

# Views: No Butts About It

don't mean to judge, but the pope is an asshole.

Not literally, of course. That oft-vilified anatomical opening is a vital, natural and good thing. The Pope himself has one – a fact even his hole-y-ness's personal physician would not "rebutt," so to speak.

It's that very opening, the one the Holy See denies could ever be a source of pleasure, that has the papal panties in a wad. John Paul II's new edict tells politicians they have a "moral duty" to oppose same-sex marriage. Duty! *Doodie* is more like it.

Church and state are supposed to be separate in the U.S., not conjoined like two-ply Charmin. But, and I use the term loosely, the Big Guy warns Catholic politicians that voting for egalitarian marriage legislation would be "gravely immoral." In the sphere of political analysis, the Patriarch's recent condemnation of same-sex marriage and gratuitous defamation of gay people stands out like swollen hemorrhoidal tissue.

Any leader who tells me I

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can't marry my own wife is obsessed with Uranus. We're married honey, and we want the civil recognition we deserve. Popeymon says – and, by the way, so does our monkey-faced president (no offense to primates) – that a solemn and legal vow binding two women in matrimony is sinful, that two men legally promising to care for each other as long as they both shall live will put the sanctity of marriage asunder. Infallible Man's head is up something other than his miter.

Thank God(dess) the faithful in the U.S. Senate, at least, are defying the Pope on this one.

Catholics – by and large intelligent, loving people who take care of their families and do good works in their communities and around the world – know the Pope does not always speak the true word of God, whatever that is. Humans are endowed with a conscience by our creator, or evolution or whatever fabulous serendipity got us here. We get to decide for ourselves.

When I was thirteen, I slept over at my Catholic friend Teri's house. In the middle of the night she nudged my sleeping bag. "Come, on, I've got something to show you." She led me by flashlight into the laundry room. High on the shelf, behind the family-sized box of blue Cheer, lay an old cigar box. Under the lid nested the contraband – her mom's stash of birth control pills. A devout Catholic, Teri's mom marched her family to mass every Sunday, sent all her kids to Saint Theresa School and fixed fish for dinner on Fridays. But, in 1964, when the pill was a seriously controlled substance, she used it anyway.

"It's a sin. Women are only

supposed to have sex to get pregnant," Teri whispered.

"Who says?" I asked in the Talmudic tradition of my Jewish people.

"The Pope!" End of conversation.

Turns out, according to the well-respected Catholics for a Free Choice, 96 percent of Catholic women in the U.S. have used modern methods of birth control, which the Head Patriarch still forbids. As a lesbian, my birth control method is completely natural, but the Holy Father picks on me anyhow. He's all up in my business, and I object.

Don't get me wrong. Along with the brave senators who opposed putting archconservative William Pryor on the bench, I am not anti-Catholic. I stand with the millions of open-hearted and fair-minded good Catholics who champion justice, world peace and a woman's right to protect herself from unwanted pregnancy, who demand the ouster of the bishops and other church high mucky-mucks protecting priestly pedophilia, who support opening

their doors – and the pulpit – to everyone, regardless of sexual orientation or gender. Opposing the Pope is no more anti-Catholic than opposing Bush is un-American. God Bless America.

Even though the Pope and the president are all bound up, the people are moving on. If there is a Divine Plan, we are all part of it. Even the assholes. We can't trust some unelected mortal to see that no one is left behind – no pun intended. ▼

Add your voice in support of civil marriage for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender couples at [www.MillionForMarriage.org](http://www.MillionForMarriage.org).

Sally Sheklow teaches at Portland State University and performs with WYMPROV!, Oregon's award-winning all-lesbian comedy improv troupe. Comments can be sent to [sally@wymprov.com](mailto:sally@wymprov.com)

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