

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



OFFICE OF THE CARDINAL

November 11, 2013

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As you all know, the State of Illinois has entered into law the recognition of same-sex unions as marriages. The Church was part of the public debate, as you also know. We tried to explain that this is not primarily a religious issue, since marriage comes to us from nature as the union of a man and a woman, long before Christ walked the earth or the state came into being.

Nevertheless, there will be consequences for the Church and society that will become clearer as the law is used to sue for discrimination. The law has made some gays and lesbians happy, and that is not a bad thing in itself. The law, however, is bad law because it will contribute over the long run to the further dissolution of marriage and family life, which are the bedrock of any society. The Church will therefore continue and strengthen her ministry to families. We have lived with bad laws before, and we will do our best to adjust to this one for the sake of social harmony.

One of the consequences for our religion is already evident in the misuse of Pope Francis' words, spoken last summer, about our attitude toward an individual gay person who has asked God for forgiveness. The Pope was not speaking about approving gay marriage. To use his words against his teaching, as they were used on the floor of the State House of Representatives on November 5, is less than intellectually honest.

We are called, by reason of our belief that every person is made in God's image and likeness, to love and respect all of our brothers and sisters, without exception. But we express this respect within the context of our belief in how God has made us and made the world. This belief and this love is the basis of our joy in living the Catholic faith with integrity of mind and heart.

I thank you for your life of faith. God bless you and those you love.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Francis Cardinal George, O.M.I.' The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Francis Cardinal George, O.M.I.
Archbishop of Chicago