

# **Saint Peter Damian – Part I**

## **Sodomy, Pederasty and the Emasculation of a Saint**

### **By Randy Engel**

#### **Introduction**

February 23<sup>rd</sup> on the traditional Roman Catholic calendar is the feast day of one of the greatest saints in the Church, Saint Peter Damian (1007 – 1072), an Italian Benedictine monk and hermit, Cardinal-Bishop of Ostia, a precursor of the Hildebrandine reform in the Church, a key figure in the moral and spiritual reformation of the lax and incontinent clergy of his time and a Doctor of the Church.

I first made the acquaintance of Saint Peter Damian in 2002 when I was researching the history of sodomy and pederasty in the Church in the Middle Ages for *The Rite of Sodomy*. When I obtained Damian's treatise *Liber Gornorrhianus (The Book of Gomorrah)* written sometime between 1049 and 1054, as an inter-loan acquisition from Catholic University of America, I thought I had died and gone to heaven. Indeed, heaven or *Paradiso* was where Dante has placed the saintly Peter Damian near the end of his Canto XXI (Seventh Heaven: Sphere of Saturn) in his epic literary masterpiece, the *Divine Comedy*.

So impressed was I with Peter Damian's work, that I took two months off from my research to pen a two-part series for *Catholic Family News* (June/July 2002) titled, "St. Peter Damian's *Book of Gomorrah* – A Moral Blueprint for Our Times." Later, I expanded the article for inclusion in *The Rite of Sodomy*. Today, fourteen years later, this article continues to be the most popular reprint on the New Engel Publishing website.

Naturally, you can appreciate how overjoyed I was to recently learn that a new and beautifully translated, and I might add, affordable version of Saint Peter Damian's treatise has been carried out by Matthew Cullinan Hoffman and published by ITE AD Thomam Books and Media. What makes *The Book of Gomorrah and St. Peter Damian's Struggle Against Ecclesiastical Corruption* even more attractive is that the translator, like this writer, actually believes what Saint Peter Damian wrote and taught, and what the Church has formally and

publicly taught on the “most abominable and exceedingly disgraceful vice” of sodomy, at least until the post-Conciliar era. Indeed, the treatise is as fresh, lively, and pertinent as the day it was presented to Pope Saint Leo IX almost a 1000 years ago.

### **The Table of Contents to *The Book of Gomorrah***

Although this article is not a book review, *per se*, of Hoffman’s laudable translation of Saint Damian’s classic work, I thought it might be helpful for the reader to at least have an opportunity to review some of the Table of Contents of the treatise. The content of the chapters is self-explanatory:

- I. The beginning of the *Book of Gomorrah*, by the humble monk, Peter Damian
- II. On the different types of sodomites
- III. That excessive mercy leads superiors to not prohibit the fallen from holy orders
- IV. That those who are habituated to filthy enjoyments should not be promoted to holy orders
- V. Whether it is legitimate for such people to act as priests if the Church has need of it
- VI. That those who seek ordination after having been involved in this vice are of a reprobate sense
- VII. On rectors of the Church who are soiled with their spiritual children
- VIII. Of those who confess their offenses to those with whom they have fallen
- IX. Just as is the case with those who violate nuns, a prostitute of monks must be deposed in accordance with the law
- X. That both he who falls with his carnal or spiritual daughter, and he who is soiled with his penitential son, should be accountable for the same offense ...

Saint Peter Damian was the first and only Bishop and Doctor of the Church to write a specific treatise on the grave sin of sodomy, a term which is broadly interpreted by him to include the solitary sin of masturbation, masturbation with another, stimulation between thighs, Onanism (contraception), bestiality, sodomy, that is, penetration of the rear of an adult by an adult male, and pederasty, that is, sexual relations between a male adult homosexual and an adolescent boy. The language Damian employs in describing the various acts of sexual

perversion is explicit and clear, as are the punishments he assigns to the specific practices mentioned above.

