

GAY MARRIAGE

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A nominal Catholic (one not well informed in the teachings of the Church) approaches me and argues that due to new social conditions, marriage must be understood in an entirely different way than in the past. He defines "gay marriage" as being within the word "marriage".

First and foremost, I will speak to him with the truth (from the bottom of my heart) since this is a very complex issue. We cannot redefine what God has created. **Since the beginning God created them male and female.** We know from the book of Genesis (which is the first book of the Bible) that God did not want man to be alone, this is why He created the woman (flesh of his flesh) precisely from his rib. This I find fascinating, because it shows us how God so desired for man to have a female companion in life, that He took her out of man's own physical body. Only God can do this, He is so creative.



In Genesis 2:24, it says: that the two, man and woman, were created for marriage: "Therefore, a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh." In this way a great creative perspective is opened. It is precisely the perspective of man's existence, which is continually renewed by means of procreation, or, we could say, self-reproduction.¹

What is marriage? It is a conjugal commitment of love 'by which a man and a woman agree (for their whole life) to be open to the procreation and education of their children. It is so highly esteemed that Christ Himself raised it to the dignity of a sacrament. They are united until death due them apart. It is an unbreakable union between a man and a woman. They are no longer two but one flesh. Marriage wouldn't be marriage without a man and a woman. Male and female complement each other, and their bodies are designed this way on purpose.

They were created by God to help Him by becoming co-creators with Him, in other words to procreate children. In marriage, the man and the woman become a mutual gift to each other. This is what God intended for marriage to be.

Unfortunately, the world in which we live in is a world full of different ideas /opinions / choices, etc. We are so opinionated. We have an answer for just about anything in life. We live in a world, where anything goes. No one really wants to follow what the Catholic Church teaches because (somehow it will mean) that they would have to give up their own beliefs and their own wants (and desires). In other words, they would have to give up their comfort zone. We live in a world where no one likes to be told what to do. We are living in a society where anything goes, anything is allowed and acceptable, as long as it makes me feel good, and I am ok with it. Therefore, I am going to keep on doing what I am doing (no matter what it is, who gets in the way, or whether it is right or wrong for me).

I am not saying this is your case, I am just speaking in general terms, however, we cannot deny the fact that you and I live in a world which is pretty selfish. Everyone (for the most part) lives within the mentality of "what's in it for me" or "what can I get out of this situation", "what can I get out of this person". And, when I say "we", I mean (we, human beings) who have tried to redefine (in our own terms) that which cannot be redefined, specifically "marriage".

Therefore, needless to say, (as you rightly stated) there exists new conditions which have been brought forward by modern men. These new circumstances were invented by modern men (based on their own needs). There is a need in society today for civil recognition for gay marriages. Why? Because they feel (as you also stated) that marriage must be understood in a totally distinctive way than in the past. But, the real questions we should be asking ourselves are:

- 1) Is it because 'I' want it to be understood as marriage (something which cannot be called marriage within the context of the true definition of marriage - which is between a man and a woman) for my own hidden agenda?
- 2) Is it because deep down inside (it benefits me)?
- 3) Am I just going with the flow of wanting to be accepted or re-affirmed in my own relationship?

We must be honest with ourselves and answer these questions. As I stated earlier, are we feeding with our actions, the 'what's in it for me' mentality of today's world. I am not going to convince you of what the Church teaches, what I am going to say, however, is that the Church truly cares about you, and that is why it desires only what is the best for you. You are an important person (because of the dignity of being a child of God). And, the Church recognizes that you are valuable. The Church has the responsibility (before God) to teach the Truth (even if no one listens).

The Catholic Church teaches us that: "The use of the sexual function has its true meaning and moral rightness only in true marriage" (Declaration on Sexual Ethics, Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1975, paragraph 5). In the same document (paragraph 10) we find: "The moral order of sexuality involves such high values of human life that every direct violation of this order is objectively serious." (This clearly follows what Saint Paul has taught us: One is not excluded from the Kingdom for venial matter.) Drawing from this and other Church teachings, we may conclude, any voluntary sexual arousal or act outside of a normal marital union of husband and wife is seriously sinful. This would include masturbation, fornication, extramarital foreplay, adultery, homosexual acts, and even lustful thoughts (Mt 5:28).²

To a homosexual person this may seem outrageous (and perhaps hard to follow) but Jesus Christ's moral teachings (even though they demand much of us) are possible to follow. The Church invites you to live a chaste life (which means not engaging in any type of sexual activity). And although this lifestyle may seem impossible to you at first, I can guarantee you that it is possible (with God's grace) to live a chaste life. That is the goal (to be able to live a celibate life). This is what the Church encourages you to do.

