act that subverts free consent will be, by that very fact, not truly human. The use of power, violence, rape against an unwilling partner will, therefore, never be truly human. With the modern “discovery” that woman is as free as man, free consent may be seriously interfered with, or even precluded entirely, by any sexual activity that is marked by socially constructed male domination or female subordination. The same reasoning applies to anyone of diminished capacity—the immature, the dependent, the drugged, the drunk, for example—for diminished capacity will automatically mean diminished consent.

A consistently recognized end of sexual activity, heterosexual or homosexual, is both the expression and enhancement of interpersonal relationship, love, or friendship; sexual activity is, in the common phrase, a way to make love. To express and enhance relationality, however, sexual activity must be *mutual*; it must be wanted by and participated in freely by both partners. True love, truly willing the good of another, is never one-sided; there is no true love until love is mutual. It is the mutual love between lovers that creates between them the communion that characterizes lovers. That leads us to a further specification of the mutuality between lovers, namely, mutual, long-term commitment. The Christian tradition has always required some form of long-term commitment, some kind of solemn promise or covenant, from the partners for sexual intercourse to be moral. That this covenant always was linked to marriage, and that marriage was primarily linked to procreation, is no reason not to retain commitment as a reasonable and moral norm for sexual activity, heterosexual or homosexual. We believe long-term commitment is required for a just and loving relationship, including truly human sexual acts, to mature into fruitfulness for both marital and common good. That fruitfulness, which may include the love and communion between the partners, children, and the common good of the community in which the partners and any children live, requires a long-term commitment to be nourished into maturity.⁸⁴ To be loving and just, therefore, any sexual act requires commitment to be truly human.

Normative Implications for Catholic Sexual Ethics

Three implications for Catholic sexual ethics follow if we espouse holistic complementarity, irradiated with the virtues of justice and love, as our foundational principle for truly human sexual acts. The first is that the Magisterium's absolute moral norm prohibiting all homosexual acts must, at least, be reexamined. Without a prior consideration of one's sexual orientation, a sexual act that violates heterogenital complementarity can no longer be considered, from this fact alone, absolutely immoral. Genital complementarity is relevant in determining the morality of truly human sexual acts, but it is not the primary factor. The morality of the use of the genitals in sexual acts must be determined primarily in light of orientation and personal complementarity.

The second implication for Catholic sexual ethics follows from the first; the foundation for sexual moral norms may need to be redefined. Current magisterial teaching posits, for both homosexuals and heterosexuals, an intrinsic relationship between biological and personal complementarity in which heterogenital complementarity is primary and foundational. On this foundation, certain sexual acts are ipso facto immoral because they violate heterogenital complementarity, regardless of sexual orientation and the relational meaning of the act for personal complementarity. In holistic complementarity, there is an integrated relationship between orientation, personal, and biological complementarity that serves as the foundation for sexual norms. In this relationship, for both heterosexuals and homosexuals, orientation and personal complementarity are primary, and they determine what constitutes authentic genital complementarity in a particular sexual act. If orientation complementarity indicates that a person is of heterosexual orientation, then personal complementarity would indicate that authentic genital complementarity would be male–female. If orientation complementarity indicates that a person is of homosexual orientation, then personal complementarity would indicate that authentic genital complementarity would be male–male or female–female. In current magisterial teaching, heterogenital complementarity is the primary foundational dimension for the essential relationship between biological

and personal complementarity. In our holistic complementarity model, orientation and personal complementarity are the foundational dimensions for the integrated relationship between orientation, personal, and biological complementarity.

The third implication is that nonreproductive sexual acts cannot be absolutely morally prohibited. Although such acts violate reproductive complementarity, they do not ipso facto violate personal complementarity and diminish human flourishing. The truly human sexual act in our sexual anthropology is a sexual act that facilitates holistic complementarity, which may or may not include reproductive complementarity in any given sexual act. One may reasonably argue that reproductive sexual acts are the ideal expression of human sexuality, but this does not logically justify the judgment that any sexual act that does not attain that ideal, an infertile or homosexual act, for instance, is morally wrong. Other types of sexual acts that lead to orgasm but are nonreproductive demonstrably facilitate personal complementarity and human flourishing, and may also realize reproductive complementarity in the case of reproductive technologies, as we will see in chapter 6.