For example, in cases involving pederasty, which is, historically speaking the most universal and enduring form of homosexual behavior, the cleric or religious is to be “publicly beaten” and humiliated “by his loss of tonsure, his face smeared with spittle, bound in chains, worn down with six months of imprisonment, and three days every week to fast on barley bread at sundown,” and confined to a monastery in perpetuity under constant guard.

Damian opposes the ordination of sodomites. He is also opposed to unshriven sodomites saying Holy Mass and wrote that “God refuses the sacrifice from an impure priest.”

As a word of encouragement to the faithful clerics and laity of his day, as well as those of our own time, Damian argues that “It is no sin to expose the grave sins of the clergy and monks,” when he is criticized for his writings by his detractors. “How else will they be lead to repent and do penance?” he asks.

Then Damian asks another excellent question, “How can a sodomite priest, depraved himself, seek to become of intercessor for the sins of others?”

Regarding those clerical sodomites who make a practice of confessing to their partners, Damian notes that not only is the confession invalid, but both men commit sacrilege. Little wonder his words thunder as he describes as “damnable,” the sodomite who acts as a priest while vice continues to reign damnably within him.”

Damian is especially critical of “sodomites who burn with ambition, but in the afterlife, will burn in hell if they do not repent and do penance. “You strive for the pinnacle of ecclesiastical order. But you store up for yourself on the day of judgment. You first emerge yourself in the depth of sin and then rising yourself up in arrogance,” he adds.

### **The Fish Rots from the Head Down**

In his *Book of Gomorrah*, Saint Peter Damian first attacks the problem of clerical moral laxity and sexual perversions from the top down beginning with members of the Catholic hierarchy, that is, bishops and religious superiors who turn a blind eye to the moral depravity within the ranks of clerics and monks under their rule.

When he speaks of “do-nothing” superiors, the reader can almost feel the earth shake under him:

Listen, you do-nothing superiors of clerics and priests. Listen, and even though you feel sure of yourselves, tremble at the thought that you are partners in the guilt of others; those, I mean, who wink at the sins of their subjects that need correction and who by ill-considered silence allow them license to sin. Listen, I say, and be shrewd enough to understand that all of you alike are deserving of death, that is, not only those who do such things, but also they who approve those who practice them (Rom 1:32).

Having launched that thunderbolt, Damian then attacks, with even more vehemence, those reprobate bishops and religious superiors who **themselves** are guilty of heinous sodomitic acts and who prostitute their own spiritual sons – seminarians, priests and monks under their care.

### **The Emasculation of Saint Peter Damian**

When I finished reading the Hoffman translation, just for fun, I decided to take a look at the talks given by Pope Francis, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, Pope John Paul II and Pope John XXIII on or about the saint’s feast day which falls on the 21<sup>st</sup> of February on the Nervous Order calendar. After all, if the Modernist popes of Virtual Church, which is mired in sodomy and pederasty and other unchaste acts, were sincerely seeking advice on dealing effectively with clerical homosexuality and pederasty, what better source could they go to than Saint Peter Damian?

As I suspected, I didn’t find any reference to *The Book of Gomorrah* by any of the popes mentioned above.

I found one letter memorializing Saint Peter Damian written by Benedict on February 20, 2007, to the Camaldolese Order, a Benedictine monastic order:

The 1,000th anniversary of his birth is an especially appropriate occasion to examine closely the aspects characterizing his multifaceted personality as scholar, hermit and man of the Church, but especially as a person in love with Christ. ... St Peter Damian felt the presence of the universal Church in the hermitic life so strongly that he wrote in his ecclesiological treatise entitled *Dominus Vobiscum* that the Church is at the same time one in all and all in each one of

her members. ... Lastly, St Peter Damien was the soul of the "*Riforma gregoriana*," which marked the passage from the first to the second millennium and whose heart and driving force was St Gregory VII. ... he reminded priests of the highest ideal of their mission that they were to exercise by cultivating purity of morals and true personal poverty.

