

Excerpts from the Interview with Pope Francis aboard the flight from World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro to Rome; July 28, 2013

Patricia Zorzan: Speaking on behalf of the Brazilians: society has changed, young people have changed, and in Brazil we have seen a great many young people. You did not speak about abortion, about same-sex marriage. In Brazil a law has been approved which widens the right to abortion and permits marriage between people of the same sex. Why did you not speak about this?

Pope Francis: The Church has already spoken quite clearly on this. It was unnecessary to return to it, just as I didn't speak about cheating, lying, or other matters on which the Church has a clear teaching!

Patricia Zorzan: But the young are interested in this ...

Pope Francis: Yes, though it wasn't necessary to speak of it, but rather of the positive things that open up the path to young people. Isn't that right! Besides, young people know perfectly well what the Church's position is.

Patricia Zorzan: What is Your Holiness' position, if we may ask?

Pope Francis: The position of the Church. I am a son of the Church.

Ilze Scamparini: I would like permission to ask a delicate question: another image that has been going around the world is that of Monsignor Ricca and the news about his private life. I would like to know, Your Holiness, what you intend to do about this? How are you confronting this issue and how does Your Holiness intend to confront the whole question of the gay lobby?

Pope Francis: About Monsignor Ricca: I did what canon law calls for, that is a *preliminary investigation*. And from this investigation, there was nothing of what had been alleged. We did not find anything of that. This is the response. But I wish to add something else: I see that many times in the Church, over and above this case, but including this case, people search for "sins from youth", for example, and then publish them. They are not crimes, right? Crimes are something different: the abuse of minors is a crime. No, sins. But if a person, whether it be a lay person, a priest or a religious sister, commits a sin and then converts, the Lord forgives, and when the Lord forgives, the Lord forgets and this is very important for our lives. When we confess our sins and we truly say, "I have sinned in this", the Lord forgets, and so we have no right not to forget, because otherwise we would run the risk of the Lord not forgetting our sins. That is a danger. This is important: a theology of sin. Many times I think of Saint Peter. He committed one of the worst sins, that is he denied Christ, and even with this sin they made him Pope. We have to think a great deal about that. But, returning to your question more concretely. In this case, I conducted the *preliminary investigation* and we didn't find anything. This is the first question. Then, you spoke about the gay lobby. So much is written about the gay lobby. I still haven't found anyone with an identity card in the Vatican with "gay" on it. They say there are some there. I believe that when you are dealing with such a person, you must distinguish between the fact of a person being gay and the fact of someone forming a lobby, because not all lobbies are good. This one is not good. If someone is gay and is searching for the Lord and has good will, then who am I to judge him? The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains this in a beautiful way, saying ... wait a moment, how does it say it ... it says: "no one

should marginalize these people for this, they must be integrated into society". The problem is not having this tendency, no, we must be brothers and sisters to one another, and there is this one and there is that one. The problem is in making a lobby of this tendency: a lobby of misers, a lobby of politicians, a lobby of masons, so many lobbies. For me, this is the greater problem. Thank you so much for asking this question. Many thanks.