

**Tangaza College**  
**Catholic University of East Africa**

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**PASTORAL CARE FOR THE HOMOSEXUALS IN THE CHURCH WITH  
REFERENCE TO ZIMBABWE.**

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**A long Essay submitted in Partial fulfillment of the Requirement for the  
Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies.**

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## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this long essay (thesis) is my original work achieved through my personal reading, scientific research method and critical reflection. It is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies. It has never been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit. All sources have been cited in full and acknowledged.

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## **Dedication**

This work is dedicated to my late mother Nancy Nyamwena and my father Elisha Mukupo and all my family members friends and relatives.

## **Acknowledgements.**

Foremost, I want to express my sincere gratitude to Gays and Lesbians staff in Harare Zimbabwe for the information they gave me when I visited their offices in Harare. I want to thank Fr. William Guri CSSR for his insights regarding my paper and directing me to Sapes Sarips Library and Gays and Lesbians Offices for more information. Also, I want to thank him for the loan of books on homosexuality he gave me. I want to thank also Stephen O’Kane ofm who insisted that I should talk to Fr. William Guri CSSR who had written something related to homosexuality when he did his long essay at the University of Zimbabwe. I also want to thank Alfigio Tunha ofm who always brought books for my paper whenever he came across useful material. I am greatly indebted to Emmy M. Gichinga who had great interest on my paper and encouraged me to forge ahead with it. She also gave me insights, which I never thought of since she is a counselor by profession herself.

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## **General Introduction.**

The problem of homosexuality is a daily phenomenon in our contemporary society today. Homosexuality is found through out almost all the cultures and many religions as well. It is also found in all classes of people rich and poor alike.

In Chapter One of this research I am going to look at definition and myths and misconception of people of a homosexual orientation. I am going to look at Africa in general and then keep my focus to Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe I have talked to people of homosexual orientation at Gays and Lesbian Zimbabwe Offices in Harare. I talk with one man was a general one but I was able get very vital information. I also got pamphlets, their constitution and a book to help to understand them. I am going to see if this problem was imported from Europe, as many people would say. Court cases reported show that as early as 19<sup>th</sup> century the problem was already there. I will also look at prisons and schools and see if they contribute to this dilemma. I will also look at what happens at Gays and Lesbian Center in Harare. To be homosexual is not easy so I will treat the challenges of being homosexual in a country like Zimbabwe. I will then look at the issue of gay marriage and child adoption which is a hot issue these days.

In Chapter Two, I am going to give the theological reflection. Basically, I am going to look at the bible. What does it say both in the Old and New Testaments? It is condemned through and through. Human beings are meant to be co-creators since they are created in

the image and likeness of God. The Catholic Catechism and the Magisterium is very clear as regards to the problem of homosexuality. The Magisterium has a moral position and it talks about the dignity of human person and finally the discrimination against homosexuals. At the end of this chapter I will look at what the Church says on the Gay marriages and child adoption.

In my last chapter, which is chapter three, I am going to give the pastoral reflection on the issue of homosexuality. Homosexuals need to be cared for pastorally. This is a special case and must be handled with care. These people need to be accepted without judging them but empathizing with them. No one fully understands their plight therefore we need to be kind to them. We can also use the Theology of the Cross in order to help them to realize that they are not suffering alone but with the crucified Christ. I will give some recommendations to help these people. Some of the recommendations have been used elsewhere and have proved to some extent to be helpful. At the moment I know not a parish, which is handling this issue, but it is important to be prepared for this problem. Homophobia makes it hard for people to come out and seek help from priests and other competent people.

## **Chapter One**

### **1.1.0 Introduction.**

In the first chapter I am going to look at who is a homosexual and who is not. There are several myths and misconceptions, which need to be cleared as regards homosexuals. We all have our own biases and prejudices towards people of different orientation. I am going to look at Africa in general and then focus my research to Zimbabwe. Our president, Mr Mugabe is known for his strong stance on homosexuals. He and many other African leaders and other people believe it is un-African and an exportation from the west. Basically, I am going to look at homosexuality in the early colonial Zimbabwe and see if there are any traces of the homosexual orientation. I will look at schools and prisons and see if they contribute to this phenomenon.

Gays and Lesbians Zimbabwe (GALZ) is an organization, which caters for homosexuals in Zimbabwe. We shall see how it came into being and what is done at their center at number 35 Colenbrander Road, Milton Park, Harare. I will give examples of true stories of how two Zimbabwean women suffered when it was discovered that they were lesbians. Is there any possibility of changing this orientation? I will conclude by treating gay marriages and child or children adoption.

### 1.1.1 Definitions.

A homosexual person is a person with an inner urge, force or desire for a person of the same sex that is male to male and female to female. For women the term lesbian is often used. The word 'gay' is used also to mean a homosexual, before the word 'gay' meant someone who was cheerful. "*The terms 'homosexual' 'gay' and 'lesbian' should be applied only to persons whose conscious sexual desire and experience are exclusively or primarily directed toward other persons of the same sex.*"<sup>1</sup> We must always remember that not all homosexuals actualize their desire for the same sex because some do sublimate their orientation. When an individual decides to actualize his or her orientation that is when you can refer to him or her as gay or lesbian. In this research the word gay and homosexual shall be used interchangeably. The word gay is used in modern language to "*designate a person who prefers erotic contact with his or her own gender.*"<sup>2</sup> The word gay is widely used in Swedish, Japanese, Danish, Dutch, and French, with the same sense as in English. In the late nineteenth century a Germany psychologist coined the word homosexuality despite its air of antiquity. The same sex phenomenon is what is called homosexuality, this could be by conscious preference, subliminal desire, or circumstantial exigency.

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<sup>1</sup> R. J. HUNSTER, et al, *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, Nashville, 1990, p 529.

<sup>2</sup> J. BOSWELL, *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality*, Chicago, 1980, p 41.

### 1.1.2 Myths, Misconceptions about Homosexuals.

In my Shona culture in Zimbabwe we say, “*kusaziwa kufa*” meaning “ignorance is death”. The fact of life is that we do not know what goes on within a person who has a homosexual orientation. This is a mystery. Many of us think that we can know a homosexual person from outside appearance, this is not the case. I have heard people say homosexuals speak with a female voice, dress like women and put earrings. The percentage of such homosexuals is very small. Here we are faced with a problem of generalization because most homosexuals speak and dress like heterosexuals.

*“For males there is no correlation between homosexuality and effeminacy in mannerism or passivity in behaviour. For females there is no correlation with masculinity in appearance or aggressive in behaviour”<sup>3</sup>*

In Zimbabwe people associate homosexuality with abnormality, witchcraft and sickness. Homosexuals are not pedophiles, some people tend to think that a homosexual can seduce minors but there is no evidence for that. It is also clear that someone cannot be a homosexual because he or she was exposed to a person with such orientation. A person is either homosexual or heterosexual. In Zimbabwe for example homosexuality remains hidden simply because of the social stigma it carries.