In light of these three considerations, we advance the following with regard to sexual moral norms and truly human sexual acts. Sexual moral norms must be formulated and truly human sexual acts must be defined in light of a revised theological anthropology grounded in holistic, not heterogenital, complementarity. A person's sexual orientation is a fundamental dimension of the concretely and normatively human dimension of her or his being, and sexual norms that prescribe or proscribe specific sexual acts must be formulated and applied in light of that orientation. Sexual moral norms must seek to facilitate the integration of holistic complementarity—orientation, personal, and biological complementarity. This integration does not allow for the absolute condemnation of particular sexual acts without due consideration of a person's sexual orientation and the meaning of this sexual act for these persons in relationship—that is, in personal complementarity—which is expressed in and through genital complementarity. The Magisterium's model posits absolute norms forbidding homosexual acts and all nonreproductive-type

sexual acts. Our model cannot justify these absolute norms, but it does posit a formally absolute norm in relation to truly human sexual acts.

Formal absolutes are norms that emphasize character and/or virtue in relation to acts. A formal absolute norm, for instance, might state the following: a not-truly-human, abusive, dishonest, uncommitted, unjust, unloving sexual act, heterosexual or homosexual, is morally wrong; a truly human, caring, honest, committed, just, loving, sexual act, heterosexual or homosexual, is morally right.⁸⁵ The integration of holistic complementarity, that is, the integration of orientation, personal, and biological complementarity, determines whether a sexual act is moral or immoral. In the case of a person with a homosexual orientation, a truly human, caring, honest, committed, just, loving, sexual act will be expressed personally with male–male or female–female genitalia. In the case of a person with a heterosexual orientation, a truly human, caring, honest, committed, just, loving, sexual act will be expressed personally with male–female genitalia. Some theorists have proposed this shift to formal absolutes in terms of a virtue-based sexual ethic in which the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance, always allied with the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, would be the guiding “norms” for what constitutes truly human sexual acts.⁸⁶

CONCLUSION

For any sexual act to be truly human, it must exhibit holistic complementarity, equality between the partners, equal freedom for both partners, free mutuality between the partners, and the mutual commitment of both partners. The Christian tradition will add that those characteristics are all to be informed by the love of God and neighbor enjoined by Jesus. That neighbor-love is concretized by willing and seeking the good of the neighbor, compassion, mercy, forgiveness, and reconciliation, extending even to those neighbors who may be characterized as “enemies.”⁸⁷ Considerations like these lead Farley to a conclusion with which we are comfortable and with which we will conclude this chapter.

Sex between two persons of the same sex (just as two persons of the opposite sex) should not be used in a way that exploits, objectifies, or dominates; homosexual (like heterosexual) rape, violence, or any harmful use of power against unwilling victims (or those incapacitated by reason of age, etc.) is never justified; freedom, integrity, privacy are values to be affirmed in every homosexual (as heterosexual) relationship; all in all, individuals are not to be harmed, and the common good is to be promoted.⁸⁸

That sums up nicely what we have been arguing, and it leads us to our ultimate conclusion. On the basis of our revised foundational sexual ethical principle, *some* homosexual and heterosexual acts, those that meet the requirements for holistically complementary, just, and loving sexual acts, are truly human; and *some* homosexual and heterosexual acts, those that do not meet the requirements for holistically complementary, just, and loving sexual acts, are not truly human. Whether any given sexual act, heterosexual or homosexual, is truly human is determined, as every moral judgment in the Catholic tradition is determined, not by the naked application of abstract moral principles, but by a careful, hermeneutical analysis of how those principles apply in real, concrete, particular human relationships.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. How do you understand the sexual person? Does this chapter confirm or challenge that understanding? Explain.
2. The sexual drive has three personal meanings: it is pleasurable; it is relational; it is potentially procreative. How do you see these meanings contributing to Gallagher's Catholic judgment that "mutually pleasurable marital sexual acts are possibly the human experiences that most fully symbolize the loving communication between the divine Trinity?"

