



MARRIAGE AND THE SUPREME COURT



USCCB Nationwide Bulletin Insert

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The Supreme Court has tragically declared that states must issue marriage licenses to two persons of the same sex and recognize same sex "marriages" that were contracted in another state.

This broad, adverse ruling redefines marriage in the law throughout the entire country, changing thousands of laws regarding marriage, family and children and threatening religious freedom in numerous ways. "Regardless of what a narrow majority of the Supreme Court may declare at this moment in history, the nature of the human person and marriage remains unchanged and unchangeable." -Archbishop Kurtz, President of the USCCB

WHAT YOU CAN DO

PRAY, FAST, SACRIFICE

The Bishops have encouraged Catholics to participate in a **Call to Prayer for Life, Marriage, and Religious Liberty**. Visit www.usccb.org/pray to learn more and commit to praying and fasting for life, marriage, and religious liberty.



ADVOCATE FOR MARRIAGE

Don't be afraid to talk about it.

Be a witness for the truth of marriage. Take advantage of opportunities to speak about it kindly with family, friends, neighbors or co-workers. Be prepared for false charges of discrimination and to respond with the following truths in charity.

What is marriage?

Marriage is the permanent and exclusive union of one man and one woman, for the good of the spouses and for the procreation and education of children. **One man, one woman, for life.**

The difference is the difference.

Men and women are equal and different. Sexual difference is essential to marriage and raising children. Ignoring or removing "the difference is... the problem, not the solution" (Pope Francis).

Mothers and fathers matter.

They aren't interchangeable. While single parents and others raising children often make heroic sacrifices and deserve support, society should also affirm every child's basic, natural right to come from and be raised in the loving marital union of his or her own father and mother.

Support religious freedom

The First Amendment Defense Act is one way that Congress is seeking to protect religious believers from being coerced to accept, condone, or participate in same-sex "marriage." The Child Welfare Provide Inclusion Act is another important piece of legislation. Please let your representatives know that you support this legislation through our action center, and keep informed of other such measures.

LEARN MORE

Visit www.MarriageUniqueForAReason.org for more resources on the authentic meaning of marriage. For resources for engaged couples and married couples, visit www.ForYourMarriage.org and www.PorTuMatrimonio.org.



THE ARCHDIOCESE
OF KANSAS CITY IN KANSAS

Office of Marriage & Family Life
Department of Parish Ministries
www.archkck.org/family

July 21, 2015

Dear Father, Deacon and Pastoral Staff Members,

The recent decision by the Supreme Court redefining the civil meaning of marriage will have repercussions at many levels. The Court's action provides further injury to an already weakened appreciation in our culture for the genuine meaning and value of marriage and family. Those involved in ministry to engaged couples are well aware of the distorted understanding that already exists concerning human sexuality and marriage. The action by the Court will only serve to further distort the genuine meaning of these beautiful gifts. Additionally, the Court's actions will likely bring charges of intolerance and bigotry to those who attempt to be faithful to the Church's teaching.

The "marriage equality" movement is just the latest in a series of attacks on the genuine meaning of marriage, human sexuality and family life. However, it should strengthen our resolve to eagerly share the beauty of the genuine meaning of Christian marriage and the value of family life found in the Church's teaching.

The Office of Marriage and Family Life is working diligently to provide you with resources to help you form the faithful in the truth and beauty of marriage. Attached you will find a few resources that you might find helpful. Copies of the attachments can also be found on the Office of Marriage and Family Life website (www.archkck.org/family).

Many have voiced a need for practical tools to help parishioners defend the Church's teaching and to engage in fruitful discussions with family and friends who might be sympathetic to the redefinition of marriage or who actually support or embrace the gay lifestyle. The Office of Marriage and Family Life, along with the Office of Social Justice, will be preparing resources that you can distribute to parishioners to better enable them to discuss the issues. These resources will be provided to you as soon as they are available.

Lastly, the Office of Marriage and Family Life is committed to strengthening programs for marriage preparation, but also for assisting already-married couples to better live their matrimonial commitment with joy and passion. The best witness to the truth about God's design for marriage and human sexuality can be found in the heroic, self-giving love of joyfully married couples. Please consider inviting married couples from your parish to enrich their relationship by attending a *Living in Love* retreat, a *Recharge Marriage Enrichment* or a *Worldwide Marriage Encounter* weekend. Dates and times are available on the Office of Marriage and Family Life webpage.

