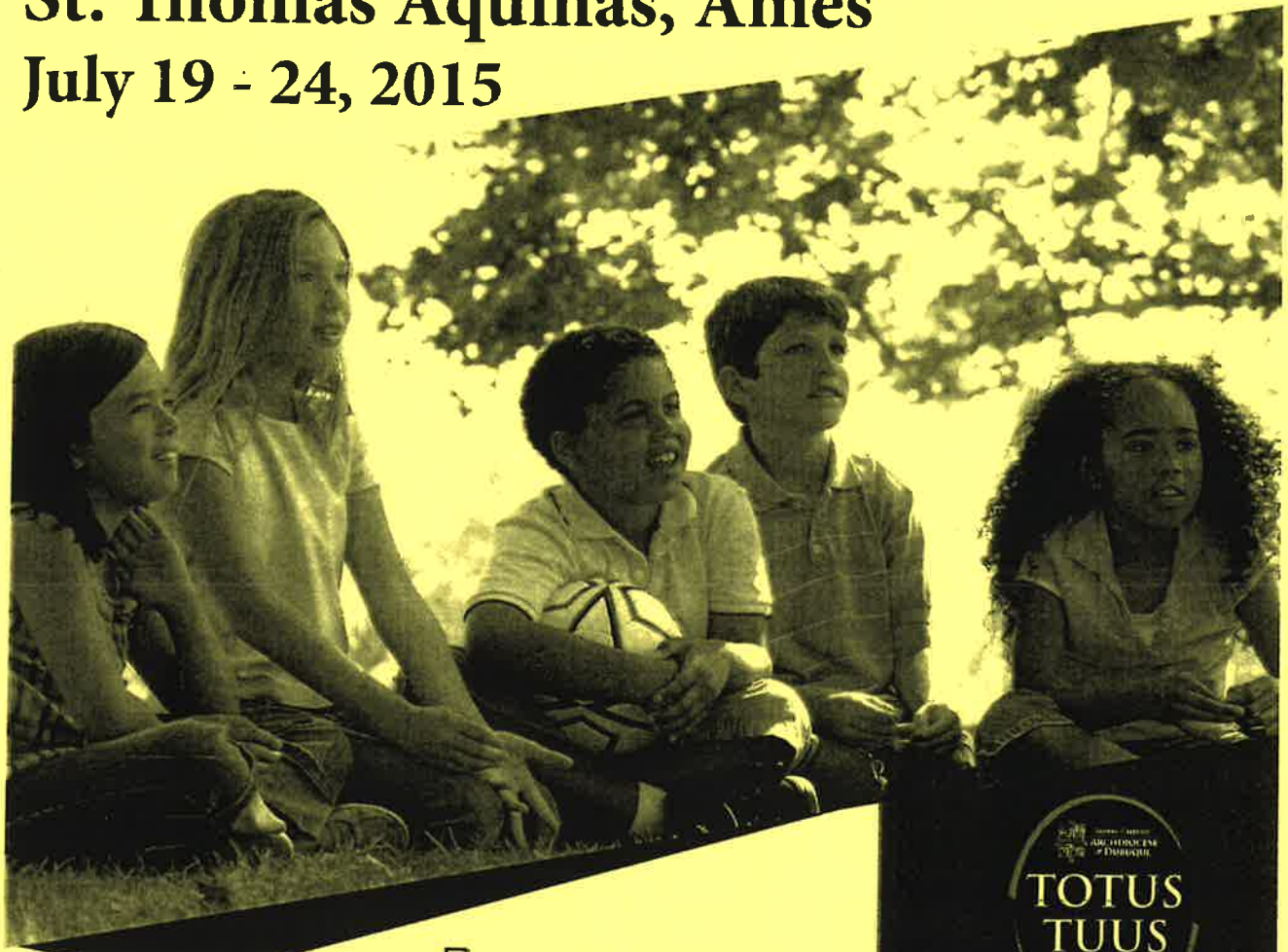


TOTUS TUUS

St. Thomas Aquinas, Ames

July 19 - 24, 2015

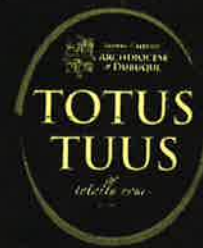


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8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Junior High & High School

Sunday - Thursday
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... *after* the divorce papers are served and the bottom falls out of your life.

... *after* the funeral, when everyone has left and the emotions you've held at bay come crashing in on you.

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... *after* the last child honks the horn, waves, and drives away—and the house suddenly seems empty.

... *after* the gavel goes down, the handcuffs go on, and your loved one is led away.

... *after* the baby arrives, demanding more of you than you ever dreamed possible.

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... *after* your family and friends have heard your story one too many times, but you still need to talk it out.

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BIBLE

— 101 —

A CRASH COURSE
IN SCRIPTURE



with

KATIE PATRIZIO

OUR NEW DIRECTOR OF FAITH FORMATION

WED JUL 22 7PM SOCIAL HALL

A Catholic Perspective on Homosexuality

In their pastoral letter Always Our Children: A Pastoral Message to Parents of Homosexual Children (1997), the U.S. Catholic bishops' Committee on Marriage and Family said a Catholic attitude toward homosexuality and homosexual persons should be formed "within the larger context of accepting divinely revealed truth about the dignity and destiny of human persons." The committee outlined the following points as a summary of Catholic teaching.

