



Left to Right: Joseph Sciambra, Hudson Byblow, Daniel Mattson

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3 PROMINENT CATHOLICS DISCUSS THEIR SAME-SEX ATTRACTION

“I believed I could find happiness there, and I couldn’t.”

Jim Graves

I spoke with three prominent Catholic men who have struggled with same-sex attraction but who are today practicing Catholics seeking to live lives of chastity in accordance with Church teaching. All have written and spoken extensively about their experiences; below are some thoughts they shared.

Daniel Mattson is author of *Why I Don't Call Myself Gay: How I Reclaimed My Sexual Reality and Found Peace* and was featured in the documentary *Desire of the Everlasting Hills* (<https://everlastinghills.org/movie/>). He is a professional musician from Michigan, raised in a Catholic home (his brother is Fr. Steve Mattson, in fact, a priest of the Diocese of Lansing) and is a featured speaker for COURAGE, the Catholic Church's ministry to persons with same-sex attraction.

"I tried practicing the world's view of sexuality. For a time, I considered myself "gay" and lived out that life. I rejected the Church's teaching as archaic, outdated and unreasonable ...

... I had no attraction to women, and I was addicted to pornography. I was angry and decided to turn my back on God. I found a man with whom I thought I wanted to share my life. I put a stake in the ground and said, 'I am a "gay" man.' However, God brought a woman into my life to whom I was attracted. I thought she was the most beautiful woman in the world. It made me angry all the more. I wasn't supposed to be attracted to women anymore: I was "gay"!

So, in my experience, it is a mistake to put people into boxes as "gay" or "straight," and not be open to the possibility that these attractions may change on their own. I am not attracted to many women, but there are some. A person can have many attractions in his life, but only some he should act upon.

Throughout the history of the world people have recognized that it is not uncommon for people to have attractions to both sexes, but only in the past 150 years have those attractions meant that you're a certain sort of person."

"... What led me to the Catholic Church was her constant teaching about the nature of the human person as well as my own dissatisfaction with the world's view. This, in turn, led me to explore the correct use of words, which led me to the truth. Words are important in reflecting reality.

... I also came to understand our need for disinterested friendship and disinterested love, the love that Christ has for us and that we should have for one another. The word "disinterested" may have a negative connotation, but it means that we love others with no conditions and no demands.

... The chaste man is the man who sees reality, and lives in accordance with reality. All virtues do that, but chastity in particular helps us to see ourselves as we really are. I am a man, made for union with a woman. The reality of our bodies reveals that sex is ordered to procreation, and also the unity of man and woman in marriage.

Sexuality typically leads to children, so it needs to be tied to a marriage that is life-long. To use sex outside of marriage is to go away from the path of human fulfillment that God ordained for our lives."

Hudson Byblow (<http://www.hudsonbyblow.com/>) is a Canadian Catholic speaker who has publicly shared his struggle with same-sex attraction. He developed an addiction to pornography in his youth, and while in college, "gay" rights groups pressed students such as Hudson to "come out," to identify themselves as homosexual and to openly live the lifestyle. At the time, Hudson accepted various statements that "gay" activists were making, such as that people are born homosexual and that 10% of the population was homosexual (i.e. don't fight it, just accept it and the lifestyle). He had previously held back from "coming out" out of fear of hurting his family. But by 2007, he thought it was his only road to happiness.

The week he decided to "come out," however, he went to Mass and heard a homily by a "wise, humble" priest who challenged many of the statements put forth by "gay" activists. He decided not to "come out," and instead explore Father's viewpoint. He read voraciously and went to the priest for confession. Hudson said, "He assured me that God

loves me, which I really needed to hear, as I felt myself to be dirty and unlovable. He made me see the love of Christ as accessible to me.”

“Until that point, I had isolated myself from men, and turned to pornography as a release from my frustration. The problem is, the more I exploited others, the more I hated myself. But I found out through COURAGE that despite my past, Jesus Christ still had room for me. I realized I was not alone. There were other people like me who wanted to live right with God. They wanted to live a life with God at the center, above their sexuality.”

[Part of his recovery from the promiscuous lifestyle was] “putting the face of Christ on every person … I found it impossible to exploit people when I saw Christ in their eyes.”

[The fellowship he experienced in COURAGE gave him] “a little taste of heaven on Earth. We’re brothers fighting for the same cause: to keep Christ at the center of our lives and our embraced identities.”

“We are not merely sexual beings. Sexuality is a gift from God, our loving Creator. I am a beloved child of God first, and I love God above my sexuality. Therefore, I cannot embrace an identity centered on my sexuality, regardless of the sexual attractions I experience.”

[Today, he enjoys a peace like] “none I have ever had before [as compared to the] “hopelessness” [that he felt as he prepared to “come out.”]

[Hudson hopes that all people] “will be open to responding to this invitation with an open heart, mind and spirit. Being fully honest with ourselves is the key to experiencing the greatest degree of joy, which is something we can only achieve if we choose to reject that which is not true, and instead embrace a greater degree of truth once we become aware of it.”

“The real struggle is getting the truth of the love of Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church out to the world, especially on this sensitive topic.”

Joseph Sciambra (www.josephsciambra.com), too, was addicted to pornography in his youth. Sexually confused at age 18, he made his way to The Castro, a “gay mecca,” to immerse himself in the “gay” lifestyle for 11 years. He lived it to the extreme, even acting in “gay” porn movies. But rather than the happiness, acceptance and fulfillment he sought, he found a life of misery.

“Porn is an addiction, and it is progressive. It is comparable to being addicted to drugs. When you begin taking drugs, you don’t start with heroin, but alcohol or marijuana. You become desensitized to what you are doing, and then move onto harder drugs. When you start with porn, you don’t start with S&M, bestiality or homosexuality. You look at soft-core porn. In my generation, it was *Playboy* magazine.”

Today, children can be introduced to sexually suggestive imagery by watching music videos featuring Britney Spears or Lady Gaga. They get hooked young, and begin to see pornography as beautiful. It re-wires the way they think about sexuality. It changes the way they become aroused. They develop a dependence on it.”

… In my 11 years in the “gay” lifestyle, and with my ministry to that community now, I have never met a happy “gay” couple. Their relationships are transitory, fleeting and physically-based. And, even for people who are supposed to be involved in monogamous relationships, it is understood that these relationships will ‘open up.’ This happens despite the fact that you may be emotionally connected and living together.”

“... I was literally shocked out of the life. I was involved with porn the day I was converted. I got sick, was in the hospital and resigned with dying. But I realized that death would lead me to hell. I didn’t want to go to hell. I wanted out of the lifestyle.

... [Regarding a deliverance he had from homosexuality, with the help of a priest] It was a year or two after I left the lifestyle, and it was still a traumatic time. I was wounded, and I was having a hard time coming back to the Catholic Church. A priest could sense I was struggling. He asked to pray over me privately. Afterwards, I felt I was freed from multiple demonic influences.

... [How the “straight” population can help those in the “gay” lifestyle] Pray, fast and make sacrifices for the conversion of people in the homosexual community. Be the light of truth to them. Be charitable. Love them. Let them know you want what is best for them. Many Christians are afraid to express such thoughts to family members or friends in the lifestyle. They think they’ll alienate them. But if done in the right way, it can be very helpful.

... [Is he happy today?] Being in the “gay” lifestyle was a search for happiness. It was restless, frantic and unfulfilling. I believed I could find happiness there, and I couldn’t. Now that I have come back to Christ and his Church and embraced chastity, I’ve never been happier.”