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<sup>3</sup> Nation News Paper, (Kenya), Saturday, *Opinion Section*, Column 2, 1 May 2004.

### 1.1.3 General Homosexuality in Africa.

Homosexuality is a problem, which is found everywhere here in Africa. Homosexuality is often referred as “*cultural decadences of the west.*”<sup>4</sup> The likes of Robert Mugabe the president of Zimbabwe, Yoweri Museveni of Uganda and Sam Nujoma of Namibia have spoken strongly about homosexuality. Also, former presidents Fredrick Chiluba and Daniel Arap Moi have also spoken against homosexuals. Kenneth Kaunda said in 1998, homosexuals should be allowed to go about their business without harassment. In Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Congo-Brazzaville, Chad, Mali, Gabon, South Africa, Comoros, Sao Tome and Principe, Reunion and Central Africa Republic homosexuality is legal. In Egypt, Ivory Coast, Lesotho, Madagascar Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somali and Rwanda, the law does not say anything but this does not mean its not there. Even though homosexuality is legal in some countries discrimination still exists. In all the eleven countries where homosexuality is legal it is only in South Africa where they can adopt a child or children. Homosexuals too cannot get married legally except in South Africa. In Africa, “*Many that have dare to openly state their sexual orientation have suffered persecution, violence, harassment, rejection and all manner of discrimination.*”<sup>5</sup> The Churches in Africa and Muslims are quick to quote the holy books as regards homosexuals. Many people here in Africa will tell you that it is against the order of nature and that it is unnatural, but for homosexual it is natural. The Bible was used in favour of slavery but now today slavery is condemned. In Paul’s letter to the we read, “*Slaves be obedient to those who are according to human reckoning your masters with deep respect and sincere loyalty, as you are obedient to Christ.*” cf. Ephesians 5,6. In

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<sup>4</sup> British Broadcasting Cooperation, *Focus on Africa*, Oct/ Nov., 2003 p 18.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. British Broadcasting Cooperation, p 18.

South Africa during apartheid, the whites, "*slanted verses to justify white supremacist goal, race mixing was ruled as unnatural.*"<sup>6</sup> Who knows maybe in hundred years to come homosexuality will be accepted. The early church saw slavery as acceptable. In a pastoral statement Gregory I said, "*Slaves should be told . . . not to despise their masters and recognize that they are only slaves.*"<sup>7</sup> Who ever thought slavery was wrong and sinful but it is over and gone now and yet the bible supported it. In Zimbabwe in 1996 the court said, the government had no right to ban gays and lesbian from exhibiting their publication at Zimbabwe International Book Fair. In 1999 Namibia courts echoes the same judgment. The fact is that same-sex erotics have always existed in many countries in Africa. To say homosexuality has no roots in Africa or Zimbabwe is refusing to face reality. Very respectable people in Zimbabwe have been implicated in homosexual activities. In Africa sexual deviation is often judged as abnormal, unnatural or a result of witchcraft.

In Nairobi, Kenya there are places where gays meet. There are many well-educated affluent and confident lesbians but since homosexuality is illegal in Kenya they therefore have hideouts. In Kenya people are more tolerant to lesbians than to male homosexuals. They are others who are gay but married and these have their own organization. "*The number of women who enjoy same sex relationship is possibly Kenya's best secret.*"<sup>8</sup>

In South Africa the law protects homosexuals and they do not feel that they need to fight for their rights. A South African man who is twenty-three years old enjoys going out with other men and he is happy to be a South African because the law protects them. It is

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. British Broadcasting Cooperation, p 18.

<sup>7</sup> M. FIDLER AND I. RABINEN, eds., *Rome has spoken. A guide to forgotten Papal statements, and How They have changed through the centuries.* New York, 1998, p 60

<sup>8</sup> Cf. British Broadcasting Cooperation, p 18.

unjust and unfair to be pointing fingers at whites for homosexuality. However, it is also true that there are Africans who have sex with whites in order to get money, cars, mobiles and other things. Many people who cannot cope with their sexual orientation resort to suicide said Dhlahla who is a lesbian and a pastor.<sup>9</sup> Dhlahla knows the plight of homosexuals so she counsels them and comforts them. In South Africa, some traditional healers have sex with other men for traditional rituals. The one who receives the same sex gets some spiritual power. This is homosexual for a purpose and is not an orientation. The traditional healer is submissive in order to be a powerful healer or spiritual guru. In Ghana they do not accept the idea of two men having sex. No one will admit they are gays in Ghana because of the stigma. At the same time they are gay clubs in Accra the capital of Ghana. People in Ghana are more tolerant towards lesbians and they find male homosexuality disgusting. There is also a phenomenon in many secondary boarding schools where girls have open romantic relationships. However, many pass the phase after school and continue with normal life. Those who are lesbians by nature continue with this way of life. From these countries in Africa alone we see that, homosexuality has existed in all time and in all places.<sup>10</sup> In Ghana sodomy is a crime, homosexuality is a taboo.

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. British Broadcasting Cooperation, p 18.

<sup>10</sup> G. D. COLEMAN, *Homosexuality and Appraisal*, Chicago, 1978, p 15.

#### 1.1.4 Homosexuality in Early Colonial Zimbabwe.

Homosexuality has been there in Zimbabwe before the colonizers came. Mine marriages were a common thing by the nineteenth century in South Africa,<sup>11</sup> and Zimbabwe was no exception. The fact that it was rare does not mean it was not there. The constant problem faced in Zimbabwe is denial. This therefore suggests that Zimbabweans are exclusively heterosexual by nature. It is often said, Malawians and Mozambicans brought it. Homosexuality is seen as a disease. Cases of homosexuality have been in courts as early as 1917, 1921.<sup>12</sup> These cases involved black Zimbabweans. The origin of the word "*Ngochani*" can be linked to people who stayed between Beira and Maputo in Mozambique or the Ndebele or the Ndau people of Zimbabwe. Although the origin is not very clear the word dates back to 1840s. We might not have the word originating from the Shona language but this does not rule out the presence of the orientation.

In Shona there are words used as normless, euphemisms: "*shamwari*," friend "*Kurinda*" (to fuck, not specifying who or what) and "*kutamba chete*" (Just playing.)<sup>13</sup> However, any homosexual acts were seen as witchcraft among the adults as opposed to young ones. No cases of lesbians were ever in court. Women simply had to marry and only complained of not having desire for men or satisfaction. Therefore if lesbianism was there it means that it was highly secretive and was not at all talked about.

The British South African Company came to Mashonaland in Zimbabwe in 1890 and in 1892 five cases of sodomy were tried in "*Salisbury*" and "*Umtali*" and no white men were involved. This is indeed a clear sign that homosexuality was not new to the native

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<sup>11</sup> S. O. MURRAY-W. ROSSE, *Boy Wives and Female Husbands*, Studies in African Homosexuality, Palgrave, 1988 p 196.

<sup>12</sup> S. O. MURRAY W ROSSE, p 200.

