



1) WHY OPPOSE REDEFINING MARRIAGE IN LAW FOR SAME-SEX UNIONS?

Throughout our nation's history, authentic marriage has been understood and recognized as it exists in nature: a lifelong, exclusive relationship between one man and one woman which is open to the creation and care of new human lives. The proponents of recognizing same-sex unions as marriage have the burden of demonstrating why this understanding should change. It is incumbent on them to demonstrate that same-sex unions are of the same benefit to society as marriage between a man and a woman and thus worthy of privilege in the law.

Both reason and faith tell us that the marriage of one man and one woman calls forth the best of spouses, not only for their own sake, but also for the well-being of their children and for the advancement of the common good. Marriage generates children, is an ideal environment for raising them and is the basic building block for any human society. In the end, it is neither possible for us to change the definition of marriage, without forfeiting its meaning, nor wise to attempt to do so.

2) HOW DOES MARRIAGE BETWEEN ONE MAN AND ONE WOMAN BENEFIT SOCIETY?

First and foremost, marriage provides an essential contribution to society because a stable, loving marriage is the ideal environment for raising children. Through marriage, children grow up knowing that they were created through an act of intimate love and with the knowledge that their mother and father have committed to each other for life. Marriage is a bond between parents but also between parents and children, who are provided the essential care and love of a mother and a father.

Marriage is also beneficial for adults as the ideal structure for man and woman to live interdependently, recognizing the equal dignity, beauty and value of one another while also relying on each other's care and love. This is the natural order embracing the complementarity – physical, emotional and spiritual – of man and woman.

Marriage has existed as a reality natural to human beings long before any recognition by the state. The state cannot change the reality of marriage – a permanent, covenanted relationship of a man and a woman open to the creation of new life – without compromising the goods intrinsic to marriage. However, the state does have an interest in promoting marriage as part of the common good. As explained, marriage provides a beneficial order to society through which man and woman support one another, and love and educate their children to become responsible citizens and productive members of society. Marriage also reinforces the law's protection of children and their best interests. So, for the stability and well-being of society, the state has an obligation to give preferred status and legal protection to this most basic cell of society.

3) WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT FOR CHILDREN'S PARENTS TO BE MARRIED?

According to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's *Donum Vitae*, every child has the right to be "brought up within marriage: it is through the secure and recognized relationship to

his own parents that the child can discover his own identity and achieve his own proper human development.”

It is difficult to overstate the significance of a child’s need to know his or her parents. The desire to know the identity of, and bond with, one’s biological parents is built into the design of the human person. This truth is made plain in the human experience. It is obvious in the void left when a parent has been lost to a child either through abandonment, divorce, or death, and this topic is a recurring theme in literature and other media outlets. Moreover, the trend of states’ enacting legislation opening the adoption process in favor of more access to information to those adopted recognizes that even those adopted into loving, happy and healthy families have a yearning and a right to know their biological parents.

4) HOW DO LEGALLY RECOGNIZED SAME-SEX UNIONS AFFECT MARRIAGE?

The law has an educative function and becomes a cultural resource. By attempting to redefine marriage, the state would inculcate in its citizens the belief that marriage is not concerned with reproduction or the rights of children to be bonded to their parents. Instead, marriage would be perceived solely as the function of the romantic interests of any group of consenting adults. This change in the law would communicate that there is no essential benefit to having both a mother and a father, and that, ultimately, the roles of the two parents are identical and that either could be discarded without harm. It is a direct attack on fatherhood and motherhood and ignores a child’s optimal fulfillment in being raised by mother and father. It is also an affirmative declaration by the state that marriage is *not*, by definition, heterosexual.

Marriage is procreative (at least potentially), permanent and exclusive. However, divorce statistics already challenge marriage’s status as a permanent relationship, and marriage in America has been undermined as the normative venue for the procreation of children: half of marriages end in divorce and over 40 percent of children are born out of wedlock and most often without that needed care of both mother and father. Out-of-wedlock births are one of the nation’s leading causes of poverty. Further, the widespread use of contraceptives, sterilization and abortion severely diminish the essential life-creating reality of marriage.

