

2011–present

Christian Traditions

Roman Catholic Experiences

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Annotated by Carlos R. Fernandez, annotations adopted from Amazon.com

Arthur, L. Robert. *Sex Texts: Sexuality, Gender, and Relationships in the Bible*. Dorrance Pub, 2013.

In the book, *The Sex Texts: Sexuality, Gender, and Relationships in the Bible*, Arthur writes that the majority of accepted Roman Catholic beliefs have remained unquestioned for two thousand years. He argues that many doctrinal “truths”, for example, views on God, creation, sexuality, gender, and human relationships, are based on misinterpretations and mistranslations of the original Biblical texts.

Browning, Frank. *The Monk and the Skeptic: Dialogues on Sex, Faith, and Religion*. Soft Skull, 2013.

In his new book, *The Monk and the Skeptic*, Browning examines the intersection of sexuality and religion through the framework of conversations between the author and a gay priest. They discuss the nature of secular and spiritual friendship; religious thought on same-sex marriage; the relation of the body to God; the mission of charity enacted by the drag troop Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence; the biblical prohibitions on improper pleasures of the body; and the history of how the church has viewed the body and desire. Browning manages to bring in a host of influences to his discussion: Descartes, Locke, Greek Myth, Christian Myth, Buddhist myth, Harry Potter, St. Thomas Aquinas, as well as modern writers like Jeanette Winterson, John Boswell, and Daniel Mendelsohn. The result is an engaging, timely, and very modern discourse on how the self and sexuality has been interpreted throughout the ages.

Callaghan, Tonya. *That's so Gay! Homophobia in Canadian Catholic Schools*. Neue Ausg. ed. Saarbrücken: AV Akademikerverlag, 2012.

Because Catholic doctrine about homosexuality is contradictory and fundamentally homophobic, some lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ) teachers find themselves having to deny their sexuality and resort to hiding in a metaphorical Catholic “closet” when teaching in Canadian Catholic schools. Educational researcher Tonya Callaghan employs a multi-method qualitative framework to uncover how homophobia is institutionalized in these schools. Callaghan first theorizes the problem and examines pertinent Catholic documents as well as key Canadian legal decisions. Then, using interviews with six LGBTQ teachers and her own experience as a lesbian teacher, Callaghan retells the teachers’ stories in the form of life-narrative vignettes. This varied

research design provides much needed insight into a previously untold aspect of Canadian schooling. It offers a valuable perspective that may be beneficial to LGBTQ teachers and their colleagues, school administrators, government officials, teachers' unions, and human rights activists. This book also may be of interest to researchers in the fields of education, sociology, law, ethics, sexuality studies, and religion.

Jordan, Mark D. *The Silence of Sodom: Homosexuality in Modern Catholicism*. Chicago, Ill.: U of Chicago, 2012.

The Silence of Sodom by Mark D. Jordan, a professor of theology at Emory University, is a smart, graceful, important book about homosexuality and modern Catholicism. It transcends discussion of sexual identity and contends that theology cannot, fundamentally, be argued--it must be lived. "Serious moral theology cannot be principally the framing and manipulation of quasi-legal propositions. It must begin and end in the discovery of particular lives under grace." Consequently, Jordan writes, "lesbian and gay lives will have to become audible to the church, readable within it, before their graces can be discerned and described." Jordan argues that the way for gay lives to become audible in the church is to demonstrate an intimate relationship between "homosexuality and holiness." To demonstrate that relationship, gay people must rethink their notions of identity by questioning the descriptive power of terms such as *gay* and *homosexual*, and perhaps even abandoning such terms.

Kaczor, Christopher Robert. *The Seven Big Myths about the Catholic Church: Distinguishing Fact from Fiction about Catholicism*. San Francisco: Ignatius, 2012.

The Roman Catholic Church has long been the target of suspicion and hostility. However, how much of this is based on ignorance and prejudice and how much is the fruit of thoughtful consideration of the facts? This book separates fact from fiction. Without excusing or justifying wrongdoing, author Christopher Kaczor clarifies official Catholic teaching and demonstrates that much popular opinion about Catholicism is based on misunderstanding and misinformation. He also provides robust and lucid arguments for Catholic belief and practice. No one book can answer everyone's questions or objections about Catholicism, but this work examines seven of the most controversial and most common myths about the Catholic Church.