Yours in Christ,

Deacon Tony Zimmerman, Lead Consultant
Office of Marriage and Family Life



ONE MAN, ONE WOMAN, FOR LIFE

Lead Messages on Marriage Redefinition



For more resources, please visit www.marriageuniqueforareason.org

Note: These "lead messages" are concise points that can assist clergy and leaders, and can also be used by all the lay faithful in discussing marriage with family and friends.

The big picture

Marriage is a great gift to men, women, children, and society. The Church *serves and strengthens* marriage by providing pastoral care to engaged couples and marriages at all stages, and in any difficulty. The Church *promotes and defends* marriage by preaching and teaching about marriage's authentic meaning.

Challenges facing marriage

Marriage needs to be strengthened, not redefined. Cohabitation, divorce, and contraception all erode marriage's meaning as a public, total, lifelong, and fruitful communion of persons between husband and wife. The latest challenge to marriage, the proposal that sexual difference doesn't matter, removes the very basis of marriage's meaning as a one-flesh communion, open to children, making the definition of marriage in law (and thereby culture) open to limitless variation and ultimately meaningless.

The Supreme Court

Two cases before the U.S. Supreme Court raise the question of marriage's definition in law. The USCCB has joined with many other organizations and individuals in urging the Court to uphold both the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) and Proposition 8, which define marriage as the union of one man and one woman. Negative rulings could redefine marriage throughout the country, creating a "*Roe v. Wade*" moment for marriage.

The Catholic Church supports marriage

What we stand against is its redefinition. Marriage is and can only be the union of one man and one woman. It is the only institution that unites a man and a woman with each other and with any child who comes from their union.

Sexual difference matters

Sexual difference is essential for marriage. Only through sexual difference can a man and woman "speak" the language of married love in and through their bodies: the complete and total gift of self to the other, a gift that is open to the further gift of the child. *The difference is the difference.*

Marriage is natural

Marriage is a natural institution. It predates both religion and government and is grounded in the nature of the human person. Despite cultural variations, every human society in the entire history of the human race has understood that marriage is a sexual union of man and woman with the purpose of procreating and educating the next generation, and so marriage has with reason been given a unique status in the law. While Jesus elevates Christian marriage to a sacrament, the complementarity of the sexes and the natural meaning of marriage can be known through reason without appealing to scripture.

Equality and Rights

Affirming the true definition of marriage denies no one their basic rights. On the contrary, protecting marriage affirms the basic rights and equal dignity of women and men and safeguards the basic rights and equal protection of children.

Children

Every child is a *gift*. Every child *has* a mother and a father. And every child has a *basic right* to a mother and a father united in marriage. While circumstances may prevent a child being raised by his or her own mother and father, marriage is the way society provides for children's needs in ordinary circumstances.

Mothers and fathers matter

Only a man can be a father; only a woman can be a mother. Both men and women – fathers and mothers – bring irreplaceable gifts to the shared task of child-rearing. A child should not be deliberately deprived of a married mom and dad. Parenting is gender-specific, not gender-neutral.

Single Parents

Those who, often through no fault of their own, become single parents strive heroically and make great sacrifices to raise and provide for their children need and deserve our respect and support. The key point is not to *deliberately or intentionally* deprive children of their mother and father, which would be the necessary consequence of enshrining in the law the claim that a man and a woman are not necessary to make a marriage.

Family

Marriage is about building families, not just about adult relationships. A husband and wife united in marriage are the foundation of a family. And since the union of a man and a woman naturally is ordered to children, marriage is the place where children are welcomed and the family grows.

Adoptive Families

Even when children do not or cannot come forth from a marriage (e.g., due to infertility, the loss of a child in the womb, elderly years), a married man and woman form a total communion of persons, and can give to a child what no other relationship can: a father and a mother united to each other in an exclusively faithful commitment for life. No other relationship is comparable to the union of husband and wife.

