

DIGNITY

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AND
CONCERNED HETEROPHILES

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PROTESTANT THINKING: AN EDITORIAL

The second Vatican Council's Decree on Ecumenism declares: "Moreover some, even very many, of the most significant elements or endowments which together go to build up and give life to the Church herself can exist outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church: the written word of God; the life of grace; faith, hope, and charity, along with other interior gifts of the Holy Spirit and visible elements." (I, 3)

Also: "Therefore, if the influence of events or of the times has led to deficiencies in conduct, in Church discipline, or even in the formulation of doctrines ..., these should be appropriately rectified at the proper moment." (II, 6)

Again: "By the sacrament of baptism ... a man becomes truly incorporated into the crucified and glorified Christ and is reborn to a sharing of the divine life." (III, 22)

That the Holy Spirit resides within the Catholic Church we believe. But through baptism that same Spirit lives in others and draws them into a life-giving union with Christ. That Spirit lives in them. He speaks to them. It would be preposterous to insist the Spirit can speak only from Rome. In the days before Christ, God raised up leaders and spoke to his people through men other than Jews. Who is to limit God in speaking now? "The Spirit breathes where it will."

In the matter of homosexuality, Protestant thinking is far ahead of Catholic. We would do well to consider what the Protestant churches and theologians have to say, they who also possess the Spirit, and where necessary proceed to rectify the formulation of doctrine.

Norman Pittenger, a Protestant theologian, stated that homosexuals "cannot be expected to 'give up sex' altogether. And if it happens that one is dealing with a couple who, so far as one can see, deeply and truly love one another, it is pretty close to spiritual homicide to separate them."

Walter D. Dennis, Episcopal priest and canon of New York's cathedral of St. John the Divine, believes a homosexual relationship "should be judged by the same criterion as a heterosexual marriage -- that is, whether it is intended to foster a permanent relationship of love." (cont'd. p.2)

