



FAMILYWORKS

Newsletter of the Australian Catholic Marriage & Family Council
Number 2/2012

Pastoral Letter on the True Meaning of Marriage



The Catholic Bishops of Victoria have issued a pastoral letter on the 'True Meaning of Marriage'. The letter presents the Catholic Church's understanding of marriage and urges all Catholics to respond to the Federal Government's on-line survey (see below). **The survey will only take a few minutes.**

The pastoral letter can be downloaded from: <http://www.cam.org.au/lifemarriagefamily/>

Federal Government Internet Survey re Bills to Legislate for Same-Sex Marriage

On 13 February 2012 the [Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2012](#) was introduced by Mr Bandt MP and the [Marriage Amendment Bill 2012](#) was introduced by Mr Jones MP. The two bills amend the [Marriage Act 1961](#) to:

- legalise same sex marriage in Australia,
- continue to impose no obligation on authorised celebrants, being ministers of religion, to perform any marriage, including same sex marriages, and
- recognise same sex marriages performed in foreign countries.

This survey, illustrated below, will inform the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs regarding community views on the Bills. **You have less than a week to ensure your view is read by the Committee.**



House of Representatives C x Survey x

<https://www.surveymk.com/s.aspx?sm=uOuyCTgd1c4W9%2f9g3q%2b3h7P5m5I8fmbLuyVWxMWyvPs%3d>

Survey questions Exit this sur

***1. What is your position on the following statements:**

	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
The law should be changed to legalise same sex marriages in Australia.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Authorised celebrants, being ministers of religion, should not be obliged to perform same sex marriages. (Note: authorised celebrants, being ministers of religion, are not currently obliged to perform any marriage)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Same sex marriages performed in foreign countries should be recognised in Australia	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

***2. Do you support the following Bills?**

	Yes	No
Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2012 (Mr Bandt).	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Marriage Amendment Bill 2012 (Mr Jones)	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

3. Can you explain your reasons to the above questions? (Please limit your response to 250 words)

Fill in the Survey today: Closing date for responses is 20 April 2012.

The Current Law Regarding Marriage – Australian Federal Marriage Act 1961

Section 5 of the Marriage Act 1961 defines marriage as follows:

“Marriage means the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life.”

Universal Declaration of Human Rights – Marriage is between a man and a woman

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations in Dec 1948, states (Article 16):

- (1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.
- (2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.
- (3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

In a 1999 case brought before the United Nations Human Rights Committee (UNHRC), arguing for homosexual rights under Article 16, the UNHCR determined:

“Use of the term "men and women" (in Article 16) ... has been consistently and uniformly understood as indicating that the treaty obligation of States parties ... **is to recognize as marriage only the union between a man and a woman wishing to marry each other.**” (Emphasis added)

Marriage: Myths & Realities - A Comment on Same Sex 'Marriage' by Sydney Archdiocese



Marriage is becoming one of the most hotly-debated issues of our time. Many people instinctively understand that marriage is a faithful, loving and life-giving union between a man and a woman, but are unsure how to reconcile this truth with the growing push for same-sex 'marriage'. The following Web link is to an article from the Sydney Archdiocese which looks at some common arguments raised in favour of homosexual 'marriage' - and how we might respond to these arguments in truth and love.

Download here:

<http://www.dbb.org.au/ourparishesandpriests/Documents/Marriage%20-%20Myths%20and%20Realities.pdf>

World Meeting of Families with Pope Benedict - Milan, 30 May to 3 June 2012

- STILL TIME TO BOOK FOR PILGRIMAGE -



Announcing the 7th World Meeting of Families, Pope Benedict XVI urged: “Christian families and church communities around the world ... to set their sights on “Milan 2012”.

The two days of celebrations, music, testimonies and papal mass will be preceded by a Pastoral Theological Congress on the theme: “Family, Work and Celebration” focussing on the critical balance between work and family life.

The Australian Catholic Marriage & Family Council, together with Harvest Pilgrimages, has organised a pilgrimage with the World Meeting as its focus. The pilgrimage features:

- **7 nights Milan • Historic sites of the city of St Ambrose • Theological & Pastoral Congress • Eucharistic Celebration in the Duomo (Milan Cathedral) • Festival Vigil with Pope Benedict XVI • Concluding Papal Mass**
- **Optional Italy 7 night extension.**

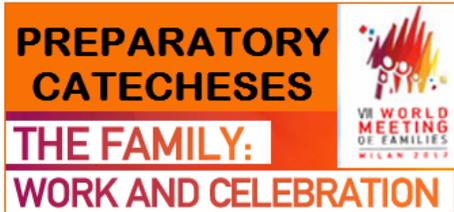
The pilgrimage will be led by Bishop Terry Brady and Ron & Mavis Pirola.