So we see that if the state sanctions same-sex unions little else will be left to the institution of marriage beyond being a temporary emotional bond between two adults: permanence, exclusivity and procreativity would become mere options in societal norms.

5) MARRIAGE IS NOT NECESSARILY ABOUT RAISING CHILDREN. WHAT ABOUT HETEROSEXUAL COUPLES WHO ARE INFERTILE OR BEYOND CHILD-BEARING AGE? IF THEY CAN GET MARRIED, WHY NOT A SAME-SEX COUPLE?

A married heterosexual couple unable to have children due to age or infertility is a tragic yet foreseen way of life in accord with the natural law. However, their marriage remains valid because it is still unitive. Moreover, the marriage is procreative as this man and woman, biologically and neurologically wired differently, come together and complement one another in a special way. Their

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union involves not two of the same thing, but one entirely new union made up of different parts. This marriage is uniquely fulfilling because it embodies the fullness of humanity in microcosm. This complementarity – two radically different kinds of human beings joining – brings about the potential for a dramatic growth in fulfillment and holiness. Thus, marriage, even when children are not possible, remains a vocation. New life in the spouses emerges from their complementarity. Further, any heterosexual couple has the potential to be a mother and father to any children born or adopted. A same-sex couple inherently lacks the potential to be mother and father.

6) SHOULDN'T SAME-SEX COUPLES HAVE THE SAME RIGHTS AS OTHER COUPLES – LIKE INHERITANCE RIGHTS, HOSPITAL VISITATION, HEALTH CARE COVERAGE, ETC.?

The fact is Illinois' civil union law already provides these benefits. If there are certain accommodations for same-sex unions that still need to be and can be conceded by law, let's look at those on a case by case basis. There is no reason to redefine and thus undermine marriage along the way.

7) ISN'T IT A MATTER OF CIVIL RIGHTS TO ALLOW SAME-SEX COUPLES TO MARRY?

It is undoubtedly important to protect every person's civil rights. However, the right to marry is the right to enter into a specific kind of relationship with a particular social benefit. It is neither unfair nor unjust to accept and instill requirements based upon the nature of an institution. The state sanctions many arrangements that distinguish between certain groups and individuals: for instance, college admissions based upon academic performance. Moreover, marriage has never been open to all members of society equally: for instance, siblings and first cousins are prohibited from marrying.

Redefining marriage – which is a natural, unique and socially productive relationship – is not an exercise of civil rights. Quite the opposite: forcing others to recognize a redefinition of marriage to include same-sex couples endangers the essential civil right of religious liberty. In our contemporary culture, any religion which holds that only heterosexual marriage is possible is likely to collide with the state, which currently prioritizes individual liberties for adults over what is in the best interests of children. From this vantage point, refusal to acquiesce to same-sex “marriage” is bigotry against persons who experience same-sex attraction. The state will not long allow for this and will use its coercive power to prevent what it has declared to be bigotry.

This is most readily apparent in foster care and adoption services. After passage of Illinois' civil union law, Catholic Charities refused to alter its long-standing policy of not placing foster children in the homes of co-habiting adults including those in civil unions. After a legal and legislative struggle – during which the Governor said he could not “condone discrimination” – the state refused to continue foster care and adoption contracts with Catholic Charities and forced the Church out of the foster care and adoption business. Similar outcomes could extend to the

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Church's other public ministries such as the provision of affordable and senior housing, parochial schools, medical services, counseling, youth groups and facilities management.

8) ISN'T THIS THE SAME AS OPPOSING INTERRACIAL MARRIAGE? ISN'T OPPOSITION TO SAME-SEX MARRIAGE A FORM OF BIGOTRY AND DISCRIMINATION?

