



The Catholic Conference of Illinois (CCI) is the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Illinois. To further the work of CCI, the Defense of Marriage Department has created this *Toolkit on Marriage* to publicly articulate the Church's teachings regarding marriage. It offers and explains concepts key to Church teaching and provides the best resources available for understanding and defending marriage.

THE CONTENTS OF THE TOOLKIT

The primary purpose of this effort is to educate Catholics and facilitate their engagement in the vital public question being debated throughout our nation and our state: what is marriage? This toolkit is intended to help engage our faith community on this question and provide resources which illuminate this question with both an unflagging respect for the dignity of each and every person, as well as fidelity to what the Church teaches. To do so, the toolkit includes:

1. a Q & A on the topics most often discussed in this debate;
2. a list of the best resources for explaining Church teaching;
3. an outline and reflection guide for homilies and other catechetical efforts;
4. information on ministering to those with same-sex attraction; and
5. information about how to become more fully-involved in the public debate.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

The toolkit materials were prepared for clergy, parish staff and an informed laity. If Catholics are to defend marriage, their catechetical leaders, teachers, priests and deacons need to have reliable information to pass along. The defense of marriage will require the participation of all of us. It is essential that this question of marriage and what it means are taught to the faithful and engaged in by our parish communities.

Item one, the *Question and Answer*, addresses the issues typically encountered in the discussion about the redefinition of marriage. It is our judgment that the conversation about marriage, the assertions and counter-assertions, can be largely distilled into these twelve questions. The Church's answers to these commonly asked questions will help better inform the faithful and encourage their engagement in the issue. Committing to memory the concepts explained in the *Question and Answer* before any public engagement or catechesis takes place in the parish would be wise.

The *Best Resource List*, item two, is a reliable guide to more extensive explorations of what is presented in the *Question and Answer*. The resources are useful for informing the catechetical leader, as well as serving as a place to which the motivated parishioner might turn for more in-depth information. Further, the videos cited are quite "user-friendly" and are presented in non-technical language, thus making them suitable for school-aged children as well as for adult education.

Item three, *Reflections for Homilists and Catechists*, is offered to assist preachers, as well as catechists, who have an opportunity to address marriage issues publicly. This item provides a few suggestions for starting points, rather than complete talks. The suggestions are arranged thematically around the themes of the beauty of creation, covenantal love, alienation and respect for all individuals. It is different from the *Question and Answer* in that it is not intended as a working document, but rather as an aid to those who seek to preach or teach the Church's viewpoint on marriage.

Item four on the *Courage* ministry offers some resources for the pastoral care of persons who experience same-sex attractions.

Finally, item five invites everyone to become actively involved in the defense of marriage and provides a method for enlisting in the *Illinois Catholic Advocacy Network* (ICAN), coordinated by CCI. The challenges to marriage – social, legal and political – will not be overcome without broad and effective grassroots support. Your voice is needed!

In short, the Toolkit on Marriage is designed to help you and your parish communities understand, explain and promote the Catholic Church's answers to the following Questions:

1. What is marriage?
2. Why is the definition of marriage important?
3. Why does the Church endure the repercussions of taking a stance on marriage which is contrary to popular social trends and media advocacy?
4. And, most importantly, why should you care about marriage?

Please utilize these materials for catechetical efforts in your parish and for engaging your faith community in the public debate. Within the toolkit is a page listing members of CCI's Defense of Marriage Department. There is one member from each diocese. Please use these contacts to help implement this Toolkit. Department members are available to answer questions and give presentations. We desire nothing more than to help you make the case for marriage so that this unique and valuable institution may endure for the benefit of all children and future generations.





1) WHY OPPOSE REDEFINING MARRIAGE IN LAW FOR SAME-SEX UNIONS?

Throughout our nation's history, authentic marriage has been understood and recognized as it exists in nature: a lifelong, exclusive relationship between one man and one woman which is open to the creation and care of new human lives. The proponents of recognizing same-sex unions as marriage have the burden of demonstrating why this understanding should change. It is incumbent on them to demonstrate that same-sex unions are of the same benefit to society as marriage between a man and a woman and thus worthy of privilege in the law.

