



STATEMENT OF
BISHOP MICHAEL F. BURBIDGE, CATHOLIC BISHOP OF RALEIGH
AND
BISHOP PETER J. JUGIS, CATHOLIC BISHOP OF CHARLOTTE
ON THE
2009 NORTH CAROLINA MARRIAGE AMENDMENT BILL

February 24, 2009

My name is Bishop Peter Jugis and I am the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Charlotte, a jurisdiction that covers the western half of North Carolina. I speak today in my own name and in the name of Bishop Michael Burbidge, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Raleigh, who is with me this afternoon, in support of Senate Bill 272 which asks that an amendment to the state Constitution be placed before our citizens declaring that “the marriage between a man and a woman will be the only domestic legal union recognized as valid in the State of North Carolina.”

There are many here who can speak to the legal, historical and social dimensions of traditional marriage. Speaking for Bishop Burbidge and myself as teachers of the Catholic faith, I wish to address the scriptural and theological basis for upholding the traditional understanding of marriage in North Carolina.

“Sacred Scripture begins [in the Book of Genesis] with the creation of man and woman in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26-27) and concludes [in the Book of Revelation] with a vision of ‘the wedding feast of the Lamb.’ (Rev. 19:7, 9) Scripture speaks throughout of marriage and its ‘mystery,’ its institution and the meaning God has given it, its origin and its end, [and] its various realizations throughout the history of salvation.” (CCC1602) Throughout the entirety of Sacred Scripture, marriage is always and only recognized as a union between a man and a woman. As a source of divine revelation, we believe that Sacred Scripture has made it clear that the traditional understanding of marriage over several millennia is the only one that should constitutionally exist in our state.

Our theological tradition of nearly 2000 years has consistently taught that “the vocation of marriage is written in the very nature of man and woman as they came from the hand of the Creator.” (CCC1603) This means that the very definition of marriage is tied to the biological and organic reality of man and woman. Their sexual complementarity is divinely ordered and the ability to procreate is an intrinsic and irrevocable dimension of the universal understanding of marriage. We believe this understanding of marriage is the only one that should constitutionally exist in our state.

In a rapidly changing society, many new ideas and concepts are offered as equals to time honored and proven beliefs and practices. Discernment and wisdom are necessary to distinguish which new ideas and concepts should be incorporated into our society. We wish to affirm our Church’s belief that men and women with a homosexual attraction are children of God possessed of human dignity because they too are created in God’s image. They are worthy of our love and acceptance. Protecting the traditional understanding of marriage is not intended to disparage our brothers and sisters with a homosexual attraction. Rather, it is intended to affirm a divinely ordered reality that cannot be changed because it is from God.

We join with millions of citizens across the state of North Carolina who believe the definition of marriage should remain the same as it has for thousands and thousands of years, that of a union between a man and a woman.

We ask our Catholic faithful throughout the state, other Christians who embrace with us a common belief about traditional marriage, and all people of good will to support this proposed legislation, to contact their legislators, and to join us in working for a constitutional amendment defining marriage in its traditional and divinely ordained meaning.

Thank you.