<sup>13</sup> S. O. MURRAY W ROSSE, p 202.

Zimbabweans. It is unfortunate that the Chiefs and headmen's did not keep records for any case they tried. Among criminal cases in 1890 homosexuality amounted to 1.5 percent. Some cases were not reported at all simply because police camps were not near the people in many places. Reports as these were just a fraction of the homosexuality, which was happening in the whole country. Between 1892 and 1923, approximately three hundred cases of homosexuals came before the magistrates.<sup>14</sup> Alien natives were often caught in these illicit activities but this does not mean that the Shona were immune to homosexuality. From this we can sense that some of the ancestors of Zimbabweans were gay. Most of these homosexual crimes were committed in hotels, camps, compounds, farms and so on. Cases were reported almost across the country for example in towns like Masvingo, Marondera, Gweru, Kadoma and Mutare. What happened in rural areas is only God who knows because they are no records.

Major cities like Harare and Bulawayo had more cases. In 1912, twenty cases were reported through out the country. Most of the cases involved sex between the thighs and anal sex. Oral and mutual masturbation were rare. Some of these men had reciprocal, relatively long-term and apparently loving relationships.<sup>15</sup> So that such cases were never reported, some engaged in these acts simply because of absence of women so these were not homosexual *per se* but were people who had basically failed to master their sexuality. Some men would be caught with boys but they would put the blame on evil spirits or gave all sorts of reasons. In some places they were gay affirmatives and that meant that it was socially accepted. Homoerotic dances were often performed in public. Homosexuality is seen as sexual deviation or perversion. Duri was a well known

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<sup>14</sup> S. O. MURRAY - W. ROSSI, p 205.

<sup>15</sup> S. O. MURRAY - W. ROSSI, p 208

flamboyant homosexual from Highfields in the 1930s in Harare.<sup>16</sup> It was common for some men to wake up and realize that their friend was squeezing his penis behind them or between their thighs.

In 1900 a Mozambican native sodomised a co-worker in Mutare. He then committed similar seven cases in a period of sixteen years but never accepted his orientation. Some cases reached the courts when the other party had refused to pay for the services rendered. "*Matenyero*" is a Malawian word meaning someone who cleans public toilets. Later on it meant a male having connection with another male between the thighs,<sup>17</sup> or one who enjoyed sex through the rear end. In some places social boys became social wives for soap, few pence and so on.

In 1921 the Shonas constituted a majority of the accused in homosexual crimes countrywide. The 'boy wives' would later marry when they had grown up. My assumption is that, they would do this to other small boys and the cycle continued. Men staying with these young boys would tell them that they had emitted semen on them and told them not to worry. There are cases where the young men were also raped. The older would just say we were playing. Some did it in order to pay debts.

In 1915 near Kadoma, Mr Singame negotiated *lobola* with his father-in-law so that he could marry a man. It was often the "wife" who brought the "husband" to court when things had turned sour. The "wives" would accuse "husbands" of extra-marital sex. In Hwange, Mr Mashumba and Mr Njebe had an affair for sixteen years and they had mutual penetration. They separated later on. The headman in the area knew of the relationships and it was not abnormal to him. Men were sentenced for six months for

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<sup>16</sup> S. O. MURRAY -- W. ROSSE, p 210.

<sup>17</sup> S. O. MURRAY · W. ROSSE, p 212.

emitting semen nonviolently onto another man's legs. Cases of white men having sex with male servants were not as many as the local fellows.

### **1.1.5 Homosexuality in Boarding Schools.**

We have many schools run by churches, which only cater for either boys or girls only. In such situation young people can engage in homosexual activities. They call this "just being playful". This is an adolescent confusion, which is called transitional homosexuality, which passes on as kids grow. Some find it hard to undo the bad habits they would have acquired but professional counselors can help them. Some as they grow can re-discover their orientation. Those who are homosexuals by nature continue in that way of life. Some do it from time to time because of stress but they do not have really the orientation. During adolescence young people experiment a lot but most these experiences are just transitory. Some hide their orientation because of fear of rejection. One-gender boarding schools do not make one homosexual when it is not innate and in some cases one can become one and yet they would be heterosexuals. The only problem is that the environment can promote homosexuality. Prefects also can abuse young ones sexually but there is no reported case. Dormitories are wide-open rooms, which makes kids shy to practice homosexuality because of the stigma it has. Some experiment during adolescent sexual exploration and get hooked into it.

### 1.1.7 Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe.

Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ) is an organization that was started in 1989 by two women. It started as a social club not a political group. It was started simply because of the growing numbers of the gay and lesbian people. At the moment this organization is growing steadily. It has more than three hundred affiliated members and majority are men. This group became more public in 1995 when they wanted to have a stand at the Zimbabwe International Book Fair (ZIBF). This did not happen when it reached the ears of the government authority. The (ZIBF) had no objection but had to obey the government so they stopped (GALZ) to exhibit. The president was very much annoyed about this and he was the one to open the Book Fair officially. The then the minister of Home Affairs, Dumiso Dabengwa had declared that homosexuality is abnormal and would not be allowed in Zimbabwe.<sup>19</sup> The security forces went on intimidating (GALZ) so that they would not take part at all at (ZIBF). When head of state opened the Book Fair he said,

*"Supporting person who believe that the denial of their alleged right to have sex in public is a violation of their human rights, form an association in defense and protection of it and proceed to write booklets and other form of literature on the subject of their rights. Is any sane government which is a protector and society's moral values expected to countenance their accessions? I find it extremely outrageous and repugnant to my human conscience that such immoral and repulsive organization like those of homosexuals who offend both the law of*

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<sup>19</sup> C. DUNTON – M. PALMER, *Human Rights and Homosexuality in Southern Africa*, Current Issues 19, Uppsala, 1996, p 9.

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<sup>19</sup> C. DUNTON - M. PALMERG, *Human Rights and Homosexuality in Southern Africa*, Current Issues 19, Uppsala, 1996, p 9.

the organization? Lastly, the publication department produces and disseminates information to its members and to the international gay community. Anybody over eighteen years can join (GAI/Z) regardless of sexual orientation, race gender or creed. (GAI Z) has a constitution, which is very elaborate. They have a code of conduct for members.

### **1.1.9 Challenges of Being a Homosexual.**

The president of Zimbabwe, R.G. Mugabe, ministers, and chiefs have said publicly that homosexuality cannot be tolerated. Many homosexuals continue to live in perpetual fear. The biggest dilemma is of homophobia as I mentioned earlier on.

A Gokwe woman discovered that she was a lesbian when she was twenty-four years old. When the parents discovered that they brought a man who raped her. She got pregnant and then she aborted. She was locked up by the police and beaten. When she went back home, the man was brought in again to rape her. She got pregnant but she miscarried. The man who raped her was never brought to book, neither the parents. Another girl was found having sex with another woman. The family brought in a traditional healer to cleanse her from this evil. Later the mother brought a man who raped her for a week. She too got pregnant and miscarried. This as you can see is just a tip of an iceberg. There are more homosexuals that we can imagine in Zimbabwe, only time will tell. There is still denial hence many unexplained suicides of young people leave a lot to be desired. Mugabe believes homosexuality is prevalent in jails where there are mad people and criminals.<sup>21</sup> High government personals were implicated and yet they were not prisoners.