Both reason and faith tell us that the marriage of one man and one woman calls forth the best of spouses, not only for their own sake, but also for the well-being of their children and for the advancement of the common good. Marriage generates children, is an ideal environment for raising them and is the basic building block for any human society. In the end, it is neither possible for us to change the definition of marriage, without forfeiting its meaning, nor wise to attempt to do so.

2) HOW DOES MARRIAGE BETWEEN ONE MAN AND ONE WOMAN BENEFIT SOCIETY?

First and foremost, marriage provides an essential contribution to society because a stable, loving marriage is the ideal environment for raising children. Through marriage, children grow up knowing that they were created through an act of intimate love and with the knowledge that their mother and father have committed to each other for life. Marriage is a bond between parents but also between parents and children, who are provided the essential care and love of a mother and a father.

Marriage is also beneficial for adults as the ideal structure for man and woman to live interdependently, recognizing the equal dignity, beauty and value of one another while also relying on each other's care and love. This is the natural order embracing the complementarity – physical, emotional and spiritual – of man and woman.

Marriage has existed as a reality natural to human beings long before any recognition by the state. The state cannot change the reality of marriage – a permanent, covenanted relationship of a man and a woman open to the creation of new life – without compromising the goods intrinsic to marriage. However, the state does have an interest in promoting marriage as part of the common good. As explained, marriage provides a beneficial order to society through which man and woman support one another, and love and educate their children to become responsible citizens and productive members of society. Marriage also reinforces the law's protection of children and their best interests. So, for the stability and well-being of society, the state has an obligation to give preferred status and legal protection to this most basic cell of society.

3) WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT FOR CHILDREN'S PARENTS TO BE MARRIED?

According to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's *Donum Vitae*, every child has the right to be "brought up within marriage: it is through the secure and recognized relationship to

his own parents that the child can discover his own identity and achieve his own proper human development.”

It is difficult to overstate the significance of a child’s need to know his or her parents. The desire to know the identity of, and bond with, one’s biological parents is built into the design of the human person. This truth is made plain in the human experience. It is obvious in the void left when a parent has been lost to a child either through abandonment, divorce, or death, and this topic is a recurring theme in literature and other media outlets. Moreover, the trend of states’ enacting legislation opening the adoption process in favor of more access to information to those adopted recognizes that even those adopted into loving, happy and healthy families have a yearning and a right to know their biological parents.

4) HOW DO LEGALLY RECOGNIZED SAME-SEX UNIONS AFFECT MARRIAGE?

The law has an educative function and becomes a cultural resource. By attempting to redefine marriage, the state would inculcate in its citizens the belief that marriage is not concerned with reproduction or the rights of children to be bonded to their parents. Instead, marriage would be perceived solely as the function of the romantic interests of any group of consenting adults. This change in the law would communicate that there is no essential benefit to having both a mother and a father, and that, ultimately, the roles of the two parents are identical and that either could be discarded without harm. It is a direct attack on fatherhood and motherhood and ignores a child’s optimal fulfillment in being raised by mother and father. It is also an affirmative declaration by the state that marriage is *not*, by definition, heterosexual.

Marriage is procreative (at least potentially), permanent and exclusive. However, divorce statistics already challenge marriage’s status as a permanent relationship, and marriage in America has been undermined as the normative venue for the procreation of children: half of marriages end in divorce and over 40 percent of children are born out of wedlock and most often without that needed care of both mother and father. Out-of-wedlock births are one of the nation’s leading causes of poverty. Further, the widespread use of contraceptives, sterilization and abortion severely diminish the essential life-creating reality of marriage.

So we see that if the state sanctions same-sex unions little else will be left to the institution of marriage beyond being a temporary emotional bond between two adults: permanence, exclusivity and procreativity would become mere options in societal norms.

5) MARRIAGE IS NOT NECESSARILY ABOUT RAISING CHILDREN. WHAT ABOUT HETEROSEXUAL COUPLES WHO ARE INFERTILE OR BEYOND CHILD-BEARING AGE? IF THEY CAN GET MARRIED, WHY NOT A SAME-SEX COUPLE?

