

Pope Francis Signals Possible Endorsement of Same-Sex Civil Unions

Pope Francis has signaled that the Catholic Church may tolerate some forms of same-sex civil unions, though he affirmed the Church's opposition to gay marriage.

According to a translation by Catholic News Service, the pope said in an interview with the Italian daily *Corriere della Sera* that "matrimony is between a man and a woman" but that moves to "regulate diverse situations of cohabitation [are] driven by the need to regulate economic aspects among persons, as for instance to assure medical care."

He added, "It is necessary to look at the diverse cases and evaluate them in their variety."

This is the first time any pontiff has indicated even tentative acceptance of civil unions. Pope Francis' remarks come shortly before the anniversary of his election as the Church's leader.

The pope also spoke about the Church's teachings on contraception in his conversation with the paper's editor in chief, Ferruccio de Bortoli.

"The question is not whether to change the doctrine, but to go deeper and make sure that pastoral care takes account of situations and of what each person is able to do," the pope said.

When asked if teachings on sexual and medical ethics represented "non-negotiable values," he replied, "Values are values, period. I cannot say that, among the fingers of a hand, there is one less useful than another. That is why I

cannot understand in what sense there could be negotiable values.”

In addition, Pope Francis defended the Catholic Church’s response to clerical sex abuse.

“Statistics on the phenomenon of violence against children are shocking, but they also clearly show the great majority of abuses occur in family and neighborhood settings,” he said. “The Catholic Church is perhaps the only public institution to have acted with transparency and responsibility. No one else has done more. And yet the church is the only one attacked.”

The highly popular pontiff reflected on his reputation and criticized “ideological interpretations, a certain mythology of Pope Francis.”

He explained, “When it is said, for instance, that he leaves the Vatican at night to go feed the tramps on Via Ottaviano. That never even occurred to me.”

“To portray the pope as a kind of superman, a type of star, strikes me as offensive,” he added. “The pope is a man who laughs, weeps, sleeps soundly and has friends like everybody else—a normal person.”