



COPTIC ORTHODOX
PATRIARCHATE



DIOCESE OF MISSISSAUGA,
Vancouver and Western Canada



Pastoral Statement on same-sex relationships and sexual identity

Date: August 30, 2023

Based on the Diocese clergy meetings and in light of pastoral care, we the clergy, have found it prudent to affirm the Church's stance on issues of same-sex relationships and sexual identity.

The Coptic Orthodox Church is an apostolic Church whose faith “**was once for all delivered to the saints**” (Jude 1:3). Her core foundation and origin is rooted in the Holy Scriptures and the immutable Holy Tradition. Unwaveringly, the Coptic Church has succeeded in withstanding waves of persecutions guarding this precious faith, as far back as the first century AD when the Church was established by St. Mark; all while not altering the faith or conforming to the ever-changing societal norms. The Church's Saints and Martyrs stand as a loud testament to the price paid. She remains faithful to the Holy Tradition as taught by Christ, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and preserved by the Fathers and vows to never relent to any societal or political pressures that go against this faith and Tradition. This unflinching stance made the Church a harbour, and a hospital as described by St. John Chrysostom for all souls seeking rest and healing that may arise from societal confusion. Consequently, the practices of the Coptic Orthodox Church are natural extensions of the vitality of this faith. The Church's core beliefs are unequivocally informed by its faith: a faith that does not change or bend. Through this lens, the Church tenets on marriage and sexuality are integral to this faith. They are:

- God made human beings in two sexes, male and female in His own image, and that chaste and sexual relationships are reserved to one man and one woman in the bond of marriage. Both genders are created equal in the eyes of God.
- From the beginning, marriage is between a man and a woman (**Genesis 1:27-28**) and is likened to the relationship of the Lord Jesus Christ with the Church (**Ephesians 5:24-26**). As such, marriage is monogamous and heterosexual.
- God has sanctified the Sacrament of Matrimony as the foundation of the family and therefore the Church condemns any teachings that go against her faith as it relates to this Sacrament.
- Homosexuality is a deviation from God's plan for humanity and thus is a sin, as has been consistently mentioned in the Old Testament (**Genesis 18 and 19, Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, and Judges 19:22**) and the New Testament (**1 Corinthians 6:9-10, 1 Timothy 1:10, Romans 1:26-27, and Jude 7**).



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- God always has an open door to the repentant heart through the Sacrament of Repentance and Confession. As such, the church welcomes the sinner and empathizes with their struggle while standing firm against sin

We remind our faithful congregants that every person is welcome in our churches. However, continued participation in the sacramental life of the church is reserved for those who strive to live a life of repentance and humility. We acknowledge that all of us are sinners, and it is for precisely this reason that our Lord Jesus Christ calls us to “Repent, and believe in the gospel” (Mk 1:15)

We pray to God to grant wisdom to our leaders and for the continued sanctification of all individuals and families in the world and to grant us houses of prayer, houses of purity and houses of blessings.