It is not bigotry or discrimination to treat different things differently. Marriage is unique in that one of its central components is sexual difference. Same-sex couples lack this essential difference and cannot procreate or provide both a mother and a father to children. The link with interracial marriage is not valid. It is a very different thing to have a mother and father of different races than to be motherless or fatherless. The issue is whether the state is going to change the definition of marriage. Prohibitions of interracial marriage, perverse as they were, never called into question the essential characteristics of marriage as a union between one man and one woman ordered to procreation and the good of the spouses.

9) JESUS WELCOMED ALL PEOPLE. ISN'T IT A MATTER OF LOVE AND HOSPITALITY TO WELCOME ALL PEOPLE, REGARDLESS OF THEIR SEXUAL ORIENTATION, JUST AS JESUS DID?

All persons should be treated with respect and dignity as children of God, regardless of their sexual orientation. Being a loving and welcoming people, however, does not necessitate a legal redefinition of the basic cell of society. As Jesus so often demonstrated, the adherence to the revealed truth about our lives and how they are to be lived, demands that we not simply "tolerate" others, but actually attempt to be a witness for those things in our lives that will help bring us authentic fulfillment and true peace. Marriage is a timeless institution with the capacity to generate authentic fulfillment and true peace for spouses and their children.

10)WHAT ABOUT THE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE? WHY DOES THE CHURCH INTERJECT HERSELF IN PUBLIC DEBATES? WHY DOESN'T THE CHURCH JUST BELIEVE WHAT SHE WANTS WITHOUT FORCING HER VIEWS ON SOCIETY?

Like the state, the Church has an interest in protecting the stability and health of the family as a social unit. Catholic social teaching requires the preservation of marriage by seeking to create conditions where our potential as virtuous human beings is most fully fostered. This state of affairs of optimal human flourishing is called "the common good." One element of that common good is raising children who are cared for, healthy and virtuous. The social science is clear that children thrive best in homes where both biological parents are present and married to one another. The promotion of gender-free parenting as a desirable norm is a denial of a child's right to have a mother and a father. Maximizing the well-being of our children is a goal shared by all people of good will: not just members of certain religious denominations.

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11) IF IT WERE TRUE THAT SOME PERSONS ARE BORN WITH HOMOSEXUAL ORIENTATION, IS DENYING THEM THE OPPORTUNITY TO MARRY SOMEONE THEY LOVE UNJUST AND HATEFUL?

Whether or not a person is born with same-sex attraction is irrelevant to the question of same-sex “marriage.” Marriage, as an institution recognized and protected by the state, is not about the public recognition and approval of a private relationship of love or attraction. It is about bonding children legally to their mother and father, as well as ensuring that the future generation receives the requisite nurturing to sustain and build a robust society. Private relationships of many other kinds are tolerated in society, but marriage is essentially and legally unique because of its social purpose of contributing to the common good.

The Church recognizes and defends these natural truths. To seek to suppress the voice of the Church in the public sphere is a clear violation of religious liberty. The Church has as much right as any other group or organization to lend its voice to the public debate.

12) ISN'T THIS SIMPLY AN OUTDATED TEACHING? WHY DOESN'T THE CATHOLIC CHURCH JUST GET WITH THE TIMES?

Truth is not told by a clock. In a culture that values the “new” and “cutting edge,” a word like “traditional” can sound antiquated and be too easily dismissed. But the Church’s teaching is not simply “traditional,” it is perennial. That is, it is not based on any number of shifting biblical interpretations or theological or cultural fads. It is based on the unchanging nature and dignity of the human person. Ultimately, it is that dignity of the human person that the Church affirms in opposing the redefinition of marriage.

It is also important to note once again that marriage predates our state and our nation by thousands of years. It is part of the natural order. The state lacks any power to change its fundamental nature, and any attempt to do so only confuses and undermines the basic building block of society.

