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A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

Why don't these materials use the terms "same-sex marriage" or "gay marriage"? The terms "same-sex marriage" and "gay marriage" beg the question: What is marriage? Is it even possible for two persons of the same sex to be married? Using the terms "same-sex marriage" and "gay marriage" already presupposes (wrongly) that marriage comes in a variety of forms: "same-sex," "opposite-sex," "homosexual," "heterosexual," and so forth. However, the sexual difference and complementarity of husband and wife is not something that is added to a pre-existing thing called "marriage," as you might add spice to a recipe. Instead, male-female complementarity is at the very heart of marriage and part of its authentic definition. Marriage wouldn't be marriage without a man and a woman, a husband and a wife. This is why adding alternative adjectives to the word "marriage" ("same-sex," "gay," and so on) produces not another "variety" of marriage, but a different thing entirely. It radically alters what marriage is in its very essence.

• This Note on Language is adapted from the *Marriage: Unique for a Reason* web site.