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<sup>21</sup>C. DUNTON M. PALMBERG, p 13.

### **1.1.10 Change of Homosexual Orientation.**

Changing someone who is a homosexual by nature is not easy if not impossible. Those who can change are those who learnt it and those who do it for money. Also some who have learnt it cannot undo simply because it would have become part and parcel of them. So it depends with an individual and the grace of God. Some charismatic healers believe they can exorcise the spirit of homosexuality as they call it and someone reverts to heterosexual life. Those who are born with it, it is impossible because it is within their creation. Let me put it this way, can you tell a heterosexual to change from his or her orientation to be a homosexual? If it is possible then I think it is also possible for homosexual. Whether we like it or not homosexuality is here to stay because it is as old as humanity. Those who engage into homosexuality because of prisons or isolation from women are not homosexuals by nature but it is circumstantial or situational.

There are various degrees of homosexuals some have more percentage some are less. So the lesser percentage one has the higher the chances of someone changing. Some people have tried to marry and these marriages do not work. Bishop Robinson left a wife and two daughters in order to stay with another man. In South Africa a woman left a child and husband so that she could stay with another woman. How do you explain these to kids?

### **1.1.11 Gay Marriages.**

You cannot talk of homosexuals without talking about the issue gay marriages. In Europe they are pushing hard to have marriages. In Canada they are already marrying them. The original plan of marriage is that it may be fruitful that is why God created a man and a

woman. *"It is for this reason that same sex marriages cannot be termed marriages in the serious context of matrimony"*<sup>22</sup> Is human life naturally heterosexual? In chapter two we shall see what the church says.

*"The institution of marriage is the most frail and battered. It exists to bless, protect and encourage heterosexual bonds that will produce new human life and rear children under optimal conditions"*<sup>23</sup>

Homosexual families are defunct families. Marriage is solely for a man and woman. Christian marriage is an efficacious sign of the covenant between Christ and the church. The term marriage is only reserved to union of husband and wife. It is a fact that homosexuals have rights but these rights must not infringe the rights of children of growing up in a family of a mother and father figure. Pope John Paul in 1999 said this when addressing the Pontifical council of family, saying:

*"For some time now the family institution has been under repeated attack. These attacks are all the more dangerous and insidious since they ignore the irreplaceable value of proposing false alternatives to the family and of calling for legislative recognition of them. But when laws, which should be at the service of the family, a fundamental good for the society, turn against it, they acquire alarming destructive power. Thus some countries there is a desire to impose a society so called 'de facto union,' reinforced by a series of legal effects that erode the very meaning of the family institution"*<sup>24</sup>

Netherlands became the first country to legalize same-sex marriages in 2002. Belgium and Ontario and British Columbia provinces in Canada then followed it. This definitely

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<sup>22</sup> Messenger of Mary Immaculate, Jan/Feb., No. 102, 2004, p14.

<sup>23</sup> Messenger of Mary Immaculate, p 15.

<sup>24</sup> The Catholic World, Report, Aug/Sept., 2003, p 26.

destroys the sanctity of traditional unions. This is really swimming against the tide. Heterosexual marriage is a vital social institution.

*“Same-sex relationships are egocentric, antithetical to life and lead to a dead end sackgasse, are a product of the corruptible nature and cannot fight against this nature. The end result is unredeemable nature that consumes itself into nothingness or emptiness that is both death and also devoid of life. Christian marriage is found on a solid rock and it cannot be shaken by such perversion.”<sup>25</sup>*

Same-sex marriages will be treated in detail later on particularly in chapter three.

#### **1.1.12 Adoption of Children.**

This is another complex issue as regards homosexual marriages. Who is the mother and who is the father in gay or lesbian family? How can two men or women be co-fathers or co-mothers? How do you explain to children your way of life? *“Opponents to same sex marriage argue repeatedly that children are better off raised by a mother and father.”<sup>26</sup>*

There is a possibility of the children getting a bad socialization and they might then intend to live like the male parents or female parents. It is shaming and embarrassing for kids to say in school both my parents are men. Other kids will mock and jeer at them life fools and the next thing is that they will refuse to go to school, because they would have became laughing stock in whole school. It is a fact that these people can be caring but this is not a healthy family setting. Letting them adopt children is just institutionalizing

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<sup>25</sup> African Ecclesial Review, V 46, No 4, Dec., 2004, p382.

<sup>26</sup> Daily Nation Paper, (Kenya) Monday, March 22 2004, first column p 16.

homosexuality. The fact of life is that, "gay knows no class difference, religious, or ethnic barriers, socio-economic disparities, gender or age limits."<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>J. BABUSCIO, *We Speak For Ourselves*, Philadelphia, 1977, p 13

### **1.1.13 Conclusion.**

Homosexuality is a very sensitive topic to treat even though it is as old as humanity. I have endeavoured to give some plausible definitions and clearing some biases and prejudices against homosexuality. There is a lot of homophobia because of the utterance by state leaders. Most people see homosexuality as something out there. A survey in Africa has shown that homosexuality is everywhere. In Zimbabwe homosexuality has been there since 1800s. This is according to reported cases, which we still find in magistrate offices. As we all know traditional leaders never kept written records so we cannot say much. Homosexuality reality is there but people refuse to face it and point fingers somewhere, however these cases are a tip of an iceberg.

The establishment of GALZ in Zimbabwe is sending clear message to those who thought homosexuality was foreign. As a church minister I therefore have to be objective because sooner or later we shall be dealing with these issues at parish levels. We have seen what happens at GALZ and the services they are offering particularly counseling. We have seen also concrete cases of how the two lesbians suffered and that this orientation is hard change. Lastly, I have treated gay marriages and child adoption. These issues will come up again in theological and pastoral reflections.

## **Chapter Two.**

### **2.0.0 Introduction.**

In this chapter I am going to deal with the theological reflection as regards homosexuality and homosexuals. I am going to first of all to look at the Holy Bible and see what it says concerning this orientation. After that I shall treat the Official Teaching Church, that is, the Magisterium, as regards to homosexuality and also the teaching of the Catholic Catechism. Finally, I will treat what the Catholic Church has said recently as regards to homosexual unions and the issue of adopting children.

### 2.1.0 The Bible and Homosexuality.

The story of Sodom and Gomorrah in the book of Genesis shows the wickedness of homosexual orientation. The men of Sodom said to Lot, "Send them (meaning men who had visited him) to us so that we can have intercourse with them." Genesis 19. In other bible translation it reads, "Send them out to us so that we may know them" or "be intimate with them." The verb know mean to have sex with them. So the young men and old wanted to have with them. Lot thought it better for them to have sex with his two daughters than other men but they could not hear it. This homosexual was rife among their neighbour as we shall see in Leviticus 18, 22.