Dignity of the Human Person

All persons have inviolable dignity and deserve love and respect. There are many ways to protect the basic human rights of all, but redefining marriage serves no one's rights, least of all those of children.

Same-sex attraction

Everyone deserves love and respect, including those who experience same-sex attraction. The experience of same-sex attraction is a reality that calls for compassion, sensitivity, pastoral care and attention. But no one—especially no child—is served by marriage redefinition. No one is helped by a lie; love tells the truth.

The Church's ministry to persons with same-sex attraction

Support groups, noted for their adherence to Church teaching, for persons who experience same-sex attraction and for their family members, are an important part of Church ministries and are to be encouraged. Examples of such ministries are Courage and Encourage. (See USCCB, *Ministry to Persons with a Homosexual Inclination* [2006]: p. 22.)

Discrimination

Unjust discrimination is always wrong. Treating different things differently is not unjust discrimination. Protecting marriage is a matter of justice and builds a culture of life: *pro-woman, pro-man, pro-child, pro-family, pro-life*.

Civil unions

Civil unions, domestic partnerships, and the like are non-marital arrangements that mimic aspects of marriage. They erode the institution of marriage and overlook the essential contribution that marriage makes to the common good. They cannot be approved or promoted.

The common good

Marriage and the family are the foundation of society. Husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, perform an essential role by teaching family members and society the immense dignity of each human person and what it means to love and be loved. Marriage is a personal relationship with great public significance—not a private affair—that affects all in society.

Law

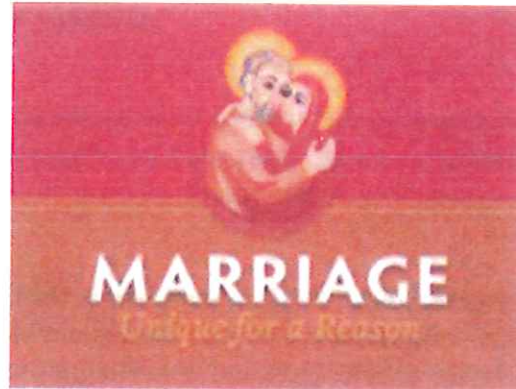
Advocates for marriage redefinition argue that the law should redefine marriage in order to grant the social status of marriage to persons in same-sex sexual relationships. This ignores not only the purpose of marriage but also the purpose of the law, which is to protect rights and provide for the common good. Redefining marriage undermines the fundamental right of the most vulnerable in our society – children – by denying their right to a father and mother (even if that right cannot be realized in every real-life situation).

Religious liberty

Changing marriage law changes not just one law but hundreds, even thousands, at once. Redefining marriage in the law will make the Church's teaching, as well as any public witness to the natural moral law, *against* the law (civil, human law), and even a form of so-called "bigotry," a claim unfortunately seeing greater frequency today. It will cause innumerable conflicts between the State and religious institutions and individuals. There are, in fact, already numerous examples of this. Marriage and religious liberty are two fundamental goods that stand or fall together.

Ongoing work

The USCCB seeks to strengthen, promote and defend marriage through its initiatives *For Your Marriage* (foryourmarriage.org), *Por Tu Matrimonio* (portumatrimonio.org) and *Marriage: Unique for a Reason* (marriageuniqueforareason.org). Please visit, explore and share these sites.



Prayer for the Defense of Marriage

God our Father, we give you thanks
for the gift of marriage: the bond of life and love,
and the font of the family.

The love of husband and wife enriches your Church with children,
fills the world with a multitude of spiritual fruitfulness and service,
and is the sign of the love of your Son, Jesus Christ, for his Church.

The grace of Jesus flowed forth at Cana at the
request of the Blessed Mother. May your Son,
through the intercession of Mary, pour out upon us
a new measure of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit
as we join with all people of good will
to promote and protect the unique beauty of marriage.

May your Holy Spirit enlighten our society
to treasure the heroic love of husband and wife,
and guide our leaders to sustain and protect
the singular place of mothers and fathers
in the lives of their children.

Father, we ask that our prayers
be joined to those of the Virgin Mary,
that your Word may transform our service
so as to safeguard the incomparable splendor of marriage.
We ask all these things through Christ our Lord,
Amen.

Saints Joachim and Anne, pray for us.