



Proposal 2:
Defending One Man and One Woman in Marriage

The marriage covenant, by which a man and a woman form with each other an intimate communion of life and love, has been founded and endowed with its own special laws by the Creator. By its very nature it is ordered to the good of the couple, as well as to the generation and education of children. Christ the Lord raised marriage between the baptized to the dignity of a sacrament.

- Catechism of the Catholic Church

On November 2, 2004 an issue of critical importance to Michigan and the entire nation will appear on the general election ballot. Voters will have the opportunity to protect marriage in the state by voting “Yes” on Proposal 2, a state constitutional amendment that recognizes marriage as the union of one man and one woman. Currently, Michigan law acknowledges that marriage is the union of one man and one woman. This law, however, does not protect Michigan from activist judges or a future legislature who may seek to implement legal recognition of same-sex unions – as has occurred in states such as Vermont and Massachusetts. Therefore, a constitutional amendment is needed to provide the strongest support of marriage and families in Michigan. Proposal 2 would provide this state with such needed protection.

The marriage question strikes to the very heart of the Catholic Church due to its effect on families, children and society as a whole. For thousands of years, the Church has taught that marriage is a natural, human institution that precedes any social or legal system; it is as old as human beings themselves because it flows from the natural complementarity and sexual differentiation and attraction of man and woman. Complementarity means that differences between the

sexes allows them to cooperate physically, psychologically, and emotionally to form a complete whole of equal partners. Marriage – the union of man and woman in a permanent and exclusive way – has been part of the natural reality of life from the beginning.

It can be argued that one of the reasons for the social fabric coming unraveled is that society has placed an exaggerated emphasis on the preferences and conveniences of individuals, elevating these personal preferences to the level of rights and entitlements, to the detriment of society. Any redefinition of marriage must be seen as an attack on the common good. As part of a pluralistic society, the Church in no way pretends to force its religious preferences on other people. But neither can the Church be intimidated by those who see our defense of the common good as simply mean spirited, narrow-minded, or intolerant of other people’s supposed rights.

The intent of this FOCUS essay is to educate Catholic voters on the sanctity and importance of marriage, at the same time urging support for Proposal 2 - which will solidify traditional marriage in our state’s constitution.

Key Supporting Points for Proposal 2

- Beyond the Catholic faith tradition, a man and woman pledging their lives together in marriage has been a part of human history in every culture. From the beginning marriage between one man and one woman has been a vital building block of human society.
- For thousands of years, marriage has been described as the union of one man and one woman; it has never included the civil bonding of a man with another man or a woman with another woman. This is just common sense.
- Marriage between a man and woman serves a unique place in society by allowing for the creation and education of *children* within the context of a family. While recognizing the presence of husbands and wives who are unable to bear children, the ideal of the family must be promoted for the common good of society.
- Defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman does not diminish or work against the legitimate rights of fellow citizens. In fact, the Catholic Church teaches that every sign of unjust discrimination should be avoided. But such Christian respect does not require us to consider so-called “same-sex” unions the same as marriage.
- The love between a husband and a wife is uniquely capable of providing *children* with the best supportive environment for growth and mature development. As a society, it is right for society to promote and defend the institution of marriage in civil law.
- People have a right to live their lives as they choose, but they don’t have the right to redefine marriage for the rest of society. Our state needs Proposal 2 to settle this question once and for all so marriage is not continually questioned and attacked.
- Proposal 2 solidifies in our state constitution what is currently state law - and what is know to be true: that marriage is between a man and a woman, period.
- Proposal 2 is necessary because of what has occurred in Massachusetts, San Francisco and other locations - where activist judges and grandstanding politicians have either created laws out of thin air or blatantly ignored the law.
- Government did not create marriage; therefore it does not have the right to change its meaning.
- The Catholic Church did not start this debate, but is taking action in response to developments across the country to defend society’s most important institution.

Biblical Citations

In Genesis we are told, “God created man in his image; in the divine image He created him; male and female He created them” (Gen 1:27). We are made in God’s image and likeness as males and as females.

Therefore, both male and female are necessary to most fully image God. Genesis tells us that “a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body” (Gen 2:24).

It is in this marital sexual union of man and woman that we most fully reveal the image and likeness of God. Two men or two women cannot complete this image. Only the union between one man and one woman can be “an intimate communion of life and love” and the complete image of God (Catechism of the Catholic Church). The first decree of the Bible tells Adam and Eve and all married couples to “be fruitful and multiply” (Gen 1:28).

This is only possible in the sexual union of one man and one woman. In light of these revelations, the Church teaches marriage and sex serve two purposes: (1) union, and (2) procreation.

Defining Marriage in Civil Law

Marriage has been a part of every culture and tradition since the beginning of time. Throughout history, one man and one woman have been biologically necessary to create a family. Human physiology and the natural biological connection between heterosexual sex, procreation and children prove that marriage is not a religious or social imposition, but rather a natural element of life that human beings discovered, much the same as we discovered other natural truths such as the existence of gravity. Marriage is between one man

and one woman, and no government should falsely claim otherwise.

If the basic reality of marriage - that it is only possible between one man and one woman- can simply be eliminated to appease one group of individuals, the government will not be able to justify upholding the other basic requirements for marriage

when other groups come forward. Thus, prohibiting polygamous marriage, incestuous marriage, and possibly even marriage involving a minor will be considered bigoted and discriminatory. Is this what society wants? Does this elevate the state’s moral fiber?

One-man one-woman marriage does not discriminate against any group of individuals. Marriage is available to every citizen subject to the same basic requirements: both parties must have attained the age of majority; the parties cannot be relatives of the first degree; neither party can already be married and the parties must be members of the opposite sex. Anyone who demands the right to marry outside of these requirements is demanding not equal

rights, but additional rights.

Since marriage is the creation of neither the state nor the Church, neither the government nor the Church can redefine it. Maintaining marriage to be what we all know to be true – a union between one man and one woman – is part of our moral and civil duty. Catholics are called to uphold the sacred gift of marriage for the protection of families and all of society.

“Marriage is not just any old union between human persons, susceptible to being configured according to a plurality of cultural models,” Pope John Paul II said in a speech on February 1, 2004 to the Roman Rota.

“When the church teaches that matrimony is a natural thing, it proposes a truth made plain by reason for the good of the couples and of society.”

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Ballot Wording for Proposal 2 Reads:

A PROPOSAL TO AMEND THE STATE CONSTITUTION TO SPECIFY WHAT CAN BE RECOGNIZED AS A “MARRIAGE OR SIMILAR UNION” FOR ANY PURPOSE.

*The proposal would amend the state constitution to provide that
“The union of one man and one woman in marriage shall be the only agreement
recognized as a marriage or similar union for any purpose.”*

Should this proposal be adopted?

Yes

No

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- A **YES** vote on Proposal 2 will adopt the above language in the Michigan Constitution, thereby offering the strongest protection of marriage between one man and one woman in our state.
 - A no vote on Proposal 2 would defeat the proposal and leave Michigan’s Defense of Marriage Act vulnerable, thereby allowing for future legislatures or activist judges to possibly overturn traditional marriage.
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