They are very few scripture passages, which state clearly the prohibition of homosexuality. However, let me look at the Hebrew people and see how same-sex was viewed. In the Hebrew society homosexuality was seen as an abominable custom of the pagan nations. In Leviticus it was repeated twice that:

*"The man who has intercourse with a man in the same way with as with a woman: they have done a hateful thing together, they will be put to death, their blood will be on their heads."*<sup>28</sup>

The Book goes on to say: "*There must be no sacred prostitute among the women of Israel and no sacred prostitute among the men of Israel.*"<sup>29</sup> This was being done by pagan religions and there was a possibility of Israel learning bad habits. This is why I said earlier on in chapter one that homosexuality is old as humanity and it is in all cultures in various degrees. In some societies it is more and in some it is less, but the reality is that it exists.

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<sup>28</sup> In The New Jerusalem Bible, cf. Leviticus 20,13.

<sup>29</sup> In The New Jerusalem Bible, cf. Deuteronomy 23,18.

### 2.1.1 New Testament and Homosexuality.

In the New Testament, it is only in Pauline literature where homosexuality is mentioned. The word homosexuality itself is not mentioned as such but it is the same-sex acts, which are strongly condemned. We can see this in Pauline letters: *"Do you not realize that people who do evil will never inherit the Kingdom of God make no mistake -- the sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, the self indulgent, sodomites . . . ."*<sup>30</sup> Paul is very strong on sexual morality because he is aware that some of his converts are coming from pagan religions where homosexuality was being practiced. He does not want this behaviour to creep into the new religion (Christianity).

*"That is why God abandoned them to degrading passions: why their women have exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural practices, and the men in the similar fashion too, giving up normal relations with women are consumed with passions for each other men doing shameful things with men and receiving in themselves due reward for their perversion."*<sup>31</sup>

We have texts that are related to the issue of homosexuality for instance if we are treating marriage, adultery, fornication and procreation. Many of such texts coalesce with those negatively evaluating homosexual acts by indicating a positive heterosexual marital and procreative norm of sexual love.

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<sup>30</sup> In the New Jerusalem Bible cf. 1 Corinthians 6,9.

<sup>31</sup> In the New Jerusalem Bible cf. Romans 1, 26-27. See also 1 Timothy 1,10.

### 2.1.2 Co-creators.

God's intention in the beginning was a very noble one, simply because he created man and woman not man and man or woman and woman. Human beings are co-creators that is why they ought to procreate. Generational quest is indeed a human desire. This is very clear in Genesis chapter 1, 2 and 5. In Genesis 1, 27 and 5, 2 there is the duality of sexes and both are created in the image and likeness of God. The union of male and female makes one flesh. Man is not complete human being when he is alone and this applies also to the woman. Man and woman are meant to complement each other. Man and man or woman and woman cannot and will never complement each other. The relation of both sexes is indeed a profound reality created by God. *"Same-sex does not create room for co-creators but are open to non-life, death, non-ontological existence, simply open to logical beings or illusionary beings of the mind."*<sup>32</sup>

### 2.1.3 Jesus and Homosexuality.

Jesus does not mention anything to do with homosexuality but appreciates familial relationship because from the stories we learn this in Matthew 22, 1-4, Luke 14, 7-11. We have also the image of the bridegroom in Mark 2, 19-20, Matthew 5,14-17 then 25,1-13 and Luke 5, 27-32. Jesus also went to a wedding at Cana in John 2, 1-11. This shows that Jesus had affirmative view of marriage of a man and women not the other way round. Jesus condemns adultery and lust cf. Matthew 5, 27-28 and yet his attitude is compassion and forgiveness cf. John 8, 2-11. Paul is negative as regards sexuality cf. I

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<sup>32</sup> African Ecclesial Review, V46, No.4 Dec., 2004, p 382.

Corinthians 7, 25-40 but he exhorts couples to love each other faithfully. cf Ephesians 5, 21-33.

#### 2.1.4 Catholic Catechism.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church is very clear in its teaching because every one is called to be chaste. Chastity consists in self-mastery of one's sexuality. Sexual feelings, are good, and God given therefore they must be controlled because we are rational beings and not animals which are led by instinct. These feelings must not dictate the way we should behave. They should not lead us by the nose. Homosexuality is an offense against chastity, however the origins of the problem of homosexuality remain unanswered. The Catechism sees homosexuality as a great depravity and that it is intrinsically evil. Homosexual acts cannot be approved simply because of the lack of complementarity. Number 2358 reads in the Catholic Catechism:

*"The number of men and women who have deep-seated homosexuality tendencies is not negligible. They do not choose their homosexual condition, for most of them it is a trial. They must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided. These persons are called to fulfill God's will in their lives and, if they are Christians, to unite to the sacrifice of the Lord's cross the difficulties they encounter from the condition."*<sup>33</sup>

In chapter three I shall treat in detail the suffering homosexuals and the theology of the cross as a pastoral reflection. In number 2359 the Catholic Catechism continues to say:

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<sup>33</sup> The Catechism of the Catholic Church, Nairobi, 1995, p 544.

*“Homosexual persons are called to chastity. By the virtues of self-mastery that teach them inner freedom, at times by the support of disinterested friendship, by prayer and sacramental grace, they can and should gradually and resolutely approach Christian perfection.”*<sup>34</sup>

It is only a man and a woman who can give themselves in conjugal love. This is not just biological but their innermost selves. This commitment made by husband and wife is for life. Sex is a gift to a man and a woman in the context of marriage and there is transmission of life. Marriage is for fidelity, fecundity and the good of the children. Homosexuals do not share in the creative power and fatherhood of God the Father. A child is not something owned but a gift, a supreme gift in marriage so if not there it is fine if there, well and good for the family and society at large. Most homosexuals are not faithful to one partner and this shows that there is no commitment. Tamara a homosexual from Rwanda said, so far he had slept with more than hundred men, he went on to say Africans are hypocrites because they can only sleep with you in the night and the following day won't talk to you.<sup>35</sup> Even though some claim to be committed this cannot be tolerated because this is undermining the original plan of God. That is why some people refer to it as devilish aberration. Man is not designed to be a woman biologically and the rear end is an outlet only and not an inlet. The rectum is not structured to be penetrated also it cannot deal with pathogens introduced from outside. It has a single purpose we all know. The Church will always teach the truth and will not give in to external or internal pressure from immoral persons. Whether someone is homosexual or

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<sup>34</sup> The Catechism of the Catholic Church, Nairobi, 1995, p 144.

<sup>35</sup> Nation Newspaper (Kenya) Magazine, 17-23 April 2004, p 6.

heterosexual everyone is called to be chaste. Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit therefore we cannot use them for a wrong sexual perversion or the way we want.