For expressions of interest or questions about the pilgrimage, email Ron or Mavis Pirola: rmpirola@ozemail.com.au.

World Meeting Website: <http://www.family2012.com/index.php?l=en>

World Meeting of Families – Online Resources for Parishes and Family Groups

Family, work, celebration: These are the three words of the theme for the Seventh World Meeting of Families. This theme links the man-woman couple with its lifestyles: the way of living relationships (the family), inhabiting the world (work), and humanizing time (celebration). *The Pontifical Council for the Family and Milan Archdiocese have prepared a 10 session catechesis designed for parish groups, Ecclesial Movements or families. These are organised similar to Lenten discussions, with prayer, scripture, catechesis and discussion questions to prompt personal sharing. The ten topics are:*



The secret of Nazareth

Work, a resource for the family

The family generates life

Work, a challenge for the family

The family is put to the test

Celebration, a time for the family

The family animates society

Celebration, a time for the Lord

Work & celebration in the family

Celebration, a time for the community

Full text of Catecheses here: <http://www.family2012.com/en/catecheses.php>

2012 – “A Year of Grace” – Starting afresh from Christ



The Australian Bishops have announced the celebration of a *Year of Grace* for the Australian Church to take place from Pentecost 2012 to Pentecost 2013. This Year of Grace is a summons to the whole Australian Church to undertake a spiritual journey, a time of listening and prayer, a fresh encounter with Jesus. The Year of Grace calls us to:

- encounter Jesus Christ in prayer
- seek healing and renewal through repentance
- grow as disciples by cultivating the gifts of the Holy Spirit

In this way, the Church in Australia will continue to be transformed by the power of Christ’s resurrection.

Further Information: http://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=248:year-of-grace&catid=9:news&Itemid=3

For Your Marriage - US Bishops’ Website on Marriage



‘For Your Marriage’ is a comprehensive resource on all aspects of sexuality, marriage, parenting and family life from a Catholic perspective.

For Your Marriage website: <http://foryourmarriage.org>

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (Now Pope Benedict XVI) - May 27, 2005:

CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING LEGAL RECOGNITION OF UNIONS BETWEEN HOMOSEXUAL PERSONS

THE NATURE OF MARRIAGE AND ITS INALIENABLE CHARACTERISTICS

The Church’s teaching on marriage and on the complementarity of the sexes reiterates a truth that is evident to right reason and recognized as such by all the major cultures of the world. Marriage is not just any relationship between human beings. It was established by the Creator with its own nature, essential properties and purpose. No ideology can erase from the human spirit the certainty that marriage exists solely between a man and a woman, who by mutual personal gift,

proper and exclusive to themselves, tend toward the communion of their persons. In this way, they mutually perfect each other, in order to cooperate with God in the procreation and upbringing of new human lives.

The natural truth about marriage was confirmed by the Revelation contained in the biblical accounts of creation, an expression also of the original human wisdom, in which the voice of nature itself is heard. There are three fundamental elements of the Creator's plan for marriage, as narrated in the Book of Genesis.

In the first place, man, the image of God, was created "male and female" (Gen 1:27). Men and women are equal as persons and complementary as male and female. Sexuality is something that pertains to the physical-biological realm and has also been raised to a new level – the personal level – where nature and spirit are united.

Marriage is instituted by the Creator as a form of life in which a communion of persons is realized involving the use of the sexual faculty. "That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife and they become one flesh" (Gen 2:24).

Third, God has willed to give the union of man and woman a special participation in his work of creation. Thus, he blessed the man and the woman with the words "Be fruitful and multiply" (Gen 1:28). Therefore, in the Creator's plan, sexual complementarity and fruitfulness belong to the very nature of marriage.

Furthermore, the marital union of man and woman has been elevated by Christ to the dignity of a sacrament. The Church teaches that Christian marriage is an efficacious sign of the covenant between Christ and the Church (cf. Eph 5:32). This Christian meaning of marriage, far from diminishing the profoundly human value of the marital union between man and woman, confirms and strengthens it (cf. Mt 19:3-12; Mk 10:6-9)