Lovatt, Stephen C. *Faithful to the Truth: How to Be an Orthodox Gay Catholic*. 2nd ed. Seattle, WA: CreateSpace, 2012.

This book is proposed as both a resource to gay Catholics, so that they are better able to defend themselves against the ignorant attacks of those who seek to vilify them, and also to those in authority in the Church who wish to study the subject dispassionately so as to inform their conscience on the matter.

Nelson, Thomas Arthur. *An Ordinary Catholic: A View from the Pew*. CreateSpace, 2012.

Millions of ordinary Catholics are leaving their Church, expressing final frustration over reforms that never come. *An Ordinary Catholic* is a memoir style essay by a Catholic-educated layman whose life experiences provide a convincing background and perspective for a reform of his Church that will resonate with many. Relating his life experiences, Nelson provides strong arguments against some very traditional Catholic doctrine and he touches on many of the issues being debated today, both inside and outside of his Church. Nelson's poignant tales of typical family dramas, the loss of his first wife, his remarriage, his dedication to gay activism and concern over school bullying are the backdrops that provide his confident qualifications for Church critique. His extraordinary activism in his community and Church provides Nelson with ample material to express his convictions on some common complaints of those departing the Church. He touches on misogynistic policies, which he feels are a natural by-product of mandatory celibacy. He also relates experiences, which clearly demonstrate an ongoing shameless abuse of aging clergy, a scandal that has garnered little public notice.

Purcell, Richard, and Susan Casslan. *Conversations with Richard Purcell: The Adventures and Reflections of a San Francisco Renegade Priest*. Meandering Trail, 2011.

Richard Purcell was an openly gay Franciscan priest who died in 2011 of Lou Gehrig's disease. Although he had irreverent views of the Catholic Church, Purcell was widely known for his spiritual insights and his service to the poor. He lived as a true Franciscan, who garnered much of his spirituality from his two decades of work with Native Americans in Arizona. Richard's final years were spent in San Francisco, where he ran a homeless shelter for men with AIDS. Although Purcell eventually became completely paralyzed, the peace and joy he exhibited throughout his illness were highly contagious. In this book, Susan Casslan, one of Purcell's caregivers in his final years, documents his journey. The book touches on healing from grief, the reconciling of sexuality with spirituality, and gives an insider's view San Francisco history and culture, especially of the Inner Mission District where Purcell lived.

Selmys, Melinda. *Sexual Authenticity: More Reflections*. Vulgata, 2013.

Drawing on the material presented at sexualauthenticity.blogspot.com it explores questions like: "How can a gay Catholic be true to her sexual identity while remaining faithful to the Church?" "Is homophobia real, and what should Christians be doing about it?" "What does it mean to be gay, or queer, or trans? Why would a Christian choose to use those terms?" "Why would a gay person want to be Catholic in the first place?" Whether you are an LGBTQ Christian looking for shelter; a straight Christian who loves someone gay; or a gay person looking for a better way to have the conversation about sexuality and faith; this is a book that cuts through the politics and the bitterness to arrive at the heart of the queer person -- A person made in the image and likeness of God.

Wagner, Richard. *Secrecy, Sophistry and Gay Sex in the Catholic Church: The Systematic Destruction of an Oblate Priest*. Nazca Plains, 2010.

For centuries, homosexuals have been vilified and persecuted by the Catholic Church, but the Church has always had a very inconvenient secret. Many of its clergy, even those in the highest echelons of the Church, were and are homosexual. Little was known of the lives these religious people lived until the publication, in 1981, of the groundbreaking, *Gay Catholic Priests: A Study of Cognitive and Affective Dissonance*. Richard Wagner is the author of that study and he is a gay priest. The media firestorm that erupted after its publication and the backlash within his religious community because of its publication eventually destroyed his public priesthood. This story of his 13-year battle with the Church to save his ministry exemplifies the spiritual isolation, emotional distress, and ecclesiastical reprisals every gay priest most fears. *Secrecy, Sophistry and Gay Sex in the Catholic Church* provides an intimate and sometimes disturbing look into the unseemly inner-workings of the Catholic Church. It is a detailed account of the Church's take-no-prisoners attitude in stamping out whatever they perceive as a threat, especially if the threat comes from within.