3. Human sexuality has been demonstrated to be multidimensional. How do you integrate in your life the physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual, and relational dimensions of your sexuality? Does this integration cause you any difficulty?
4. How do you understand the word *complementarity* and the terms *sexual orientation complementarity* and *holistic complementarity* as used in this chapter? Are the terms in any way meaningful to you?
5. There are three common senses in which one could claim a natural purpose for the sexual organs. The first is the purpose given them by “nature”; the second is the purpose given them by humans; the third is the purpose given them by God. How do you think these purposes could be identified accurately and distinguished from one another? If they could be identified and distinguished, how would that help you in establishing sexual moral norms?
6. What do you think of the principle that, to be truly human and moral, sexual acts must be both in accord with holistic complementarity and just and loving? How does or will this principle manifest itself in your life?
7. What other questions arise for you from reading this chapter?

NOTES

1. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), *Always Our Children* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1997), 3.
2. GS, 49.
3. USCCB, *Human Sexuality: A Catholic Perspective for Education and Lifelong Learning* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1991), 9.
4. Simon LeVay and Sharon M. Valente, *Human Sexuality* (Sunderland, MA: Sinauer Associates, 2006); Simon LeVay and Curt Freed, *Healing the Brain* (New York: Times Books, 2002); Simon LeVay, *The Sexual Brain* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995). See also PH, 1.
5. See Charles A. Gallagher, *Embodied in Love: Sacramental Spirituality and Sexual Intimacy* (New York: Crossroad, 1985), 21–37.
6. Tom W. Smith, *American Sexual Behavior: Trends, Socio-Demographic Differences, and Risk Behavior* (Chicago: National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago), 74. This document can be accessed at www.norc.uchicago.edu/issues/American_Sexual_Behavior_2003.

7. 1 Cor. 7:3–5; GS, 51.
8. These thoughts on Genesis 2:24 are developed from the section “Penetrer-Etre Penetrer,” in Xavier Lacroix, *Le corps de chair: Les dimensions éthiques, esthétiques, et spirituelles de l’amour* (Paris: Cerf, 1992), 111–14.
9. Michel Foucault, *L’usage des plaisirs* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), 142.
10. W. H. Masters and Virginia E. Johnson, *Human Sexual Response* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1966), 3–8.
11. June M. Reinisch and Ruth Beasley, *The Kinsey Institute New Report on Sex: What You Must Know to Be Sexually Literate* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1990), 84.
12. For an investigation of pleasure as an essential component of human sexuality, see Christine E. Gudorf, *Body, Sex, and Pleasure: Reconstructing Christian Sexual Ethics* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1995).
13. Martha C. Nussbaum, *The Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 22.
14. We are indebted to Jack Dominian’s excellent “Sexuality and Interpersonal Relationships,” in Joseph A. Selling, ed., *Embracing Sexuality: Authority and Experience in the Catholic Church* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2001), 12–15.
15. *Ibid.*, 20.
16. *Ibid.*, 13.
17. The connection of marriage and Eucharist is beautifully developed in Germain Martinez, *Worship: Wedding to Marriage* (Washington, DC: Pastoral Press, 1993).
18. Luke 22:19.
19. Adrian Thatcher, *Liberating Sex: A Christian Sexual Theology* (London: SPCK, 1993), 89.
20. Gallagher, *Embodied in Love*, 108; emphasis in original.
21. USCCB, *Human Sexuality*, 9.
22. See Can 1055, 1.
23. CCC, 2207; Pope John Paul II, FC, 21.
24. Matt. 5:43–48.
25. See Maura Ryan, *Ethics and Economics of Assisted Reproduction: The Cost of Longing* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2001), 134.
26. Mark D. Jordan, *The Silence of Sodom: Homosexuality in Modern Catholicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 74.
27. CCC, 2538; James F. Keenan, “The Open Debate: Moral Theology and the Lives of Gay and Lesbian Persons,” *TS* 1/64 (2003), 146.
28. CCC, 2337.
29. CCC, 2358; *Always Our Children*, 5.
30. CCC, 2359.
31. See LG, 12 and 34. See also Leo J. O’Donovan, *A World of Grace: An Introduction to the Themes and Foundations of Karl Rahner’s Theology* (New York: Seabury, 1980); and Thomas F. O’Meara, *Loose in the World* (New York: Paulist, 1974).

