Vatican

Nicole Winfield

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The Vatican decreed Monday that the Catholic Church cannot bless same-sex unions since God "cannot bless sin."

The Vatican's orthodoxy office, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, issued a formal response Monday to a question about whether Catholic clergy can bless gay unions.

The answer, contained in a two-page explanation published in seven languages and approved by Pope Francis, was "negative."

The decree distinguished between the church's welcoming and blessing of gay people, which it upheld, but not their unions.

The Vatican holds that gays must be treated with dignity and respect, but that gay sex is "intrinsically disordered." Catholic teaching holds that marriage between a man and woman is part of God's plan and is intended for the sake of creating new life.

Since gay unions are not intended to be part of that plan, they cannot be blessed by the church, the document said.

"The presence in such relationships of positive elements, which are in themselves to be valued and appreciated, cannot justify these relationships and render them legitimate objects of an ecclesial blessing, since the positive elements exist within the context of a union not ordered to the Creator's plan," the response said.

God "does not and cannot bless sin: He blesses sinful man, so that he may recognize that he is part of his plan of love and allow himself to be changed by him," it said.

Francis has endorsed providing gay couples with legal protections in same-sex unions, but that is in reference to the civil sphere, not within the church. His comments were made during an interview with a Mexican television station, Televisa, in 2019, but were cut by the Vatican until they appeared in a documentary last year.

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