### **2.1.5. The Position of the Magisterium**

The Official Teaching of the Church on homosexuality is very clear. It says that homosexual activity is grave and it is sinful if it is engaged in with full will and deliberation. Those who are forced into it are not responsible because there is no consent, this could be abuse in prisons or any other places. The homosexual problem remains a troubling moral and social phenomenon especially in our society today. The Magisterium also says that homosexuals should not be discriminated against because of their orientation. Homosexual act are intrinsically evil.<sup>36</sup> *"Man and women with homosexual tendencies must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity."*<sup>37</sup> Homosexual activity is a pre-moral evil and human disvalue.

### **2.1.6 Magisteriums' Moral Arguments.**

The magisterium frequently argues that same-sex marriage is impermissible because homosexual activity is always wrong. Sexual activity should be restricted to the context of two people of the opposite sex who have undertaken a permanent commitment to live in as indissoluble marriage. Sexual activity must embody both male and female

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<sup>36</sup> Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, Declaration *Persona Humana*, 29 December 1975, p 8.

<sup>37</sup> Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, Consideration regarding proposal to give legal recognition, between Homosexual persons, Nairobi, 2003, p8

complementality and procreative fruitfulness and sexual practices that fail to do so are morally wrong.<sup>38</sup> Homosexual acts are objectively immoral and intrinsically disordered.

Some “new natural lawyers” say, *“marriage is considered not as a mere legal convention, but rather as a two-in-one-flesh communion of persons that is consummated and actualized by sexual acts of the reproductive type, is an intrinsic human good, as such, marriage provides a non<sup>39</sup> instrumental reason for spouses, whether or not they are capable of conceiving children in their acts of genital union, to perform such acts.”*<sup>40</sup>

Sexual intimacy between two members of the same-sex can by their very nature accomplished no more than what is expressed in casual sex, sex contracted with prostitute or solitary masturbation. Homosexual acts are not ethically permitted because there is no unity of one flesh but a mere appearance of true sexual intimacy. Marriage has to be open to procreation the Church repeats this over and over again. As we saw already homosexual marriage is a threat to the social institution of marriage and of family life. Homosexuality is a social sin, it is an evil which ends deep into the structures, organization communities and societies on account of human choices and attitudes.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> G. V., BRADLEY AND R. P., GEORGE, Marriage and the Liberal Imagination, Journal 84 1995, pp 301-2.

<sup>39</sup> G. V., BRADLEY, ed., Committee on Marriage and Family, United States of America Conference of Catholic Bishops. “Always our Children” revised in 1998, Same-sex Attraction: Parents Guide, 2003, p 215.

<sup>40</sup> Theological Studies, p 445.

<sup>41</sup> African Ecclesial Review, V 46, No.,4, 2004, p 333

### 2.1.7 Magisterium and the Dignity of the Person.

“God does not love someone less simply because he or she is a homosexual.” The magisterium prohibits the sexual acts without condemning their agents as such. The fact is that you love the sinner and hate the sin. The magisterium says, gays are *“inherently ordered to a kind of sexual love that will always be closed in oneself, psychologically sterile, and morally bankrupt.”*<sup>42</sup> This absolutely a dysfunctional relationship that is irredeemable. The magisterium wants basically to encourage certain kinds of behaviour and social roles.

### 2.1.8 Magisterium and Discrimination.

The magisterium concedes that all forms of unjust discrimination, including those against gay people, are wrong and unacceptable.<sup>43</sup> It goes on to say that this does not mean they have a right to marry. This is what the magisterium calls justified discrimination. Unjust discrimination the magisterium means arbitrary differential treatment in virtue of membership in a particular group.<sup>44</sup> Marriage of male and female has great value as a social institution. Marriage of male and female involves a social as well as an interpersonal ethic. The Church teaches that marriage is a relationship in which the local community, the civil society, and the state have a legitimate interest.<sup>45</sup> The Magisterium fears that a purely non-procreative, contractualized notion of marriage might lead to the elimination of the family and to anarchy in child-rearing practices. “The Magisterium

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<sup>42</sup> Theological Studies, p 546.

<sup>43</sup> Theological Studies, p 550.

<sup>44</sup> Theological Studies, p 551.

<sup>45</sup> Theological Studies, p 557.

holds that, according to the natural law, love, sexual intercourse, and reproduction constitute these essential components of marriage that cannot be detached from one another and treated as independent goods."<sup>46</sup>

### 2.1.9 The Church's Position on Homosexual Marriages.

For the Church it is clear that the Creator, God, instituted marriage. *"That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife and they become one flesh."*<sup>47</sup> Marriage is to be fruitful and multiply.<sup>48</sup> Gays and lesbians do not multiply neither can they be fruitful. They too cannot become one flesh. Christ elevated marriage to a sacrament therefore marriage union is indeed holy and homosexual union is not. Homosexual *"unions are not able to contribute in a proper way to the procreation and survival of human race."*<sup>49</sup> Unions must be open to transmission of life. Homosexual unions devalue the institution of marriage. *"Such unions are harmful to the proper development of human society, especially if their impact on society were to increase."*<sup>50</sup> If at all they are to marry what would be the formula for exchanging the vows? John says to Peter: I, John take you Peter to be my what? Who is the bride and the bridegroom for both gays and the lesbians? This is indeed a scandal to humanity. The Church has no right to change the original plan of God for the sake of human beings.

The Chief Justice Margaret Marshall said this in Massachusetts in America.

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<sup>46</sup> Theological Studies, p 560.

<sup>47</sup> In the New Jerusalem Bible cf. Genesis 2.24.

<sup>48</sup> In the New Jerusalem Bible cf. Genesis 1.28.

<sup>49</sup> Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Consideration regarding proposal to give legal recognition to unions between homosexual persons*, Nairobi, 2003, p 12.

<sup>50</sup> Congregation fro the Doctrine of the Faith, p 14.

*"Marriage is vital social institution. The exclusive commitment of two individuals to each other nurtures love and mutual support. It brings stability to our society."*

<sup>51</sup> In America they are pushing for the same-sex unions and in some parts they are already getting married legally. It is indeed sad isn't it? This means they have to redefine the meaning of marriage. *"The institution of marriage is so battered that many consider gay unions the last straw."*<sup>52</sup> said, Hendrik Hartog. The America President George W. Bush said, *"the well being of children as a principle reason for limiting marriage to male-female union."* Institutionalizing homosexuality is taking it to a more dangerous level. The American Bishops said, *"It will be wrong to redefine marriage for the sake of providing benefits to those who cannot rightfully enter into marriage."*<sup>53</sup> Homosexuality is a distortion and a betrayal of marriage institution because the unions are anti-life, anti-social and anti-scriptural. Homosexuality will never measure up to or adequately portray the full meaning and significance of human sexuality.<sup>54</sup> Homosexuality depreciate marriage and is not an expression of love. *"It is the selfish taking of venereal pleasure through the use of another person's body and it entails the concomitant depersonalization of the other."*<sup>55</sup> Even if homosexuality is generic this cannot make its acts morally right. Heterosexual and homosexual intercourse cannot be justified by same moral reasons neither do they share same potential good for the society. These two do not belong to the same camp. Marriage institution is both private and public and human beings cannot survive without institutions. Sacramental marriage is a sign of Christ's grace. Homosexual unions do not reflect a union between Christ and his church. Christian

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<sup>51</sup> The Catholic World, *Report*, January 2004, p 8.