A married heterosexual couple unable to have children due to age or infertility is a tragic yet foreseen way of life in accord with the natural law. However, their marriage remains valid because it is still unitive. Moreover, the marriage is procreative as this man and woman, biologically and neurologically wired differently, come together and complement one another in a special way. Their

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union involves not two of the same thing, but one entirely new union made up of different parts. This marriage is uniquely fulfilling because it embodies the fullness of humanity in microcosm. This complementarity – two radically different kinds of human beings joining – brings about the potential for a dramatic growth in fulfillment and holiness. Thus, marriage, even when children are not possible, remains a vocation. New life in the spouses emerges from their complementarity. Further, any heterosexual couple has the potential to be a mother and father to any children born or adopted. A same-sex couple inherently lacks the potential to be mother and father.

6) SHOULDN'T SAME-SEX COUPLES HAVE THE SAME RIGHTS AS OTHER COUPLES – LIKE INHERITANCE RIGHTS, HOSPITAL VISITATION, HEALTH CARE COVERAGE, ETC.?

The fact is Illinois' civil union law already provides these benefits. If there are certain accommodations for same-sex unions that still need to be and can be conceded by law, let's look at those on a case by case basis. There is no reason to redefine and thus undermine marriage along the way.

7) ISN'T IT A MATTER OF CIVIL RIGHTS TO ALLOW SAME-SEX COUPLES TO MARRY?

It is undoubtedly important to protect every person's civil rights. However, the right to marry is the right to enter into a specific kind of relationship with a particular social benefit. It is neither unfair nor unjust to accept and instill requirements based upon the nature of an institution. The state sanctions many arrangements that distinguish between certain groups and individuals: for instance, college admissions based upon academic performance. Moreover, marriage has never been open to all members of society equally: for instance, siblings and first cousins are prohibited from marrying.

Redefining marriage – which is a natural, unique and socially productive relationship – is not an exercise of civil rights. Quite the opposite: forcing others to recognize a redefinition of marriage to include same-sex couples endangers the essential civil right of religious liberty. In our contemporary culture, any religion which holds that only heterosexual marriage is possible is likely to collide with the state, which currently prioritizes individual liberties for adults over what is in the best interests of children. From this vantage point, refusal to acquiesce to same-sex “marriage” is bigotry against persons who experience same-sex attraction. The state will not long allow for this and will use its coercive power to prevent what it has declared to be bigotry.

This is most readily apparent in foster care and adoption services. After passage of Illinois' civil union law, Catholic Charities refused to alter its long-standing policy of not placing foster children in the homes of co-habiting adults including those in civil unions. After a legal and legislative struggle – during which the Governor said he could not “condone discrimination” – the state refused to continue foster care and adoption contracts with Catholic Charities and forced the Church out of the foster care and adoption business. Similar outcomes could extend to the

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Church's other public ministries such as the provision of affordable and senior housing, parochial schools, medical services, counseling, youth groups and facilities management.

8) ISN'T THIS THE SAME AS OPPOSING INTERRACIAL MARRIAGE? ISN'T OPPOSITION TO SAME-SEX MARRIAGE A FORM OF BIGOTRY AND DISCRIMINATION?

It is not bigotry or discrimination to treat different things differently. Marriage is unique in that one of its central components is sexual difference. Same-sex couples lack this essential difference and cannot procreate or provide both a mother and a father to children. The link with interracial marriage is not valid. It is a very different thing to have a mother and father of different races than to be motherless or fatherless. The issue is whether the state is going to change the definition of marriage. Prohibitions of interracial marriage, perverse as they were, never called into question the essential characteristics of marriage as a union between one man and one woman ordered to procreation and the good of the spouses.

9) JESUS WELCOMED ALL PEOPLE. ISN'T IT A MATTER OF LOVE AND HOSPITALITY TO WELCOME ALL PEOPLE, REGARDLESS OF THEIR SEXUAL ORIENTATION, JUST AS JESUS DID?

