

## Don't Call Me "Gay!"

I am a man who suffers from unwanted same-sex attraction but who does not consider himself "gay." As I understand it, the word "gay" is a socio-political and reductionist term used by those who advance the homosexual life style. However, the word "gay" cannot define who a person is. This is a crucial point and one which the general public may not fully understand.

When someone in the "gay community" uses the word "gay," he or she means anyone who embraces or freely acts upon homoerotic thoughts or behaviors. It is a term that specifically denotes the belief (with political consequences) that a person who has same-sex attractions would be *fulfilled* by expressing them. It is intended to be a word of liberation in the sense that the term implies a "coming out" from a kind of societally imposed bondage. Once a person has been "liberated" from this supposed suppression, he or she is ready to begin the adventure toward the "sexual fulfillment" of their desires. A person "comes out" as "gay."

This is not the position of those who see themselves first and foremost as children of God—as men and women in Christ who believe that God created human sexuality for the fulfillment of His plan for human life. God's plan is realized either in individual chastity (in which we might love Him more singularly) or in chastity within a marriage between a man and a woman (in which physical attraction, rightly used, leads to the fulfillment of *His plan*, rather than our plan, for human sexuality and the openness to new life). This rightly ordered and healthy manifestation of sexuality is part of the Natural Law, a way of being that we recognize in our hearts as the Truth, one that brings us to know God's Love more fully. A theoretical win-win situation for us all.

In my life, God's plan was distorted when I turned from God's Revealed understanding of human sexuality and from His sovereignty in my life. This turning away was manifest in choices that led to bad habits and eventually to alienation from God, from myself and from others. This process began in childhood, prior to the age of reason, when I was overwhelmed by developmental distortions that interfered with my ability to identify with the masculine—partly due to my inherent characteristics and partly due to environmental factors (social, psychological and familial) that led me, eventually, to embrace the worldview of the gay community, a community which seemed to fulfill my need to be accepted and affirmed. This combination of inherent and environmental factors prevented me from fully identifying with masculinity, especially with the physical male-gendered body into which I was born.

I craved the attention and affection of other boys and men, those who I nevertheless felt inadequate to please, even with my best efforts. This perception was reinforced by many experiences in my childhood. During pubescence (after I was molested by an older boy), I sexualized this strong need for connection with the masculine, an identity I longed for but did not feel. This initiated my entrance into homoerotic / homosexual experimentation and fantasy. I began to believe that I *could* connect with other males—but because I could connect only in a sexual manner, I could not, even with my best efforts, experience the connection I really desired: that of being one with the others and of clearly belonging in the world of men. Instead, I could only achieve this connection through an active fantasy life and later by trying to possess sexually what I could not access from my own weakly identified masculinity.

The consequences of pursuing same-sex attraction for me was the development of a painful moral incongruity with my values as a practicing Christian, one whose strong primary identity was as a child of God. The awareness of being a child of God inclined me to want to do His will, to live a chaste life in order to be happy and to fulfill my baptismal promises. But my experience of unwanted same-sex attraction interfered with my ability to respond as a man in Christ, as a child of God. My psychological distress seemed to represent an

apparent irresolvable conflict—**unwanted** same-sex attraction, a sexual inclination that was not in conformity with what I knew to be the Church’s teaching and not in conformity with my inherent human desire for sexual fulfillment.

I came to experience complete alienation from my true identity as a child of God when I began acting out homosexually in the “gay community,” a lifestyle in which sex seemed to be an action not tied to any values other than sexual “fulfillment.” I also saw how my longings for connection with my own sexual identity, which had developed so poorly, was leading me to use other men simply to fulfill my desire for that masculinity which seemed to be lacking in myself; by possessing them, I longed to possess what would make *me* feel like a man. The failure to achieve this led to intensified cravings.

The incredible difficulty of regaining, repairing or achieving the development of a desired masculinity for a man who has same-sex attraction cannot be underestimated. For me, withdrawing from unwanted same-sex attraction and living in chastity has been like withdrawing from heroin. I have, for a long time, used this drug (lust) to keep me functioning in my life as well as to enable me to cope with the incredible alienation I still occasionally feel from other men (and from my own masculinity), especially when I cling to the thought that they would hate or avoid me if they knew the inclination with which I struggled. Thankfully, this alienation has lessened since I began the work of “reparative therapy.” I now feel as if I have a truer self, yet I still struggle on occasion with lust even as I progress in my development—but, by God’s grace, such struggles make me human, like every one else.

The distinction between the word “gay” and the expression “unwanted same-sex attraction” is essential to understand if you wish to engage accurately and with clarity in discourse regarding this area of human brokenness. To buy into the use of a term that does not truly or fully describe the experience of those persons with unwanted same-sex attraction is to fall prey to the “gay agenda,” a movement which would like to silence anyone who does not give complete affirmation to same-sex sexual behavior. I hope my explanation will help others to better understand this important distinction.