



## **Catholic Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn**

---

### **Pastoral Message | September 12, 2017**

---

#### **SAME-SEX MARRIAGE**

The current issue of same-sex marriage and the proposal to change the basic definition of marriage in Australia raises issues that are central to a society seeking maturity.

We all know and love same-sex attracted people in our families, parishes and communities. They do feel particularly vulnerable in the current national discussions. Our respect and care reaches out to them as always.

That been said, traditional marriage must be considered one of the great treasures of humanity. Clearly, Christianity has given it a particular sacramental understanding. Yet, the exclusive love sharing of a man and a woman that is open to the possibility of giving life to children has been a central benchmark of healthy societies over millennia.

St John Paul II often wrote that society comes through the family. Strengthening society means strengthening marriage and families. How can changing the basic and enduring definition of marriage assist a strong society?

Several recent Popes have also made the parallel with environmental ecology and human ecology. They rightly see their inter-connection.

For example, why be strong on protecting the natural beauties of Australia but less so on protecting proven human beauties, like traditional marriage?

Indeed, we seem to be strong on protecting the environment but seemingly more ready to endanger the delicate ecology of human relationships in re-defining marriage. Subjective considerations are significant but must be balanced carefully with objective truths about the value of traditional marriage and its links with the flourishing of society.

Clearly, too, if overseas examples are a guide, many countries that have permitted same-sex marriage are now encountering all sorts of challenges regarding abuses to the fundamental rights of religious freedom and speech. Various ideologies can be asserted in a subtle manner as the new "right". Pope Francis warns us about the advance of an "ideological colonisation" in our world.

Let us do all we can to protect traditional marriage from any legal re-definition. Make sure you vote!

**Archbishop Christopher Prowse**  
**Catholic Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn**  
**September 12, 2017**