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“Same-sex Marriage:” What do Nature and Nature’s God say?

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

The Illinois General Assembly is being asked to consider a bill called “The Religious Freedom and Marriage Fairness Act.” This is a deceptive title that ignores basic truths.

Marriage comes to us from nature. The human species comes in two complementary sexes, male and female. Their sexual union is called marital. It not only creates a place of love for two adults but also a home for loving and raising their children. It provides the biological basis for personal identity.

It is physically impossible for two men or two women to consummate a marriage, even when they share a deep friendship or love. Does this mean nature is cruel or that God is unfair? No, but it does mean that marriage is what nature tells us it is and that the State cannot change natural marriage. Civil laws that establish “same-sex marriage” create a legal fiction. The State has no power to create something that nature itself tells us is impossible.

Neither did the Church create marriage. The Church asks if a man and woman proposing to marry are mature, responsible and free, willing to commit themselves to one another before the Lord in the presence of the community of the faithful to a lifelong relationship of fidelity to one another and openness to the creation and care for new life in their children. Christ raised marital union to the dignity of a sacrament, giving it significance beyond that given it by nature; but, like the State, the Church cannot change the natural basis of marriage. Does this mean that the Church is anti-gay? No, for the Church welcomes everyone, respects each one personally and gives to each the spiritual means necessary to convert to God’s ways and maintain friendship with Christ.

The Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Chicago has consistently condemned violence toward or hatred of homosexually oriented men and women. Good pastoral practice encourages families to accept all their children and not break relationships with them.

The Archdiocese offers Mass and other spiritual help to those who live their homosexuality anonymously (Courage groups) and also to those who want to be publicly part of the gay community (AGLO, which celebrates its twenty fifth anniversary this year). People live out their sexual identity in different ways, but the Church offers the means to live chastely in all circumstances, as the love of God both obliges and makes possible.

Should the lame duck legislature or the new Assembly take up the passage of a “same-sex marriage” law, it will be acting against the common good of society. We will all have to pretend to accept something that is contrary to the common sense of the human race.

Those who continue to distinguish between genuine marital union and same sex arrangements will be regarded in law as discriminatory, the equivalent of bigots. This proposed legislation will have long term consequences because laws teach; they tell us what is socially acceptable and what is not, and most people conform to the dictates of their respective society, at least in the short run.

What happens next? If we ignore in law the natural complementarity of man and woman in creation, then the natural family is undermined. Our individual lives become artificial constructs protected by civil “rights” that destroy natural rights. Human dignity and human rights are then reduced to the whims of political majorities. When the ways of nature and nature’s God conflict with civil law, society is in danger. It is to that danger that we direct your attention.

We urge you to visit www.ilcatholic.org to stay updated on the effort to redefine marriage in our state and to find information on how to contact your state legislator.

Pray for our State.

Cardinal Francis George, O.M.I.

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Bishop Francis J. Kane

Bishop Alberto Rojas

Bishop John R. Manz

Bishop Andrew P. Wypych

Bishop Joseph N. Perry