

Statement of the Catholic Bishops of Louisiana on Legislation to Ban Same-Sex Marriage

We, the Roman Catholic Bishops of Louisiana, deeply concerned with the encouragement and preservation of the family in this era of escalating societal and cultural pressures on the basic unit of human life, express ourselves concerning the issue of same-sex marriages by setting forth the statement on same-sex marriage issued by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the United States Catholic Conference.

The Roman Catholic Church believes that marriage is a faithful, exclusive and lifelong union between one man and one woman, joined as husband and wife in an intimate partnership of life and love. This union was established by God with its own proper laws. By reason of its very nature, therefore, marriage exists for the mutual love and support of the spouses and for the procreation and education of children. These two purposes, the unitive and the procreative, are equal and inseparable. The institution of marriage has a very important relationship to the continuation of the human race, to the total development of the human person, and to the dignity, stability, peace, and prosperity of the family and of society.

Furthermore, we believe the natural institution of marriage has been blessed and elevated by Christ to the dignity of a sacrament. This means that Christian marriage is more than a contract. Because they are married in the Lord, the spouses acquire a special relationship to each other and to society. Their love becomes a living image of the manner in which the Lord personally loves his people and is united with them. Living a Christian sacramental marriage becomes their fundamental way of attaining salvation.

Because the marital relationship offers benefits, unlike any other, to persons, to society, and to the church, we wish to make it clear that the institution of marriage, as the union of one man and one woman, must be preserved, protected, and promoted in both private and public realms. At a time when family life is under significant stress, the principled defense of marriage is an urgent necessity for the well being of children and families, and for the common good of society.

To grant the legal status of marriage to a relationship between persons of the same sex would prevent the attainment of the unique and full potential expressed by the marital union. This is not an instance of unjust discrimination or animosity toward any person -- the Church has always emphatically taught that individuals and society must recognize the basic dignity of all persons. We owe all persons our respect, compassion, understanding and defense against bigotry and abuse of any kind because they are creations of our Loving Father as siblings of our Lord Jesus Christ. We call upon all Catholics and all citizens to recommit themselves to uphold not only the human dignity of every person but also the unique and sanctified community of marriage created between a man and a woman and God.

We, the Catholic Bishops of Louisiana, urge passage of Senate Bill 37 as a necessity to the maintenance of this Divinely blessed human relationship.

*Submitted to
Louisiana Legislature
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