<sup>52</sup> Newsweek, 1 March 2004, p50.

<sup>53</sup> *Origins* 33, November 27 2003, pp 433-34.

<sup>54</sup> J. F. DEDEK, *Contemporary Medical Ethics*, Kansas, 1996, p 81.

<sup>55</sup> *African Ecclesial Review*, V 46, No 4, Dec., 2004, p 82.

marriage aims at a profoundly personal unity. *"the unity that goes beyond union in one flesh leads to forming one heart and one soul. It demands indissolubility and faithfulness in definitive mutual giving and it is open to fertility."*<sup>56</sup> Marriage and family are anchored in the plan of God for the human family.

#### **2.1.10 Child adoption and The Teaching of the Church.**

Since these marriages have no complementarity, *"this creates obstacles in normal development of children who would be placed in care of such persons."*<sup>57</sup> Children in this setting are denied parents of both sexes. Letting these people adopt children is a grave injustice to the children. The environment of homosexual parents is not suitable for children to grow in it. This is absolute disruption to social order. When I am talking of non-discrimination I do not mean they should get married and adopt children. I have in mind basic rights like employment and others enjoyed by heterosexual people. The rights for children come first before the rights of adults simply because children cannot make decisions. Letting children to be adopted is sinning against them. If this happens it is the epitome of decadence. Some countries are already allowing them to adopt children and South Africa is the only country in Africa that gays and lesbians can adopt children.

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<sup>56</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, "Catholic Truth Society," 1981, sec. 13, pp 25-26.

<sup>57</sup> Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Consideration regarding proposal to give legal recognition to unions between Homosexual persons*, Nairobi, 2003, p12.

### **2.1.11 Conclusion.**

In this chapter I have dealt with the theological reflection regarding homosexuality. I have seen what the Old Testament says as regards men sleeping with men and women with women. It was not accepted at all. In the New Testament it is only Paul who mentions this phenomenon and its implications. Jesus says nothing directly but emulates marriage and used the image of the bride and bridegroom not bride and bride or bridegroom and bridegroom to show his appreciation for marriage. Jesus even attended a wedding at Cana in the Gospel of John 2,1-12. The Catechism and the Magisterium say no to homosexuality but these people must be treated with love and compassion. For marriage and adoption of children the church once again discourages such unions. Children ought to be raised in a father figure and mother figure even in some orphanages kids are now being raised the small families with figure parents looking after them.

## **Chapter Three.**

### **3.0.0 Introduction.**

In this last chapter, I am going to treat the pastoral aspect of the problem posed in proceeding chapters. As we have already seen that this is a complex and delicate matter. As ministers, pastors of the church we need to handle this fragile issue with care. In this chapter then, I am basically going to look at how best we can handle this dilemma in our parishes. At the moment Catholic Church in Zimbabwe has not started handling this problem in parishes. What is in this chapter are suggestions that have been used in America and Europe. So, I think it is better for us to be equipped so that when time comes, the Church in Zimbabwe will be geared for it. Since the problem is so widespread we need to look ahead and plan. I will treat the theology of the cross and the suffering homosexuals. At the end I will give some practical recommendations.

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### 3.1.0 Love and Care for Homosexuals.

Homosexuals are a small minority in the Church and no one knows who they are at the moment. They are still not open till the opportune time I suppose, but still they are some who occasionally come out. They need a support system in the Church and proper pastoral care. We must always remember that homosexuals are created in the image and likeness of God. The fact that they are of a different orientation does not imply that they are less human. Many people who find themselves in this orientation find it hard if not impossible to cope with this sexually deviant orientation. Gays or lesbians, they are children of God, infinitely precious in the eyes of God.<sup>58</sup> Homosexuals are also God's holy people and must not suffer against any harassment and persecution like as we have seen in the case of two women in Zimbabwe. You cannot rape a woman simply because she is a lesbian.

The Church is a teaching and a learning Church. We need to listen in our Churches with love without judging them maybe we can learn something from these people. The Church in Zimbabwe needs to create an ambience for dialogue with people of this orientation. We who are heterosexuals can be enriched by their insights and plight if we are prepared to listen. We should not be afraid of them because a person does not become a homosexual through exposure to homosexual role models, or by being seduced or raped by a homosexual<sup>59</sup> and some do. We must always and everywhere remember that the pastoral care, which is given to people of homosexual orientation, is similar to any other person. The Church has to deal with what a person is going through or has gone through

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<sup>58</sup> Religious Life Review, Vol., 42, May/June, 2003, p 142.

<sup>59</sup>R. J. HUNTER et al., Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling, Nashville, 1990, p529.

with love and compassion. Church ministers must be sensitive because they are dealing with people who are often judged negatively by both the Church and society.

### **3.1.1 Acceptance of Homosexuals.**

The problem of homosexuality is primarily one of straight liberation from the myths stereotypical thinking and the consequent forms of discrimination that in turn engender defensive postures among gays. Few people desire or wish to be a homosexuals therefore compassionate attitude is indeed of paramount importance to them but there are also some who choose to be homosexuals. Is homosexuality God's wish for humanity? The Catholic Church teaches that, the Church is seriously obliged to provide catechesis suited to the people of special needs that are homosexuals and others. Gays must be taken as unmarried people therefore genital activity is forbidden. Promiscuous behaviour should not be accepted at all. Homosexuals can move out their closet to self-acceptance, to self-intimacy. This can help them to be aware of God's love for them. Enduring on the part of homosexuals does not help. These people should be open to say they are gay and christian. Every situation in people's lives can be a moment of grace or religious growth. Being homosexual is not the end of life.

The Church is the body of Christ and we have to reckon that one of its parts is homosexual. There are heterosexuals who are celibates, so homosexuals can be encouraged to embrace the celibate way of life. For homosexuals, self-knowledge and self-discovery is essential rather than remain in deep, dark secret. Homosexuals go through a lot of pain and sometimes it is noticed when they drink too much particularly

men. This is a sign that they have no one to listen to them. There is mystery that surrounds homosexuality and people keep on saying it is unnatural. Homosexuals continue to be marginalized because of their orientation. The Church in Zimbabwe should make people aware that homosexuals need not to be marginalized or abused in whatever form. Homosexuals are not answerable to us but to God alone. Many homosexuals struggle and rustle with their sexual orientation which shows that they do not want to be that way. Many homosexuals experience a lot of darkness, loneliness and nothingness. The Church must provide professional counselors who can assist these people in their plight. Letting go and becoming oneself become a process of becoming who they are. Jesus said, *"Be compassionate as your Creator in heaven is compassionate."* Lk 6, 36. Compassion in this context is not feeling sorry for them but empathizing with them. An outreach program must be put in place so that those who cannot access counselors can be helped too. Here are five goals to be recommended to homosexual people:

*"1. To live a chaste life in accordance with the Roman Catholic Church Teaching on homosexuality. 2. To dedicate their entire lives to Christ through service to others, spiritual reading, prayer, meditation, individual spiritual direction, frequent attendance at Mass and the frequent reception of the sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist. 3. To foster a spirit of fellowship in which they may share with one another our thoughts and our experiences and so ensure that none of us will have to face the problems of homosexuality. 4. To be mindful of the truth that chaste friendship are not only possible but necessary in the celibate christian life and to encourage*

*one another in forming and sustaining them. 5. To live lives that may serve as good example to others.* <sup>60</sup>

We need to pray for them, in the Eucharist, Rosary and Adoration. We should at all cost avoid or stop mocking them or joking about their struggles. This is like punching them in the nose. Christians who are homosexuals are not only there simply on what they would suggest but must stick to the true Gospel values and avoid the idea of just getting along.

