

Defending the Sanctity of Marriage

By Ron Johnson, Executive Director
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It is interesting to note that the nature of marriage as a great gift uniting one man and one woman into a lifelong union of total sharing for the sake of a family is more than just a religious teaching. This understanding of marriage has existed for centuries and predates not only the creation of our government but also the establishment of the Church.

In fact, it should be mentioned that marriage did not originate from either the state or any religion, and neither has the legitimate authority to change its nature. Recent events around our country, however, are directly challenging the nature of marriage and the potential damage to our society from these attacks cannot be ignored.

The primary reason marriage is important is because it is the foundation of the family. The family, in turn, is the basic unit of society. Marriage is, therefore, a personal relationship with public significance.

Virtually all scientific research supports the claim that children do best when they live with both their mother and father. Unfortunately, not all children live in this situation and special care should be provided to these families and their needs. Nonetheless, it is indisputable that the ideal of a married mother and father both living at home with their children is an optimal situation that benefits all of society.

The best interests of children and the entire community demand that family life be supported by protecting the definition of marriage. Nothing will strengthen family life and our society like a strong institution of marriage. Conversely, it has been stated that nothing will weaken family life and our society like a weak institution of marriage.

Intuitively, it makes sense that children benefit from the full range of nurturing offered by both their mother and father. If marriage is redefined, however, then mothers or fathers may become legally irrelevant depending on the situation. What has always been common sense, the law will have to ignore.

In conclusion, the Catholic Church believes that people of all sexual orientations should be treated with respect and compassion and that their individual rights should be defended. We also believe, however, that the unchangeable definition of marriage as a union between a man and a woman needs to be protected.

It is for these reasons, that the Arizona Catholic Conference has supported state legislation (HCM 2004) urging Congress to take action on the Federal Marriage Amendment to define marriage as between one man and one woman. The best interests of our nation's children and families are at stake in this debate and now is the time, more than ever, to speak the "truth in love" on this sensitive, but very important issue.

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