

Statement of the Catholic Bishops of New York State on Marriage

We face today the prospect of a law in New York which would radically change the timeless institution of marriage. As pastors of citizens from every corner of our great state, we stand unified in our strong opposition to such a drastic measure.

Throughout history, different cultures have had different customs regarding marriage. But the one constant has been the conviction that marriage is the union of a man and a woman in an enduring bond, ordered for the procreation and stable rearing of children. Regrettably, the state Assembly has voted to redefine what nature and our common heritage long ago defined for us. We fervently pray that members of the state Senate will stand firm in opposition to this ill-advised legislation, and we call on Catholics and all New Yorkers to contact their Senators to make their voices heard.

Our opposition to this bill is based not only on Catholic teaching regarding human sexuality and the Sacrament of Marriage. Just as importantly, it is based on reason, sound public policy, and plain common sense, as we stated in our 2008 pastoral statement on same-sex “marriage.” (The statement can be found at www.nyscatholic.org.) To briefly reiterate, the

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state has a compelling legal interest in promoting marriage between men and women in order to create stable families and provide for the safety, health and well being of children. The state has no such compelling legal interest in recognizing a relationship between two people of the same sex.

If there are injustices against those in relationships other than marriage, those injustices can certainly be reformed and corrected in a way other than by drastically redefining marriage.

We close with a final point from our 2008 statement:

“(W)e want to make absolutely clear that our firm beliefs about marriage ... must not be misconstrued to be in any way a condemnation of homosexual people or an attack on their human dignity. Our Church teaches, and we affirm, that we must treat our homosexual sisters and brothers with dignity and love, as we would all God’s children. Indeed the Catechism of the Catholic Church warns that any form of prejudice or hatred – “every sign of unjust discrimination” – against homosexual people should be avoided. (CCC 2358)

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