All persons should be treated with respect and dignity as children of God, regardless of their sexual orientation. Being a loving and welcoming people, however, does not necessitate a legal redefinition of the basic cell of society. As Jesus so often demonstrated, the adherence to the revealed truth about our lives and how they are to be lived, demands that we not simply "tolerate" others, but actually attempt to be a witness for those things in our lives that will help bring us authentic fulfillment and true peace. Marriage is a timeless institution with the capacity to generate authentic fulfillment and true peace for spouses and their children.

10) WHAT ABOUT THE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE? WHY DOES THE CHURCH INTERJECT HERSELF IN PUBLIC DEBATES? WHY DOESN'T THE CHURCH JUST BELIEVE WHAT SHE WANTS WITHOUT FORCING HER VIEWS ON SOCIETY?

Like the state, the Church has an interest in protecting the stability and health of the family as a social unit. Catholic social teaching requires the preservation of marriage by seeking to create conditions where our potential as virtuous human beings is most fully fostered. This state of affairs of optimal human flourishing is called "the common good." One element of that common good is raising children who are cared for, healthy and virtuous. The social science is clear that children thrive best in homes where both biological parents are present and married to one another. The promotion of gender-free parenting as a desirable norm is a denial of a child's right to have a mother and a father. Maximizing the well-being of our children is a goal shared by all people of good will: not just members of certain religious denominations.

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11) IF IT WERE TRUE THAT SOME PERSONS ARE BORN WITH HOMOSEXUAL ORIENTATION, IS DENYING THEM THE OPPORTUNITY TO MARRY SOMEONE THEY LOVE UNJUST AND HATEFUL?

Whether or not a person is born with same-sex attraction is irrelevant to the question of same-sex “marriage.” Marriage, as an institution recognized and protected by the state, is not about the public recognition and approval of a private relationship of love or attraction. It is about bonding children legally to their mother and father, as well as ensuring that the future generation receives the requisite nurturing to sustain and build a robust society. Private relationships of many other kinds are tolerated in society, but marriage is essentially and legally unique because of its social purpose of contributing to the common good.

The Church recognizes and defends these natural truths. To seek to suppress the voice of the Church in the public sphere is a clear violation of religious liberty. The Church has as much right as any other group or organization to lend its voice to the public debate.

12) ISN'T THIS SIMPLY AN OUTDATED TEACHING? WHY DOESN'T THE CATHOLIC CHURCH JUST GET WITH THE TIMES?

Truth is not told by a clock. In a culture that values the “new” and “cutting edge,” a word like “traditional” can sound antiquated and be too easily dismissed. But the Church’s teaching is not simply “traditional,” it is perennial. That is, it is not based on any number of shifting biblical interpretations or theological or cultural fads. It is based on the unchanging nature and dignity of the human person. Ultimately, it is that dignity of the human person that the Church affirms in opposing the redefinition of marriage.

It is also important to note once again that marriage predates our state and our nation by thousands of years. It is part of the natural order. The state lacks any power to change its fundamental nature, and any attempt to do so only confuses and undermines the basic building block of society.





FROM THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

- A dedicated website of the USCCB, including many resources – a video and Q&A from the site are also linked – that help explain why masculinity and femininity are essential to marriage:
 - www.marriageuniqueforareason.org/
 - www.marriageuniqueforareason.org/sexual-difference-video/
 - www.marriageuniqueforareason.org/children-video/
 - www.marriageuniqueforareason.org/faq/
 - www.marriageuniqueforareason.org/religious-liberty-faq/
- Leaders of some of the largest religious communities in the United States have joined together in an open letter to all Americans to voice their shared concern for marriage and religious freedom:
 - www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/marriage/promotion-and-defense-of-marriage/ecumenical-and-interreligious-activities.cfm
- A very accessible brochure that explains why understanding sexual difference is crucial to defense of marriage:
 - old.usccb.org/prolife/programs/rlp/2009/bransfieldpamphlet.pdf
- Q & A bulletin insert about marriage and same-sex unions:
 - www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/marriage/promotion-and-defense-of-marriage/questions-and-answers-about-marriage-and-same-sex-unions.cfm
- 2010 Pastoral letter from the USCCB – page 22 specifically deals with the way in which same-sex unions pose a fundamental challenge to the nature and purpose of marriage:
 - www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/marriage/love-and-life/upload/pastoral-letter-marriage-love-and-life-in-the-divine-plan.pdf
- *A Brief Catechesis on Marriage*, provided by the Bishops of Minnesota:
 - mncc.org/issues/marriage/catholic-bishops-of-minnesota/

