

Documentary contains statement by Roman Catholic Pope Francis endorsing civil unions for homosexuals

NASHVILLE (BP and local reports) –Southern Baptist leaders reiterated their commitment to the authority of the Bible’s teachings on sexuality and marriage after Roman Catholic Pope Francis endorsed same sex civil unions in the documentary, Francesco, which premiered Oct. 21 at the Rome Film Festival.

News media and homosexual rights advocates applauded the pope’s statement as groundbreaking, but eagle-eyed reporters at The Washington Post recognized the clip as coming from a 2019 interview he granted to Mexican broadcaster Televisa that had been spliced into Francesco.

([washingtonpost.com/world/europe/pope-francis-documentary-civil-unions/2020/10/22/b99a07d6-146d-11eb-a258-614acf2b906d_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/pope-francis-documentary-civil-unions/2020/10/22/b99a07d6-146d-11eb-a258-614acf2b906d_story.html)).

Journalist Valentina Alazraki, who conducted the 2019 interview, told the Post the civil union comments had been removed by the Vatican, which owned and controlled the cameras. Frances was known as an advocate of civil unions while he earlier served as archbishop and then a cardinal in Buenos Aires, Argentina.



Greear

Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President J.D. Greear, senior pastor of The Summit Church in Raleigh-Durham, N.C., was among several Southern Baptist leaders who reaffirmed the SBC's conviction that marriage is an institution created by God and exclusive to one man and one woman.

"No matter what a pope, pastor, or elected official says, we do not get to define sexuality or the family," said Greear, "The Creator does, and on this His word could not be more clear."

The Baptist Faith and Message 2000 defines homosexuality as sin and marriage as "the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime." (bfm.sbc.net/) Messengers to several SBC annual meetings have approved resolutions relating to and reaffirming those convictions.



Moore

Russell Moore, president of the SBC Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville, spoke at the pope's invitation at a 2014 conference on marriage and family at the Vatican in Rome, Italy, saying those institutions are embedded in the creation order as "icons of God's purpose for the universe."

In a statement issued Oct. 21, Moore said he wasn't sure how to interpret Francis' comments in the documentary but referring to Mark 10:6 and Ephesians 5:31, Moore affirmed "that every wing of the church – Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox – has for 2,000 years affirmed Jesus' view of marriage[,] that marriage is, from the beginning, a union between a man and a woman in covenant fidelity to one another.

“The Bible also makes clear that marriage is a mystery that points beyond itself to the Gospel, the union of Christ and His church,” Moore continued. “We ought to treat everyone justly and with compassion, including those with whom we disagree, but no church has the authority to put asunder what Christ has joined together in the Word He has given to us.”



Floyd

Ronnie Floyd, president and CEO of the SBC Executive Committee in Nashville, said Southern Baptists’ “authority on sexuality and marriage is the Bible – the living Word of God. Our authority does not come from a man or a group of men and women, but from the Bible alone.

“When the Bible speaks, God speaks. The Bible teaches marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. Other faiths may choose other authorities to determine their beliefs on marriage, family, sexuality, and other matters of life. However, as Baptists we believe the Bible has God for its author, salvation for its end and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter.

“Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. We need not add anything to the Bible about marriage, family, sexuality, or anything else because the Bible is God’s perfect treasure of divine instruction.”

Established Catholic doctrine considers homosexual acts to be sin and states that marriage is between a man and a woman. As pope, Francis has previously expressed support for traditional marriage and rejected same sex marriage.

According to the Wikipedia entry on Francis, he holds several firsts in the Roman Catholic Church including:

- The first pope from the Jesuits, a Roman Catholic order founded in 1534.
- The first pope from the Americas, having been born in Buenos Aires in 1936.
- The first pope from the Southern Hemisphere.
- The first pope from outside Europe since Gregory III, a Syrian who occupied the papacy from 731-741.

Editor's note: Photo courtesy of Edgar Jiménez, Porto, Portugal – Papa rock star; Wikipedia commons CC BY-SA 2.0. William Perkins, editor of The Baptist Record, contributed to this article.