● **Every person has an inherent dignity because he or she is created in God's image.**

A deep respect for the total person leads the Church to hold and teach that sexuality is a gift from God. Being created a male or female person is an essential part of the divine plan, for it is their sexuality—a mysterious blend of spirit and body—that allows human beings to share in God's own creative love and life.

● **Like all gifts from God, the power and freedom of sexuality can be channeled toward good or evil.**

Everyone—the homosexual and the heterosexual person—is called to personal maturity and responsibility. With the help of God's grace, everyone is called to practice the virtue of chastity in relationships.

Chastity means integrating one's thoughts, feelings, and actions, in the area of human sexuality, in a way that values and respects one's own dignity and that of others. It is "the spiritual power which frees love from selfishness and aggression" (Pontifical Council for the Family, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*, 1996, no. 16).

● **Christ summons all his followers—whether they are married or living a single celibate life—to a higher standard of loving.** This includes not only fidelity, forgiveness, hope, perseverance, and

sacrifice, but also chastity, which is expressed in modesty and self-control. The chaste life is possible, though not always easy, for it involves a continual effort to turn toward God and away from sin, especially with the strength of the sacraments of penance and eucharist. Indeed God expects everyone to strive for the perfection of love, but to achieve it gradually through stages of moral growth (cf. John Paul II, *On the Family*, 1981, no. 34). To keep our feet on the path of conversion, God's grace is available to and sufficient for everyone open to receiving it....

To live and love chastely is to understand that "only within marriage does sexual intercourse fully symbolize the Creator's dual design, as an act of covenant love, with the potential of co-creating new human life" (United States Catholic Conference, *Human Sexuality: A Catholic Perspective for Education and Lifelong Learning*, 1991, p. 55). This is a fundamental teaching of our Church about sexuality, rooted in the biblical account of man and woman created in the image of God and made for union with one another (Genesis 2–3).

Two conclusions follow. First, it is God's plan that sexual intercourse occur only within marriage between a man and a woman. Second, every act of intercourse must be open to the possible creation of human life. Homosexual intercourse cannot fulfill these two conditions. Therefore, the Church teaches that homogenital behavior is objectively immoral, while making the important distinction between this behavior and a homosexual orientation, which is not immoral in itself.

It is also important to recognize that neither a homosexual orientation, nor a heterosexual one, leads inevitably to sexual activity. One's total personhood is not reducible to sexual orientation or behavior.

● **Respect for the God-given dignity of all persons means the recognition of human rights and responsibilities.** The

A Catholic Perspective on Homosexuality

teachings of the Church make it clear that the fundamental human rights of homosexual persons must be defended and that all of us must strive to eliminate any forms of injustice, oppression, or violence against them (cf. *The Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons*, 1986, no. 10).

It is not sufficient only to avoid unjust discrimination. Homosexual persons "must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2358). They, as is true of every human being, need to be nourished at many different levels simultaneously. This includes friendship, which is a way of loving and is essential to healthy human development. It is one of the richest possible human experiences. Friendship can and does thrive outside of genital sexual involvement.

● **The Christian community should offer its homosexual sisters and brothers understanding and pastoral care.** More than twenty years ago we bishops stated that "Homosexuals . . . should have an active role in the Christian community" (National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *To Live in Christ Jesus: A Pastoral Reflection on the Moral Life*, 1976, p. 19). What does this mean in practice?

It means that all homosexual persons have a right to be welcomed into the community, to hear the word of God, and to receive pastoral care. Homosexual persons living chaste lives should have opportunities to lead and serve the community. However, the Church has the right to deny public roles of service and leadership to persons, whether homosexual or heterosexual, whose public behavior openly violates its

teachings.

The Church also recognizes the importance and urgency of ministering to persons with HIV/AIDS. Though HIV/AIDS is an epidemic affecting the whole human race, not just homosexual persons, it has had a devastating effect upon them and has brought great sorrow to many parents, families, and friends.

Without condoning self-destructive behavior or denying personal responsibility, we reject the idea that HIV/AIDS is a direct punishment from God. Furthermore, "persons with AIDS are not distant, unfamiliar people, the objects of our mingled pity and aversion. We must keep them present to our consciousness as individuals and a community, and embrace them with unconditional love. Compassion -- love -- toward persons infected with HIV is the only authentic Gospel response." (National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Called to Compassion and Responsibility: A Response to the HIV/AIDS Crisis*, 1989)

● **Nothing in the Bible or in Catholic teaching can be used to justify prejudicial or discriminatory attitudes and behaviors.** We reiterate here what we said in an earlier statement: "We call on all Christians and citizens of good will to confront their own fears about homosexuality and to curb the humor and discrimination that offend homosexual persons. We understand that having a homosexual orientation brings with it enough anxiety, pain and issues related to self-acceptance without society bringing additional prejudicial treatment." (*Human Sexuality: A Catholic Perspective for Education and Lifelong Learning*, 1991, p. 55)

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United States Catholic Conference of Bishops

The full text of the bishops' statement is available on-line at: <<http://www.usccb.org/laity/always.htm>>. Printed copies are available from the Office for Publishing and Promotion Services at 800-235-8722 (No. 5-131).