BEYOND USCCB

- The new natural law argument which explains why marriage is a unique institution capable of serving the common good:
 - www.harvard-jlpp.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/GeorgeFinal.pdf
- The Ruth Institute:
 - www.ruthinstitute.org/index.html
- The work of Dr. Janet Smith, PhD, Father Michael J. McGivney Chair of Life Ethics at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit, offers cogent explanations, accessible to the general population, of the Church's teachings in this area. Visit www.janetsmith.org for some of these resources.





REFLECTIONS

Among the necessary strategies for communicating what the Church teaches regarding marriage, homiletic and catechetical efforts are extremely important. To help you think about and craft good messages, we offer the following reflections on important questions at the heart of our Church's teaching. By providing answers to the most pertinent questions, it is hoped that some of the thoughts set forth below might be adapted for the homilist or teacher's purposes. Also, some Scriptural themes are mentioned where the Mass readings suggest a connection with marriage.

WHAT IS THE CHURCH'S PASTORAL CONCERN?

Among the moral issues which the Church faces in today's world, perhaps none is more emotionally charged than the issue of current attempts to redefine marriage to include persons of the same sex. It makes perfect sense that this issue would be difficult, as one's sexual attraction is among the most intimate of one's feelings. Moreover, in a culture which has become increasingly open to diverse sexual relationships, there is a growing movement in the name of tolerance to accept the claim that homosexual actions and relationships are in essence the same as that of heterosexuals and therefore should be treated as such in society and law. However, these relationships are not the same and should not be viewed as equivalent by our society. The Church then must speak to the needs of our contemporary culture regarding this issue. "Speaking the truth in love," as St. Paul says, (Ephesians 4:15) is the duty of the Church.

WHAT DOES THE CHURCH SAY ABOUT HUMAN SEXUALITY?

Catholics profess that God has revealed the objective truth of human sexuality. Our Creator knitted the truth about intimacy and affection into our very being. We are designed to love another because we are designed in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27) who is love (1 John 4:8). However, only chaste love will produce lasting joy. Chaste love is expressed in conformity with one's state in life and always honors the beloved; for instance, a married man's chaste love would be exclusively expressed with his wife. Jesus indirectly referred to this design when the Pharisees questioned him on divorce (consider Mathew 19:4-6). It was their "hardness of heart" that blocked their embrace of the truth.

Pope Paul VI wrote that the Church is "an expert in humanity." From this expertise, we understand the complementarity of the sexes. Often at odds with our larger culture, our belief is that this complementarity of the sexes is not accidental, but intrinsic to the Creator's plan, a plan to which we have experiential knowledge: that men and women are equal in dignity and value but very different from each other. This difference is physical and emotional, and as such, allows for the complementarity to form relationships which have the capacity to grow in holiness precisely because of that difference and share in the transmission of life in a way which no other relationship can. Behavior at variance with this truth will always put us at cross-purposes with ourselves and over time can harden our hearts.

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Not only is the Church “an expert,” she is also a good mother. As such, the Church knows that our intense desire for love can make our fallen human nature vulnerable to counterfeits. So, she reminds us of the grave moral evils of adultery, divorce, cohabitation, contraception, pornography, and homosexual activity. We seek love, we are designed for it, but undisciplined efforts to find love can lead us further away from the love of God the Father. This means that sexual activity at odds with the Creator’s plan will never leave us truly fulfilled or happy, but searching again and again to be made whole.

WHAT DOES THE CHURCH SAY ABOUT MARRIAGE?

(This topic may best be addressed when the Scripture readings speak of covenantal love, commitment or about declaring who we are by how we live.)

