

Reflection for Thursday 29th October 2020

You may have been aware of the controversy resulting from some remarks made by the Pope last week about allowing homosexual couples to have a civil union. This is of course allowed in this country and in many countries throughout the world but there are still many other countries where this is not allowed by law. The big question for us as Catholics is, should the Church encourage this course of action. Before we say anything about this let's have a look at what the Church teaches about marriage:

"Marriage is a holy thing that is of God. God designed the human race and He made there to be two complementary genders, male and female. He gave humans one and only one way to bring new life into this world, and that is through the union of a man and a woman. He made it that all humans have a father and a mother and He made it that we all need our father and mother to have a stable, permanent commitment to one another for us to develop properly. That is why God instituted the state of marriage at the same time that He created the human race. We may say that marriage is an essential part of God's plans for humans. That is why we must revere and honour it. That is why we must foster it and protect it."

Fr Robinson, Priest, Professor and Author of "The Realist Guide to Religion and Science".

From this understanding of the sanctity of marriage both Pope St John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI had this to say in 2003:

All Catholics are "obliged to oppose the legal recognition of homosexual unions" and where such unions are given the legal status and rights that belong to marriage, "clear and emphatic opposition is a duty," said St. Pope John Paul II in a 2003 letter issued by then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the current Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI.

In addition to Catholics in general having a duty to clearly oppose homosexual marriage, a Catholic politician “has a moral duty to express his opposition clearly and publicly and to vote against” such unions, and if it already is the law, the politician still must oppose it and has a “duty to witness to the truth.”

“The common good requires that laws recognize, promote and protect marriage as the basis of the family, the primary unit of society,” said St. Pope John Paul II and Cardinal Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI) in the March 2003 document, *Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons.*

In 2010, Cardinal Bergoglio (Pope Francis) said that a proposal to legalize same-sex marriage in Argentina was “destructive of the plan of God” and was “a ‘move’ of the Father of Lies who wishes to confuse and deceive the children of God.”

The “Father of Lies” reference comes from the Gospel of John (8:44), where Jesus refers to Satan as “a liar and the father of lies.”

Finally I would like to quote an extract from a statement of the Confraternity of Catholic Clergy, of which I am a member, issued yesterday:

It is important to state that pastoral charity demands sensitivity to all, and no unjust discrimination towards individuals with same-sex attraction (cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church 2357). The same charity, however, demands that the Church and society discourage same-sex activity, and the normalisation of same-sex relationships, as harmful to individuals and damaging to marriage. The Church’s official teaching on these matters is clearly expressed in the document of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith *Considerations Regarding Proposals to give Legal Recognition to Unions between Homosexual Persons.*(CDF 2003). Here we read: ‘The Church teaches that respect for homosexual persons cannot lead in any way to approval of homosexual behaviour or to legal recognition of homosexual unions’ (CDF 2003, 11).

The Catholic Bishops of England and Wales released this statement on Civil Partnerships in 2003:

The Church has an obligation not only to protect Christian marriage but also to support the Natural Law which is valid for all people at all times. Thus, the Church has a duty to uphold monogamous Marriage between the two sexes, open to life and built on love, as the foundation of society. The promotion of civil same-sex unions would ‘not promote the common good’ and ‘there is a real danger that the deeply rooted understanding of marriage as a permanent and exclusive relationship between a woman and a man, and as the best context for raising children, will be eroded. (Extract)

May the Lord bless us and Our Lady protect us.

Deacon Kevin