But there was no reference to *The Book of Gomorrah*.

In his General Audience of September 9, 2009, at Paul VI Hall, Benedict reflected upon Saint Peter Damian as a lover of solitude and reformer. He acknowledged Damian as one of the best Latinist of his time. He praised the saint for his love of the cross of Christ and his solitary life of a hermit. Benedict brought his Wednesday talk to an end by calling the saint "a man of prayer, meditation, contemplation," and he mentions Damian's attack on corruption in the Church, particularly the vice of simony. Not sodomy, but simony. Not *Liber Gomorrhianus*, but *Liber Gratissimus*, Damian's tract on simony.

Other than Benedict's two rather generic talks, I found no references to Saint Peter Damian's most prominent work in connection with the other post-Conciliar popes. What a sad commentary on the state of the papacy.

Even Catholic churches named after the great saint, make no reference to their patron's tract on sodomy. There are online references to the liturgical calendar list for Saint Peter Damian found on numerous Catholic websites where the saint is described as "a reformer," "a papal legate," and a saint who fought simony and upheld clerical celibacy and clerical continence. Only a few Catholic websites mention *The Book of Gomorrah*.

Until the recent publication of Matthew Hoffman's translation, if one wanted to learn about this most famous of Damian's writing, one would have had to order the book through a library inter-loan service or have gone to other Catholic sources like *Catholic Family News* or secular sources like WIKI which has an excellent article on *Liber Gomorrhianus*.

### **A Brief Criticism of Certain Errors Found in the Author's Preface and Footnotes**

Catholics owe Mr. Hoffman a debt of gratitude for his accomplishment and I hope each reader will order at least several copies – one for themselves, one to be used as a circulating copy among family, friends, clergy and members of the hierarchy, and possibly, if one is inclined, a

copy for Francis – the “non-judgmental” fellow sitting in the Chair of Peter, and residing at Suite 201, Domus Sanctae Marthae, Vatican City State, 00120.

Having thanked the author for his excellent translation, there remains the less pleasant task of reviewing his long preface and footnotes to *The Book of Gomorrah*. It appears that once the author departs from the translation, several errors appear which require comment and correction. I don't believe these errors are deliberate. Rather they stem from the author's understandable lack of knowledge regarding specific aspects of homosexual behavior which are not widely reported or not correctly reported even when they come from ostensibly Catholic sources.

### **Animals Cannot be “Homosexuals”**

In footnote number 124 in *The Book of Gomorrah*, Hoffman discusses “species of animals in which some members engage in sexual behavior with same-sex partners. ....” The comment is not without a touch of humor, but the reference needs correction nevertheless.

Animals act on God-given instincts which are directed at the survival of the species. Animals naturally seek out mates of the opposite sex. They do not experience love or lust because they do not possess the same transcendent cognitive and moral component found in man. Therefore, an animal can never be a “homosexual” nor have “same-sex partners.”

In artificially-induced environments, a male animal may attempt to mount another male, but this act is normally associated with an act of aggression rather than a sexual encounter. Some homosexual propagandists try to use the example of a species of squamate reptiles as having a homosexual “nature,” but these lizards reproduce by parthenogenesis, a form of nonsexual reproduction in which the female reproduces its kind without fecundation by the male.

### **Pederasty Not Pedophilia**

The remaining examples are more complicated, but vastly more important to Catholics.

Let's start with the word *pedophilia*, that is, adult sexual activity with infants or young children. The term is not used by Saint Peter Damien in *The Book of Gomorrah*, but it does appear twice in Hoffman's book.

It first appears in the otherwise excellent foreword by Juan Cardinal Sandoval Iniguez, Archbishop Emeritus of Guadalajara. And secondly, in the author's preface in reference to "pedophile priests" who are protected by their bishops. Otherwise, the author uses the correct term *pederasty* in his commentary – the word Damian himself employs in his treatise.

