

Hallo again M,

Thanks for your email. I hope you are making progress with your expository preaching.

Regarding your friend who is being attracted towards Roman Catholicism, I am not sure what to say. Quite a number of my gay Christian friends have moved in the direction of sacramentalist churches like the Anglo-Catholics or Roman Catholics, because of disillusion with evangelical Protestantism. This is ironic, because the official position of these churches towards homosexuality is just as hostile as the evangelicals. However, the tradition of all-male unmarried clergy has over the years provided a refuge for many gay Christians – a place where they can keep their self-respect and their sense of vocation, while protected by a conspiracy of silence about their sexuality. It is well-known that the Vatican is full of gay priests! As you say, the Catholic liturgy has an attraction for many too, with its atmospheric mysticism, rich symbolism and choral beauty. And the need for theological and ethical authority in a post-modern world where the multiplicity of 'valid' opinions generates pandemic uncertainty is a factor for some as well.

Personally, I find the unbiblical error in Catholic theology completely unacceptable, and it disappoints me when my friends turn a blind eye to this. But I have not yet found a way to convince them that standing for revealed truth should come first. Somehow Catholics are able to sustain their own private convictions, which are often totally opposed to their church's official teaching, and yet still claim the Pope's blessing. The illusion of theological unanimity is just that – an illusion! But they seem wilfully blind to the essentially hypocritical nature of the whole Catholic enterprise. What can we do? I guess just try to show them, by the example of our love and integrity, that biblical authority, intellectual rigour, and authentic spirituality can coexist.

Let me know if you think I can be of any further help.

Christian love and my prayers,

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