

as others. But that has nothing to do with any condition they might be suffering from. It is because it takes courage and a lot of belief in yourself to be happy when you are told, or it is intimated to you constantly, that you are an outsider, defective, perverted, laughable, or a sufferer from a condition. It is not surprising that people in that condition sometimes end up frightened, miserable and bitter and that some even kill themselves. But, to repeat, what they are suffering from is not homosexuality but inhumanity.

- 1 Though it is controversial, I follow the practice of using the word 'gay' to refer to homosexual people of either sex. This is not meant to give offence to lesbians.
- 2 n. 8.
- 3 Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith;: *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons*, n. 3.
- 4 *An Introduction to the Pastoral Care of Homosexual People*.
- 5 The Vatican *Declaration* neatly refers to gays as 'those who suffer from this anomaly' (n. 8). This is of course an admission that what the gay person suffers from is no condition; he or she suffers from being different.
- 6 Ratzinger does see homosexuality as mortally dangerous to those who have got it. He speaks of the self-denial of gay people as something 'which will save them from a way of life which constantly threatens to destroy them' (n. 12). But notice that it is not now a disease, a condition, that is supposed to threaten to destroy them, but a way of life. A way of life is not akin to a condition. Here we are back with moral talk, and have veered away from the incompatible medical model.
- 7 nn. 13, 15.

Civil Disobedience: A Sign for Jonah

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The authors were tried on 9 January at Banbury Magistrates Court for alleged offences committed during a CND demonstration at a base where nuclear-armed bombers are on constant alert. Though they were fined for trespass and breaking a by-law, they were found not guilty of criminal damage. Brother Richard's counsel, Dr John Finnis, Praelector in Jurisprudence in Oxford University, had submitted (substantially on case law) that they had 'lawful excuse' for their

actions. The Crown Prosecution Service will almost certainly try to get the Court's important decision reversed. This is the text of the defendants' own last words to the Court.

We cannot escape the fact that at USAF Upper Heyford people are ready to kill the innocent. That readiness is at the heart of our deterrent policy. And if we support that policy, acquiesce in these plans, then that readiness to kill the innocent, however reluctantly, is in our hearts also. We harden our hearts. I think we can best explain why we did the limited and public damage that we did by telling a short Bible story, about that reluctant prophet Jonah. He too is hard-hearted. He wants to see Nineveh destroyed, even when the people have repented. He is cross with the God who has mercy on them. So God causes a gourd, a castor-oil plant, to grow up and shelter Jonah. And then God destroys it. And Jonah is furious.

Then God says:

'You had pity on the plant for which you did not labour, which you did not make grow, which sprouted in a night and perished in a night. And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left...?'

(4—10f.)

If Jonah is so incensed by such a small hurt, how can he possibly countenance the annihilation of a city of innocent people, people who couldn't tell which hand to hold a sword in? And through that small hurt he is brought to see his own hard heart. Argument on its own was not enough. God's word was not enough. So God destroyed the gourd, and that little damage was a symbol that revealed to Jonah his own lack of compassion, readiness to do untold damage.

If you think we must be brought before the courts and fined for outlining a few crosses and letters in paint, what will you do about the plans, the readiness, to kill innocent millions in the cities we deliberately target? What we have done, with other Christians, is to expose in symbolic action nothing other than the evil intent, the lawlessness, at the heart of our State security. If you condemn one, what will you say of the other?

There are differences, of course. The law is an infinitely more precious thing than the plant, the work not of a night but of centuries. It exists to protect not just property but the poor and the weak. But now our laws are being used to protect the nuclear deterrent, protect weapons aimed at the poor and the weak. The plant in the Bible was just offering some shade, not protecting the threat to Nineveh. God destroyed the plant. Our public acts on October 15th did not destroy the law itself. As our defence has tried to show, we acted for the good of the law. And for the good of the people law ought to protect. But how would you judge the case of God v. Jonah? And what will God say of our hardness of heart? You might judge us guilty of breaking the letter of the law. But what of the spirit?