And, you may wonder, how can I live a chaste life like the one you are telling me about, for me it is impossible to do so. And, I would answer you, that you are right because humanly it is not possible, but if you love God and you ask Him to help you (because you want to trust Him with your whole life), He will take care of the rest. It takes surrendering of one's life.

By all means, this is not easy to do, but if you (wholeheartedly) give your life to Christ, He will not only make you happy for the rest of your life, but He will show you the way you ought to follow. The Church has a special concern for your well-being and that of the rest of Her children. Every human person was created in the image and likeness of God, therefore, no one can ever take away your dignity. This is why I must respect you and you should respect me. Does this mean we have to agree on everything? No, not necessarily, however, this does not mean that I should disrespect you or viceversa, just because we don't agree. All it means is that we must learn how to dialogue (which is what we have been doing so far).

The sacredness of marriage (as God intended it to be) is precious. No one, not you, not me, not society, not new social situations can ever re-define what God has already defined since the beginning. This is why the Church has consistently taught that homosexual acts are always objectively morally wrong, because it goes against our human nature.

Gay marriage lacks the complementarity between a man and a woman. Therefore, it cannot be called a marriage, because in marriage, both (the man and the woman) are open to life, open to bringing up children into this world. This is their main purpose. Which is something that cannot happen between two homosexual persons. They cannot bring children into the world.

Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, tradition has always declared that "homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered". They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved."³

As you can see, the response of the Church in these cases is straightforward, She cannot approve this lifestyle. It will go against what She stands for. Furthermore, the Church (as it was mentioned earlier) desires only the best for you, that is why the Catechism of the Catholic Church (which is a book which contains what the Church teaches on all aspects of life) also teaches that homosexual persons must be accepted and treated with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. In other words, the Church will never allow or condone any discrimination against you. This does not mean, however, that the Church approves gay marriages. There is saying, which goes: 'hate the sin, love the sinner', and we can apply it perfectly well in this situation.

Homosexual persons are called to chastity. The Catholic Church defines chastity as the integration of sexuality within the person, which includes a training in self-mastery. Is this hard to do? Absolutely but not impossible. Moreover, a homosexual person needs to live a chaste life, for his or her own good, there are so many psychological and physiological problems which can occur if one does not remain chaste. Christ is the perfect model of chastity and the One to follow.

Man and woman were created for one another. This is just the way it is, and no matter how hard we may fight against this truth, no matter how much we may reject this truth, it doesn't change the fact that God created them for this purpose in mind. Therefore, gay marriage could never be a 'marriage' because it lacks complementarity, which means there is no procreation possible, which defeats the purpose of marriage.

I appreciate you approaching me with this issue (which is very sensitive). I have tried in the most polite way possible to explain with my poor words the importance of marriage (as God created it to be). I truly hope and I will pray that your heart may be able to experience how much God loves you and desires only what is best for you. God created a perfect world, and we (human beings) have destroyed it all up (beginning with original sin). In addition, we continue to sin (yes, we are all sinners) except Jesus and His Blessed Mother (who are the only two people in the entire world who have no sin). They are pure and holy, as we are all called to be.

And, we continue to be unfaithful to God with our words, our actions, our ways of thinking (which are not His). The world, my dear brother (and yes, you are my brother in Christ) is in desperate need of God, whether they know it or not, and whether they want to accept Him or not. God is so near to them, they can even feel Him if they want it to, but God will never force Himself upon them. He can show them the way, since He is the Way, and the Truth and the Life, but it is up to the person (as to whether or not he or she wants to accept this reality in his or her life). The decision to follow Christ is a life-changing experience. It will turn your entire world upside down (in the good sense of the word), because it would mean getting out of your comfort zone.

Jesus is the only person in the world that can bring true happiness into your life, if you let Him. Do not be afraid to follow Christ. Do not be afraid to open your heart totally, so that He can reign in it. Believe me it is worth it. We only have one life, and one way to live it, let's live it for Christ.

To conclude, I would like to just re-emphasize that the objective purpose of marriage is to procreate, therefore, any relationship (within the context of a love relationship) which does not have this as their main goal is not (and could not ever be called) a marriage.

¹ John Paul II - "Original Innocence and Man's Historical State", General Audience of 13 February, 1980

² http://www.couragerc.net/What_is_Chastity.html

³ The Catechism of the Catholic Church #2357 - Page 625 - Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, 1994

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