Based on God’s Word given in divine revelation, and from our discernment of the natural law, we believe that marriage creates a sacred bond between spouses and their children. We hold this to be true not only for ourselves, but for all humanity. In the context of faith, marriage is willed by the Creator from the beginning to mirror God’s love for the human family, and it was raised by Christ to the dignity of a sacrament of the New Covenant of grace, a visible and effective sign of Jesus’ sacrificial love revealed on the Cross. As such, marriage is a constant reminder of God’s love for the human race, as well as a reflection of the permanent, faithful, and fruitful bond of love between Christ and the Church (cf. Genesis 1:27, 2:22-24; Ephesians 5:31-32.) The perspective we hold on this issue is also shared by many other people of faith both Christian and otherwise (cf. Manhattan Declaration: A Call of Christian Conscience, November 20, 2009).

Marriage is also a call to holiness, existing solely between a man and a woman, who by mutual self-gift, reserved for themselves, commit to love one another and help one another grow in virtue. It is also a call to cooperate with God in the procreation and upbringing of new human lives. Marriage is the exclusive venue wherein the unimpeded procreative power of the sexual faculty is to be exercised. This openness to procreation, coupled with fidelity and permanence in married life, expresses the truth of spousal love. There are no substitutes for these foundational, defining aspects of married life.

WHAT IS THE CHURCH’S PURPOSE IN THIS DEBATE?

(This topic may best be addressed when the Scripture readings speak of being misunderstood or alienated.)

The Church desires to stand as a witness in the midst of our culture: not with arrogance or anger, but with a deep desire to lead all to the most profound truths concerning human existence. Again, may we never desire to do anything less or more than what St. Paul commands: speak the truth in love.

Unfortunately, those who challenge the equating of relationships between persons of the same sex with marriage are often immediately dismissed as bigoted, old-fashioned, or worse. It is as if the attempt to understand the dignity and purpose of human sexuality and marriage were a personal attack on the dignity of those who do not agree. It should be remembered that the Church has not

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initiated some type of attack on individuals, but rather seeks to show that what God has revealed about human sexuality is for our good, and though not always easy to live, it is the only true way to fulfillment and happiness. This conflict is not new to Christians as it was also familiar to Christ:

The Pharisees wanted to trap Jesus. They brought him a woman who had been caught in adultery, and stood her alone in front of a crowd. They told Jesus that she was a sinner, and that she should be stoned. They waited for him to trip up—to ignore her sinfulness, or to treat her contemptuously. Either could be used against him.

Jesus did neither. He offered her words of compassion and words of truth. He sent away her persecutors and spoke to her in love. But he also told her the truth. He recognized her sinfulness. As she left him, Jesus told her, “Go, and sin no more.” (John 8:11)

In a subsequent encounter, Jesus spoke again to the Pharisees. His words there were clear: “You will know the truth and the truth will make you free” (John 8:32).

Throughout the Gospel, Jesus united truth and love in his being and his preaching. By example and by precept, he instructs us, his disciples, to be faithful to him in this way, for the good of our own souls and so that we might bring understanding to others. In imitating Jesus’ commitment to telling the truth and doing so in love, we can enjoy what St. Paul called “the peace that passes understanding” (Philippians 4:7).

HOW ARE PERSONS WITH SAME-SEX ATTRACTIONS TO BE TREATED?

(This topic should be addressed whenever the broader debate is engaged.)

The Church’s teaching on human sexuality is in no way an attack on the dignity and worth of people who experience same-sex attraction. We must treat those who experience same-sex attractions with respect on account of their inherent dignity. All people are made in God’s image, and all are our brothers and sisters for whom Christ died. All baptized Christians are adopted sons and daughters of God, regardless of their sexual attractions. It is sinful to belittle or dismiss any person, regardless of any characteristic of their lives: among numerous places in magisterial teaching see, for example, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith’s *Persona Humana*.

Moreover, the Church teaches an essential distinction between having an orientation or inclination toward same-sex activity, and freely choosing to engage in homosexual acts. Our culture assumes orientation necessarily results in acts. The Church, by contrast, makes a crucial distinction. Even if a person feels he or she can’t help who he or she is attracted to, the attraction itself is not a sin. Only acting in accord with it is sinful. All of us struggle with many temptations, and we all pray for strength.

