

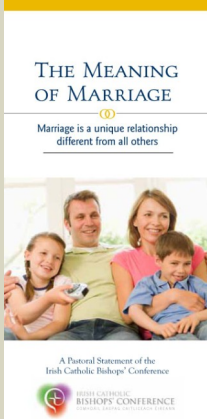


The Meaning of Marriage

Newsletter for dioceses and parishes

Issue 6 for 26 April 2015 – Vocations Sunday

Bishops' pastoral statement: *The Meaning of Marriage*



Please read the full text of *The Meaning of Marriage* which is available in English, Irish and Polish on catholicbishops.ie.

"The difference between man and woman is not for opposition, or subordination, but for communion and creation, always in the image and likeness of God."

Pope Francis speaks at his General Audience, 15 April

Produced by the Catholic Communications Office of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference. See www.catholicbishops.ie

Extract from the Prayer by Pope Francis for the Synod on the Family

Holy Family of Nazareth, grant that our families too may be places of communion and prayer, authentic schools of the Gospel and small domestic Churches. Amen.

The procreation of children is a gift from God

Last month, after their Spring General Meeting which took place in Maynooth, the bishops of Ireland said:

We come to this debate believing that the union of a man and a woman in marriage, open to the procreation of children, is a gift from God who created us 'male and female'. Reason also points to the truth about human sexuality that makes the relationship between a man and a woman unique. Mothers and fathers bring different, yet complementary gifts and strengths into a child's life.

We cannot support an amendment to the Constitution which redefines marriage and effectively places the union of two men, or two women, on a par with the marriage relationship between a husband and wife which is open to the procreation of children.

We respect the views of people who think differently to us, trusting that our sincerely held views, grounded in faith, will also be heard and respected.

Marriage is important - Reflect before you change it



The effects of the referendum of 22 May will be far reaching for this and for future generations. Catholic bishops are concerned that, should the amendment be passed, it will become increasingly difficult:

- to speak any longer in public about marriage as being between a man and a woman;
- to teach children in school about marriage;
- for those who sincerely continue to believe that marriage is between a man and a woman as they may be forced to act against their conscience.

Can a way be found to protect the civil rights of gay people without undermining the fundamental meaning of marriage as commonly understood across cultures, faiths and down the ages?

For more detail please see www.meaningofmarriage.ie