They should be reminded that the Church says,

*“That sexual intercourse is an act of total commitment which belong properly with permanent marriage relationship. That fornication and adultery are sins against this ideal and are to be met by a call to repentance and the exercise of compassion. That homosexual genital acts also fall short of this ideal and are likewise to be met by a call to repentance and the exercise of compassion. That all Christians are called to be exemplary in all spheres of morality, including sexual morality, and that holiness of life is particularly required of christians.* <sup>61</sup>

*“The Church must establish rehabilitation schemes for homosexuals. It has to be form, continuous, caring humble, loving and penetrating into the deeper needs and horizons of the life of homosexuals without allowing any loophole of justification.* <sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> See Booklet, *The Gay Agenda: A Christian Response*. Miami, p 16.

<sup>61</sup> *Theological Studies*, Sept., 2004, V 65, No. 3, p 504.

<sup>62</sup> *African Ecclesial Review*, V 46 No 4, Dec., 2004 p 335.

### 3.1.2 Theology of the Cross and Homosexuality

The Church teaches homosexuals, to join one's suffering of Jesus on the cross and to live a life of sexual renunciation. Fundamentally, Homosexuals are called to enact the will of God in their life by joining whatever suffering and difficulties they experience in virtue of their condition to the sacrifice of Christ's cross. That cross for the believers is a fruitful sacrifice since from that death come life and redemption while any call to carry the cross is met with bitter ridicule by some. It should be remembered that this is the way to eternal life for all who follow Christ.<sup>63</sup> The cross is denial of self. Crucify all self-indulgent passion and desires cf. Galatians 5, 24. As we saw already homosexuals are called to be chaste like anybody else. There is no discipleship without discipline therefore self-denial is a necessary precondition to discipleship cf. Matthew 10, 39 and Luke 17, 33. Homosexuals can share in the redemptive suffering of Christ.<sup>64</sup> Self-denial of sexual orientation makes one to enter into a fruitful self-sacrifice. This is recommended to any other people. The spirituality of the cross symbolizes a participation in the suffering of Christ. Homosexuals can be transformed by grace to live a chaste life in peace and joy without resentment. Suffering is part and parcel of human existence but when they do suffer they suffer with Christ. The Vatican, The Head Office of the Catholic Church says, homosexuality itself is not sinful but rather a condition intrinsically ordered toward evil.<sup>65</sup> The Cross is also a symbol of both God's own incomprehensible love for us in the death of Jesus Christ and our own call to embrace it. The cross is an expression of divine empathy. God' love is revealed on the cross for all of us. The reality of the love of God to us is that it is unconditional. He loves each one as he or she is. So the theology of the

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<sup>63</sup> Theological Studies, p 505

<sup>64</sup> Theological Studies, p 508

<sup>65</sup> The Gay Agenda: A Christian Response, Miami, p16.

cross helps homosexual to come in terms with their orientation. The burden of their orientation is surrendered to the cross.

The Church in Zimbabwe must call on the government, in the event of legislation to decriminalize homosexual acts, to enact appropriate measures to protect public and public health in schools, public places and places of work the institutionalization of this orientation. In the Churches it must be declared that those of homosexual orientation are to be received as full members of the Church on the same basis as anyone else. There must be continuous dialogue and growth within the church on the issue. Jesus came for the sinners not the righteous, but sinners must convert and show signs of repentance. A homosexual person cannot live perpetually in sin when he or she has christian values. Jesus said, " Let the one among you who is guiltless be the first to through a stone at her." John 8. 7. Everyone is a sinner but it is easy to point at others and judge them harshly. If Jesus was to be around us now he would probably be found dinning in gay bars with homosexuals as he did with Tax Collectors and sinners during his earthly life. The church need to find a lasting solution to homosexuality only at personal level through committed dialogue with the homosexuals. Pope John Paul said,

*"Infidelity, sexual activity outside of marriage and the absence of a moral and spiritual vision of marriage covenant are depicted uncritically, while positive support is at times given to divorce contraception abortion and homosexuality. Such portrayal, by promoting causes inimical to marriage and the family are detrimental to the common good of society."*<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> John Paul II, Message for the 38<sup>th</sup> World Communication Day, No 3, Vatican, 2004.

### **3.1.3 Conclusion.**

In the last chapter we have seen how we can best help homosexual on a pastoral level. We need to accept homosexuals with compassion and love. These people need also to honour God fully in their bodies by living a life of chastity and seek to live chastely. We have seen that when they suffer they suffer with Christ and the theology of the cross helps them to face their reality. Lastly, I have given some recommendation on how basically homosexual can be able to live chaste life and how we ought to remember them in our prayers. Our bodies must not be martyrs to our desires. Homosexuality is a sensitive and controversial issue in the contemporary world and should be handled with care. It is also a challenge to the Church and the Church should be open to accept those of homosexual orientation as its members. The Church is for both sinners and holy people. The Church should journey with the members of the body of Christ who are weak but must not and will never promote homosexuality as a way of life.

## **General Conclusion.**

I have looked at the problem of homosexuality, which is often referred to as un-African by many people. From my research I have noticed that in every country there are people with homosexual tendencies. Some countries have few and others more and also depending on what the law says about them. It is indeed not easy to be a homosexual because it is not socially accepted and degrading names are used simply to mock them. Both the Old and New Testament condemn homosexuality as sinful. The Church teaching is very clear about the practice of this behaviour. It is immoral, sinful and disordered. However, the Church treats homosexuals with love and care. The Church tries to separate the sinner and the sin.

Compassion, love and acceptance are extremely important if at all we wish to help these people as ministers of the Church. Spiritual guidance is vital without being judgmental. Some people have been helped and today are happy to be gay and Christian. Even though it is hard to reverse this orientation, we are also sure that with the grace of God some, not all are delivered from this orientation. We too who are heterosexual also need to pray for these people. Lastly, the Church will always teach the truth and the truth is that homosexuality is unnatural and sinful.

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