Although there are cases of clerical sexual abuse of young, prepubescent children mostly females, in the English-speaking world, the ancient Greek practice of pederasty is the norm for today's adult clerical homosexual predators.

The reader may recall that as late as 1961, the term pederasty was used by the Vatican in its document *Careful Selection And Training Of Candidates For The States Of Perfection And Sacred Orders* (S. C. Rel., 2 Feb., 1961), which prohibited violators of the sixth commandment, including sodomites and pederasts, from entrance into the novitiate, "since for them, the common life and the priestly ministry would constitute serious dangers."

However, when the Catholic clerical sex abuse scandal broke into the news in the 1980s, the Vatican and the evil geniuses of AmChurch at the United States Catholic Conference/National Conference of Catholic Bishops (today the USCCB), followed the secular media in dropping the term pederasty in favor of pedophilia to protect the Homosexual Collective and to prevent the Catholic laity from connecting the dots between homosexuality and the clerical abuse of adolescent boys.

Although it is another topic or another day, I would also like to state that while the heterosexual pedophile and the homosexual/pederast share common traits – all are immature, self-absorbed, and high compartmentalized – there are important etiological differences between them. These distinctions are critical in terms of reparative therapy and long-term prognosis.

For these reasons, the term pedophilia, in the two cases mentioned above, should be replaced by the term pederasty.

### **Homosexual "Orientation" and Homosexual "Acts"**

In his preface, under the title, "The Spiritual and Psychological Destructiveness of Sodomy," Hoffman asserts that while Damian repeatedly condemns homosexual acts, he does not identify them with... homosexual "orientation" – the notion that same-sex attraction may be

deeply embedded in the psychology of homosexual actors. Hoffman continues, “Damian’s work, therefore, is not a criticism of those who **merely** suffer from homosexual urges or temptations, but rather those who act upon them (emphasis added).” The author’s use of the word **merely**, immediately sent up a red flag to this reviewer.

It was because of this kind of overly benign interpretation given to the so-called “homosexual condition” as referenced in the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith’s (CDF) mischievous document of December 29, 1975, titled “Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics,” issued by Franjo Cardinal Seper, Prefect, with Pope Paul VI’s approval, that later forced an unavoidable retraction from the CDF. On October 1, 1986, the CDF, now headed by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, issued a “clarification” of its earlier document. Titled “On the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons,” the CDF now declared that the “homosexual condition” is not “neutral” or “good,” but it is “a more or less strong tendency ordered toward an intrinsic moral evil; and thus the inclination itself must be seen as an objective disorder.”

Pope Saint Gregory the Great, commenting on homosexual desires, deliberately and knowing entertained, says, “So it was just that Sodomites, burning with perverse desires... should perish by fire and sulfur so that through this just punishment they would realize the evil they had committed, *led by a perverse desire* (emphasis added).

Damian uses the terms “perverse speech” or “perverse counsel” with regard to pederasts, indicating that he was acquainted with various techniques of seduction and “grooming” that the boy lover uses to ensnare his victim before sexually assaulting him.

In the *Confiteor* we pray at the Traditional Mass, we admit that we have sinned “in thought, word, and deed.” It is not only acts that matter. In serious sins, the thought and word precede the deed. This is why our Lord said that “Whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Matthew: 5:28).

Throughout *The Book of Gomorrah*, Saint Peter Damian constantly refers to the burning lust (not love) that drives the sodomite and the pederast. In so far as the homosexual male lusts after or desires another adult male or male adolescent, he has gravely sinned if the conditions for mortal sin are met, that is – grave matter; knowledge of the intellect, and the free consent of the will. This is also true of the lesbian who lusts after another women or a young girl.

## **Boswell Was a Homosexual Activist**

In his excellent remarks in the section of his preface titled “The Rejection Thesis and Other Misinterpretations of the Book of Gomorrah on “revisionist,” writers, Hoffman cites the works of a number of pro-homosexual writers and scholars who have distorted the works and certain events surrounding the life of Saint Peter Damian.

