

# Russian Orthodox Church Agrees With Pope: 'Sex Is a Gift From God'

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**Pope Francis / Vatican News**

A Russian Orthodox archbishop in charge of family affairs has sided with Pope Francis in his assessment that sexuality is not a taboo but a gift from God — as long as it is practiced within the family.

The pope reportedly [told](#) young worshippers in France this week that “passionate” love “leads you to give your life forever.” “Sexuality, sex, is a gift of God. Not taboo,” he was quoted as telling young Catholics from the Grenoble diocese.

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Archpriest Dmitry Smirnov, who heads a Russian Orthodox patriarchal commission for children’s and mother’s rights, concurred with Pope Francis that “sex is a component of love.”

“But only love within marriage,” Smirnov [told](#) the Govorit Moskva radio station Wednesday.

He echoed the pope’s message that premarital sex “violates God’s plan and is a mortal sin.”

*Correction: An earlier version of this article incorrectly referred to Dmitry Smirnov as an archbishop. He is an archpriest.*

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