



ONE MAN, ONE WOMAN

What is marriage?

Marriage is a covenant “by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life [that] is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring” (CCC 1601).

Why is marriage only between a man and a woman?

Marriage is oriented toward procreation, and only a man and a woman can procreate. Also, God made men and women to complement each other, both physically and psychologically.

Two men or two women do not complement each other the way a man and a woman do. They are not anatomically or biologically compatible, and they cannot produce children.

This is why cultures all over the world recognize the uniqueness of marriage. Marriage produces children, the future of every society, and so marriage is unique compared to every other form of social relationship.

“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. . . . They mutually perfect each other, in order to cooperate with God in the procreation and upbringing of new human lives” (UHP 2).

This kind of union goes beyond just the question of child-bearing, for even when a marriage results in no children, a man and a woman still physically and psychologically complement each other in a way two men or two women do not.

Can there be such a thing as homosexual marriage?

No. Marriage is simply the kind of union between a man and a woman described above.

Stretching the term “marriage” to include homosexual unions doesn’t change the underlying reality. It’s just playing games with words. It does not alter the fact that a man and a woman are capable of having a kind of union that two persons of the same sex are not.

While governments may play games with words and stretch the term “marriage” beyond breaking point, the reality of marriage is possible only between a man and a woman.

Should society recognize homosexual “marriages”?

No. To do so would harm society in numerous ways. In the first place, it would harm the people contracting such unions because society would tell them that they are married when in fact they are not. It would be a “social lie” that would deceive the people involved in these unions and prevent them from recognizing the reality of their situation.

“There are absolutely no grounds for considering homosexual unions to be in any way similar or even remotely analogous to God’s plan for marriage and family. Marriage is holy, while homosexual acts go against the natural moral law.

Homosexual acts close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved.

“Sacred Scripture condemns homosexual acts as a serious depravity (cf. Rom. 1:24-27, 1 Cor. 6:10, 1 Tim. 1:10). This judgment of Scripture does not of course permit us to conclude that all those who suffer from this anomaly are personally responsible for it, but it does attest to the fact that homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered” (UHP 4).

The compassionate thing to do for those who struggle with homosexual temptations is to be honest with them, in a kind and charitable way, concerning the truth about human sexuality and marriage. It is not compassionate to facilitate a deception that pretends homosexual activity is good or that marriage between persons of the same sex is possible.

How else would society be harmed by homosexual marriages?

Giving legal recognition to homosexual marriages, or even to “civil unions” between homosexuals, “would result in changes to the entire organization of society, contrary to the common good. Civil laws are structuring principles of man’s life in society, for good or for ill. They play a very important and sometimes decisive role in influencing patterns of thought and behavior.

“Lifestyles, and the underlying presuppositions these express, not only externally shape the life of society, but also tend to modify the younger generation’s perception and evaluation of forms of behavior. Legal recognition of homosexual unions would obscure certain basic moral values and cause a devaluation of the institution of marriage” (UHP 6).

Indeed, treating homosexual unions as marriages would open the door to a new era of religious persecution.

How would homosexual marriages lead to religious persecution?

To be faithful to the teaching of Christ, the Church must proclaim the truth about human sexuality and marriage. This includes the facts that homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered and that true marriage is possible only between a man and a woman.

Individual Christians must reflect these truths in their own lives. They must proclaim them to society as part of their witness to the Christian faith.

If the government treats homosexual unions as marriages, this puts the machinery of state on a collision course with both the Church and the individual Christian. Religious persecution has already begun in those parts of the world where legal recognition has been given to homosexual unions:

- Pastors have been prosecuted for preaching sermons on this subject.
- Christian ministries, no matter how mildly and charitably they phrase the truth about homosexuality, have been targeted for violating “hate speech” laws.

- Individual Christians have been arrested under the same “hate speech” laws.
- Schools have been forced to teach children that homosexual marriages are as acceptable as heterosexual ones and that homosexual activity is morally permissible.
- Adoption agencies have been forced to place children with homosexual couples—or to cease operations.
- Ordinary Christian business people have been prosecuted for refusing to provide services to homosexual couples.

Wherever legal recognition has been granted to homosexual unions, homosexual activists have seized the opportunity to use the machinery of the state to compel churches and individual Christians into silence, to separate the Christians’ faith from their public and business lives, and to make Christians behave as if homosexuality and homosexual marriage are perfectly legitimate and acceptable.

If society shouldn’t recognize marriage between homosexuals, should it recognize civil unions between them?

No. In the homosexual agenda, “civil unions” are merely a stepping stone toward homosexual marriage. They are seen as a temporary solution whose only purpose is to prepare society for homosexual marriage.

“The inevitable consequence of legal recognition of homosexual unions would be the redefinition of marriage. . . . If, from the legal standpoint, marriage between a man and a woman were to be considered just one possible form of marriage, the concept of marriage would undergo a radical transformation, with grave detriment to the common good” (UHP 8).

As a kind of quasi-marriage, civil unions between homosexuals serve only to further obscure the truth about marriage.

What about the issue of fairness?

This is not a question of fairness. It is a question of reality.

The reality is that marriage is possible only between a man and a woman.

A man and a woman are capable of joining with each other in a permanent union that brings new life into the world. Two men or two women are simply not capable of this, and it is not fair to them, or to society as a whole, to pretend otherwise.

The fair and compassionate thing to do is to be honest concerning the truth about human sexuality and marriage, not to obscure it by treating things that are not marriage as if they were.

How are people with homosexual temptations to be regarded?

Like everyone else, they are human beings whom Christ loves and for whom he died.

Like everyone else, they have temptations, and their call is to overcome their temptations and to unite themselves to Christ.

“According to the teaching of the Church, men and women with homosexual tendencies must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided. They are called, like other Christians, to live the virtue of chastity. The homosexual inclination is, however, objectively disordered and homosexual practices are sins gravely contrary to chastity” (UHP 4).

What responsibilities do Catholics have concerning civil unions and homosexual marriages?

They must oppose them. “Moral conscience requires that, in every occasion, Christians give witness to the whole moral truth, which is contradicted both by approval of homosexual acts and unjust discrimination against homosexual persons. . . . Those who would move from tolerance to the legitimization of specific rights for cohabiting homosexual persons need to be reminded that the approval or legalization of evil is something far different from the toleration of evil.

“In those situations where homosexual unions have been legally recognized or have been given the legal status and rights belonging to marriage, clear and emphatic opposition is a duty. . . . In this area, everyone can exercise the right to conscientious objection” (UHP 5).

What responsibilities do Catholic politicians have concerning civil unions and homosexual marriages?

Catholic politicians have the same duty to oppose homosexual marriages that ordinary Catholics do. They cannot use their position as public servants to shirk this duty.

“When legislation in favor of the recognition of homosexual unions is proposed for the first time in a legislative assembly, the Catholic lawmaker has a moral duty to express his opposition clearly and publicly and to vote against it. To vote in favor of a law so harmful to the common good is gravely immoral.

“When legislation in favor of the recognition of homosexual unions is already in force, the Catholic politician must oppose it in the ways that are possible for him and make his opposition known; it is his duty to witness to the truth” (UHP 10).

Where can I learn more?

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Where can I get copies of this to share with others?

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ABBREVIATIONS

CCC Catechism of the Catholic Church

UHP Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions between Homosexual Persons (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith)

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