32. For a more fully developed explanation of these terms, see Todd A. Salzman and Michael G. Lawler, "Quaestio Disputata. Catholic Sexual Ethics: Complementarity and the Truly Human," *TS* 67, no. 3 (September 2006): 625–52.
33. GS, 49; emphasis added.
34. CRP, 7.
35. FC, 19. The pope speaks of a "natural complementarity."
36. Barbara Hilker Andolsen, "Review of *The Sexual Person: Toward a Renewed Catholic Anthropology*, Todd A. Salzman and Michael G. Lawler" in *Conversations in Religion & Theology* 8 (2010): 87.
37. CRP, 3.
38. Can 1084, 1.
39. HV, 10; see also Pope Pius XII, "The Apostolate of the Midwife," in *The Major Addresses of Pope Pius XII*, ed. Vincent A. Yzermans, vol. 1, *Selected Addresses* (St. Paul: North Central, 1961), 169.
40. HV, 11.
41. Gareth Moore, *The Body in Context: Sex and Catholicism, Contemporary Christian Insights* (New York: Continuum, 2001), 162.
42. CRP, 3.
43. *Ibid.*, 4; CCC, 2357.
44. CCE, *EGHL*, 35.
45. John Paul II, *Women: Teachers of Peace*, 3, Message of His Holiness Pope John Paul II for the XXVIII World Day of Peace (January 1, 1995), www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_08121994_xxviii-world-day-for-peace_en.html (accessed May 20, 2006).
46. Christine E. Gudorf, "Encountering the Other: The Modern Papacy on Women," in *Feminist Ethics and the Catholic Moral Tradition, Readings in Moral Theology* No. 9, ed. Charles E. Curran, Margaret A. Farley, and Richard A. McCormick (New York: Paulist, 1996), 75; and Charles E. Curran, *The Moral Theology of Pope John Paul II* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2005), 192–93.
47. Edward Collins Vacek, "Feminism and the Vatican," *TS* 66 (2005), 173–74, referring to John Paul II, "Authentic Concept of Conjugal Love," *Origins* 28 (March 4, 1999): 655.
48. John Paul II, "Letter to Women," 7.
49. *Ibid.*; emphasis in original; FC, 19.
50. Kevin Kelly, *New Directions in Sexual Ethics* (London: Cassell, 1999), 51–52. He critiques ontological complementarity as ultimately "oppressive and deterministic."
51. John Paul II, "Letter to Women," 8; MD, 6; John Paul II, "Authentic Concept of Conjugal Love," 5.
52. FC, 19.
53. John Paul II, "Authentic Concept of Conjugal Love," 5.
54. John Paul II, "Letter to Women," 7–8.
55. Moore, *Body in Context*, 121–27.

56. See FC, 23; John Paul II, "Letter to Women," 9; MD, 18; and *Women: Teachers of Peace*.
57. Cristina L. H. Traina, "Papal Ideals, Marital Realities: One View from the Ground," in *Sexual Diversity and Catholicism: Toward the Development of Moral Theology*, ed. Patricia Beattie Jung with Joseph Andrew Coray (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001), 280–82.
58. See Elaine L. Graham, *Making the Difference: Gender, Personhood, and Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996); Margaret A. Farley, *Just Love: A Framework for Christian Sexual Ethics* (New York: Continuum, 2006), 156–57.
59. Traina, "Papal Ideals," 282.
60. CRP, 7.
61. For a review of this data, see Osnat Erel and Bonnie Burman, "Interrelatedness of Marital Relations and Parent–Child Relations: A Meta-Analytic Review," *Psychological Bulletin* 118 (1995), 108–32; Paul R. Amato and Alan Booth, *A Generation at Risk: Growing Up in an Era of Family Upheaval* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 67–83; Stacy J. Rogers and Lynn K. White, "Satisfaction with Parenting: The Role of Marital Happiness, Family Structure, and Parents' Gender," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 60 (1998), 293–316; David H. Demo and Martha J. Cox, "Families with Young Children: A Review of the Research in the 1990s," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 62 (2000): 876–900.
62. CCE, EGH, 4.
63. PH, 1; emphasis added.
64. USCCB, *Always Our Children*, 4–5; emphasis added. See also PH, 8.
65. Robert Nugent, "Sexual Orientation in Vatican Thinking," in *The Vatican and Homosexuality: Reactions to the "Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons"*, ed. Jeannine Gramick and Pat Furey (New York: Crossroad, 1988), 55.
66. This terminology is borrowed from John E. Perito, *Contemporary Catholic Sexuality: What Is Taught and What Is Practiced* (New York: Crossroad, 2003), 96.
67. See William Paul, et al., eds., *Homosexuality: Social, Psychological, and Biological Issues* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1982); Pim Pronk, *Against Nature? Types of Moral Argumentation regarding Homosexuality* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993); Richard C. Pillard and J. Michael Bailey, "A Biological Perspective on Sexual Orientation," *Clinical Sexuality* 18 (1995): 1–14; Lee Ellis and Linda Ebertz, *Sexual Orientation: Toward Biological Understanding* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997); Richard C. Friedman and Jennifer I. Downey, *Sexual Orientation and Psychoanalysis: Sexual Science and Clinical Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002). Robert L. Spitzer ("Can Some Gay Men and Lesbians Change Their Sexual Orientation? 200 Participants Reporting a Change from Homosexual to Heterosexual Orientation," *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 32 [2003]: 403–17) presents a contrary and minority perspective.
68. CDE, "Vatican List of Catechism Changes," *Origins* 27 (September 25, 1997):