Among the scholars he mentions is the late John E. Boswell, whose name jumped off the page at me. Hoffman uses the word “strange” in connection with Boswell’s claim that “Peter in fact had no luck in convincing anyone that gay sexuality deserved hostile attention.” Strange? Not really.

The author does a good job of dissecting and destroying Boswell’s arguments relating to Damian, but, unfortunately, he does not take the time to inform the reader that Boswell was a sodomite who died of AIDS, so his claims against Damian were not so “strange” after all.

Perhaps, Hoffman, as a Christian gentleman, purposely withheld this information from the reader, but this is a mistake. The leaders of the Homosexual Collective, in which Boswell played an important role, takes no prisoners and gives no quarter. Kindness toward the Collective is seen as a sign of weakness and is exploited wherever possible. It is a valuable lesson especially for one so committed to popularizing Saint Peter Damian and his *Book of Gomorrah*.

I wish Mr. Hoffman all the best in this worthy endeavor. I hope his translation gets the publicity and world-wide distribution it deserves and I hope my criticism will be taken in the spirit of charity in which it was written. His book can be ordered from Ite Ad Thomam Books at [www.iteadthomam.com](http://www.iteadthomam.com).

As for the reader, I trust you will remember the words of Saint Peter Damian, written for his time and our time as well. – “It is no sin to expose the grave sins of the clergy and monks. . . . “How else will they be lead to repent and do penance?”

So, please, if you have not made a promise to join the universal battle against the forces of organized perversion, do so today. And continue to pray to Saint Peter Damian for his continued assistance.

[Part II – What Would Saint Peter Damian Say and Do Today?]



### **Prayer of Saint Peter Damian to the Blessed Virgin Mary**

*O holy Virgin,  
Mother of God,  
help those who implore your assistance.*

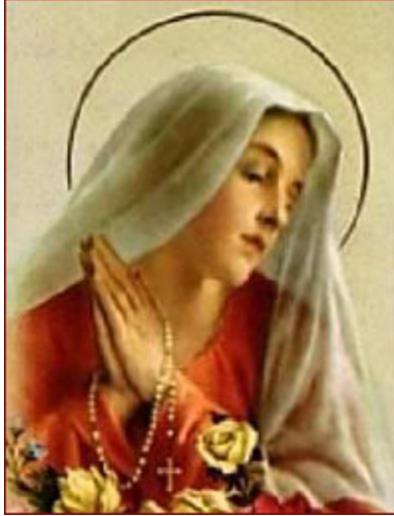
*Turn toward us.*

*Have you perhaps forgotten us  
because you have been elevated  
to a position close to God?*

*No, certainly not.*

*You know well in what danger you left us.  
You know the miserable condition of your servants.*

*No, it would not benefit such great mercy  
as yours to forget such great misery as ours.*



*Turn toward us, then,  
with your power,  
for He who is powerful  
has made you omnipotent in heaven and on earth.  
For you, nothing is impossible.  
You can raise even those who are in despair  
to a hope of salvation.  
The more powerful you are,  
the greater should be your mercy.*

*Turn also to us in your love.  
I know.  
O Mary, that you are all kindness  
and that you love us with a love  
that no other love can surpass.  
How often you appease the wrath of our Divine Judge,  
when He is on the point of punishing us!*



*All the treasures of the mercy of God  
are in your hands.*

*You will never cease to benefit us, I know,  
for you are only seeking an opportunity  
to save all sinners  
and to shower your mercies upon them.*

*Your glory is increased when,  
through you,  
penitents are forgiven and reach heaven.*

*Turn, then, toward us,  
so that we may also be able to go  
and see you in heaven.*

*For the greatest glory that we can have,  
after seeing God,  
will be to see you,  
to love you,  
and to be under your protection.*

*So be pleased to grant our prayer;  
for your beloved Son wishes to honour you  
by refusing nothing that you ask.*

*Amen.*

**Source: A Year of Prayer 365 Rosaries**