At the same time, as Jesus demonstrated to the Pharisees, the adherence to the revealed truth about our lives and how they are to be lived, demands that we not simply “tolerate” others but actually attempt to be a witness for those things in our lives which will help bring us fulfillment and peace.





Courage is a spiritual and fraternal support group for men and women who experience same sex attractions and desire to live in accordance with the Church's teachings on human sexuality. EnCourage assists parents, spouses, and other family members of those with same sex attraction. The Courage apostolate was founded in 1980 by the late Terrance Cardinal Cooke of New York, with the help of the late Fr. John Harvey OSFS who served as the apostolate's director for almost 30 years. Fr. Paul N. Check, Diocese of Bridgeport, CT is the present Executive Director. Timothy Cardinal Dolan chairs Courage's episcopal board.

GOALS OF COURAGE MEMBERS

- To live chaste lives in accordance with the Roman Catholic Church's teaching on homosexuality.
- To dedicate our entire lives to Christ through service to others, spiritual reading, prayer, meditation and attendance at Mass, and the frequent reception of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist.
- To foster a spirit of fellowship in which we may share with one another our thoughts and experiences and so ensure that none of us has to face the problems of homosexuality alone.
- To be mindful of the truth that chaste friendships are not only possible but necessary in chaste Christian life and to encourage one another in forming and sustaining these friendships.
- To live lives that may serve as a good example to others.

CHAPTERS AND MEETINGS

Each local Courage chapter is guided by a priest, who is appointed by his Bishop. The chaplain meets privately with prospective members before they join the group to ensure that they understand the five goals. Trust and confidentiality are central to the work of Courage, so only those who participate in the meetings know its time and location. On-line support is available through the Courage website.

REFERENCES

- USCCB Guidelines for Pastoral Care: Ministry to Persons with a Homosexual Inclination (2006) old.usccb.org/doctrine/Ministry.pdf
- Website for Courage and EnCourage: www.couragerc.org
- Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraphs 2357-2359
- Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith: Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons (1986)
- Fr. John Harvey: *Homosexuality and the Catholic Church; Same-Sex Attraction, A Parent's Guide; The Truth About Homosexuality*





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A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

Why don't these materials use the terms "same-sex marriage" or "gay marriage"? The terms "same-sex marriage" and "gay marriage" beg the question: What is marriage? Is it even possible for two persons of the same sex to be married? Using the terms "same-sex marriage" and "gay marriage" already presupposes (wrongly) that marriage comes in a variety of forms: "same-sex," "opposite-sex," "homosexual," "heterosexual," and so forth. However, the sexual difference and complementarity of husband and wife is not something that is added to a pre-existing thing called "marriage," as you might add spice to a recipe. Instead, male-female complementarity is at the very heart of marriage and part of its authentic definition. Marriage wouldn't be marriage without a man and a woman, a husband and a wife. This is why adding alternative adjectives to the word "marriage" ("same-sex," "gay," and so on) produces not another "variety" of marriage, but a different thing entirely. It radically alters what marriage is in its very essence.

* This Note on Language is adapted from the *Marriage: Unique for a Reason* web site.





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**HOW TO GET
INVOLVED IN
THE PUBLIC
DEBATE OVER
MARRIAGE**

**JOIN I-CAN, THE ILLINOIS CATHOLIC
ADVOCACY NETWORK:**

<http://v.www.ilcatholic.org/take-action/join-i-can/>

The Catholic Conference of Illinois is here to serve you and our Church. Sign up now for our Illinois Catholic Advocacy Network (I-CAN) to stay informed on issues affecting the Church and her mission at both the state and federal levels.

BENEFITS OF I-CAN:

- Regular email updates on legal and political developments surrounding the marriage debate. You can also choose to get updates in the areas of respect life, education, immigration and other social justice topics being addressed by state and federal lawmakers.
- Pre-written messages on urgent issues you can email to your elected representatives.
- Alerts to update you on the status of advocacy items.
- Announcements about periodic Conference events.
- Security in the knowledge that members' contact information will not be shared with others.



Catholic Conference
of Illinois

TOOLKIT ON MARRIAGE