- 257; CDE, "Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons," www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19861001_homosexual_persons_en.html, 3 (accessed January 4, 2012).
69. CCC, 2357; CRP, 4.
 70. See GS, 48–50; Code of Canon Law, Can 1055, 1; Lawler, *Marriage in the Catholic Church: Disputed Questions* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002), 27–42.
 71. Though it is beyond the scope of this chapter, as in the Magisterium's model, *how* these elements complement one another in a "truly human sexual act," heterosexual or homosexual, needs to be more fully developed.
 72. We recognize the reality of bisexual persons, but focus and space do not allow us to address this orientation in detail.
 73. PH, 9.
 74. Aquinas, *De Malo*, 15.1c.
 75. See Aristotle, *Generation of Animals*, I, 21, 729b. For greater detail, see also Paige duBois, *Sowing the Body: Psychoanalysis and Ancient Representations of Women* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 39–85; Sirach 26:19; Mishna, Ketuboth, 1, 6; Carol Delaney, *The Seed and the Soil: Gender and Cosmology in Turkish Village Society* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991).
 76. FC, 11.
 77. For a discussion of the role and function of experience in Catholic ethical method, see Todd A. Salzman, "The Basic Goods Theory and Revisionism: A Methodological Comparison on the Use of Reason and Experience as Sources of Moral Knowledge," *Heythrop Journal* 42 (October 2001): 423–50; and *What Are They Saying about Roman Catholic Ethical Method?* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2003), ch. 2; and Michael G. Lawler and Todd A. Salzman, "Human Experience and Catholic Moral Theology," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 76 (2011): 35–56.
 78. Stephen J. Pope, "Scientific and Natural Law Analyses of Homosexuality: A Methodological Study," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 25 (1997): 111.
 79. Margaret Farley, "Ethic for Same-Sex Relations," 100.
 80. See ST, I-II, 28, 1c.
 81. ST, II-II, 58, 1.
 82. We advise the reader that the original draft for this chapter was completed before Margaret Farley's beautiful book *Just Love* became available to us. We are affirmed that both the importance we assign to just love and our analysis of it are matched in general and independently by Farley. See *Just Love*, especially 200–206.
 83. See Gen. 5:1.
 84. For a fuller development of this point, see Michael G. Lawler, *Family: American and Christian* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 1998), 166–74.
 85. The formal criteria listed for what constitutes a morally right or wrong truly human sexual act, though not the specific acts themselves, are common in magisterial and moral theological discourse.

86. See Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981); Martha Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy* (New York: Cambridge University, 1988); "Non-Relative Virtues: An Aristotelian Approach," in *Ethical Theory: Character and Virtue*, ed. Peter A. French, Theodore E. Uehling Jr., and Howard K. Wettstein (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 32–53; James F. Keenan, "Proposing Cardinal Virtues," *TS* 56 (1995), 709–29; Keenan, *Virtues for Ordinary Christians* (Kansas City, MO: Sheed and Ward, 1996); and Keenan, "Virtue Ethics and Sexual Ethics," *Louvain Studies* 30 (2005): 180–97.
87. See Matt. 5:43–48.
88. Farley, "An Ethic for Same-Sex Relations," 105.

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