

Homily: Standing for the Cause of Marriage March 6, 2011

When first meeting with engaged couples I read with them Jesus' words of advice,

“Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock.... It did not fall, it was built on rock.” Matt. 7:21-27

As they build the house of marriage; they have a choice, to build on rock or sand. The rock of God's teaching and strength, or the sand of sentiment and social convention.

As if marriage is not challenging enough today, we find our state legislature engaged in an effort to *try* to redefine marriage.

What are we to make of it? Can we accept it? How do we respond?

First, as Christians we believe marriage is God's highest creation.

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he him; male and female He created them. And God blessed them...” Genesis 1:27 & 28

The fuller image of God revealed not simple in the individual, but man & woman together.

But we do not need divine revelation to see the prerogative of this pairing.

I) Man and woman are uniquely crafted for each. They have biological complementarity. Just in their physical attributes a man is made for a woman and a woman for a man. They fit.

Friends are compatible. Marriage is more than compatibility.

This in itself is enough to justify the special status of this relationship.

II) More over, only a man and woman have the creative power to bring forth new life. And even in couples that do not bear fruit, it is a union ordered toward creation.

III) Further, the permanent bond of a woman and man is the sanctuary in which children are not only created but ideally educated, socialized and raised to adulthood.

You might say Marriage is the house designed by God in which children flourish.

Some say the combination of parents does not matter. I say, ask any child, free to speak their heart, and they will tell you they long for both a mother and father.

What of Marriage Equality? It is compelling. Who could be against equality?

"The worst form of inequality is to try to make unequal things equal." -Aristotle

We may sympathize with such an aspiration, but any other pairing is not the same. The difference is the difference. It is biology, not bigotry.

Our opponents tend to blur distinction, we must insist on them.

We are caring people, but compassion does not allow us to bend the truth.
Kindness cannot demand dishonesty.
We can no more twist the truth about marriage, than we can accept that $2+2=5$.

The current MD Bill, **The Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Protection Act**

“Civil Marriage” – we all have a right to marriage, no one has the right to re-define it.
It is as simple as that

"The truth is that the reason why the state cannot redefine marriage is because it never defined it in the first place; it is a truth received, not created.

“Religious Freedom”, What it calls religious freedom means I will not have to perform such ceremonies. But I am not compelled now to perform marriage ceremonies by anyone.

However, will we be freedom to believe that such unions are morally wrong?
No. We will not be free to act on that belief without being accused of hatred and legally liable for discrimination? This is no freedom at all.

- Just this week we read about a British court ruling that a couple cannot care for foster children because they disapprove of homosexuality. (Ellen Branagh/PA Wire)
- In Massachusetts Catholic Charities can no longer operate adoption services because it is not allowed to give priority to married men and women.
- Bed & Breakfast – sued because its owner will not allow a ceremony on her property.
- Teachers and other state employees have been censured from speaking
- Policies put forth denying funding to any organization that practices “hate”.

And this “civil right” will be enforced by the “civil courts” with “civil judgments.”
We will be compelled to choice between our faith or a fallacy, principles or paycheck.
We will risk losing our licenses, our jobs, our savings.
We will become at best, “pariahs to be shunned, at worst criminals to be convicted.”

This is just the beginning.

In some ways it seems we are reverting back to the days of pagan Rome.

In the early Church citizens of the Roman Empire were require to honor the Roman gods.

In order fulfill the law one simply had to place incense on hot coals before their image.

Christians died rather than honor a false image of God.

And likewise, we cannot cooperate in placating a false image of Marriage;

We cannot comply with a lie. The early Christians did not and neither can we.

Are we ready to truly share in the fellowship of the apostles and martyrs?
To play along with a distortion of marriage
is not only to participate in the mockery of Marriage, but in the mockery of God.

I do not say this to attack any group or persons.
There are many types of relations or friendships, some healthy some not.
True marriage is particular in its make up, its potential, and its purpose in society.

If we can change marriage regardless of gender, why not number, species?
Marriage is either clearly defined or it degenerates into mean nothing.

In Sweden where such “marriages” are allowed true marriage is quickly dying.
Most children are born out of wedlock. S.Kurtz Hoover Inst.
When marriage loses its clear meaning, why bother?

This is why what is happening in Annapolis is of utmost importance.

This bill which was supposed to speedily sail to the governor desk, hit some rocks.
Besieged with calls and emails, some legislators will not stand for marriage.
What was hoped to be finished with before the weekend, was delayed,
And will not go to the full State Assembly until this week.

Both sides acknowledge that it is not clear that the forces for change have a majority.

I take a certain pride in being a citizen of Mary’s Land.
And I am alarmed by what this will mean for our state.

We have the right and duty to stand firm for marriage as it has always been understood;
God’s design for men and women, the good of children, and the flourishing of society?

As we take up this cause, be prepared for the rains of distain, to be flooded with accusations
of hate. Be ready to be blasted with the winds of social scorn.
But stand firm, for you are built on rock.