

THE REALITY OF MARRIAGE AND THE WILL OF GOD

Let me start by quoting v. 3 of chapter 2 of the book of Ezekiel we have just heard: “Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, rebels who have rebelled against me; they and their ancestors have revolted against me to this day”.

Why would God call the Israelites rebels? In which way have they been rebels against God? What does rebel mean? In religion, indeed, we call rebel a person who stands for his own opinion and his own vision of things against God’s law and rules. In that sense, the rebel is someone who does not care if he offends God by his behavior or in what he does. What counts for him is what comes to his mind and he can do regardless of God’s rules.

Because the Israelites wanted to do things their own way without taking into context the Law of God, they were called rebels. That situation tends to be repeated today in many ways in the life of people and individuals. In fact, the recent ruling from the Supreme Court to legalize same-sex marriage as a legitimate form of marriage can be assimilated to a rebellion against God’s law and will.

In fact, God’s intention from the beginning, as affirmed in the book of Genesis, is that man and woman form one body in a bond of unity and share their lives together with the possibility of having children. Because marriage is at the image of the Trinity, one God in three persons, those who enter the sacrament are united for life and can never be separated.

According to the will of God, marriage is never between two men or two women, but rather between two people of opposite sex who come together in order to fulfill God’s law of love by joining their hands together for the remainder of their lives.

This will of God has been confirmed by Jesus Christ when he said that what God has united no man has the right to separate. The social context through which Jesus affirmed that truth was that in which his opponents wanted to push him in the direction contrary to God’s initial intention. But he reminded them the truth about marriage. He reaffirmed clearly that whatever the Israelites have done in the course of history, it was not God’s intention in the creation. God’s intention is that marriage is a union of a man and woman for life.

Without even referring to God’s law, marriage is a natural institution that precedes any government. Every human society has acknowledged that sexual union of man and woman matters because it creates the next generation. While Jesus elevates Christian marriage to a sacrament, the complementarity of the sexes and the natural meaning of marriage can be known through reason without appealing to Scripture.

In that sense, marriage is a gift to humanity; it is God’s gift to men, women and society. It cannot be redefined without serious consequence on society, children and the life of society. What is needed today is not the redefinition of marriage, but rather the strengthening of marriage as a bond that unites one man and one woman with the possibility of having children. Marriage is the only institution that unites a man and woman with each other and any child who comes from their union.

The recent ruling by the Supreme Court erodes the very meaning of marriage as the union of a man and a woman as intended by God from the beginning of creation. The proposal that sexual difference does not matter removes the very basis of marriage's meaning as one-flesh communion, open to children, and making the legal definition of marriage open to limitless variation and ultimately meaningless.

Redefining marriage undermines the fundamental rights of the most vulnerable in our society, namely the children, by denying their right to a father and mother.

It is absolutely clear that sexual difference is essential for marriage. Only through sexual difference can a man and woman "speak" the language of married love in and through the bodies: the complete and total gift of self to the other, a gift that is open to the further gift.

Is the Church despising people who have same-sex attraction? Not at all. All persons have inviolable dignity and deserve love and respect. However, the Church believes that there many and beautiful ways to protect the basic human rights than to redefine marriage.

Of course the church respects, loves, cares and is compassionate and sensitive to the people having same-sex attraction, but no one – especially no child- is served by marriage redefinition.

Redefining marriage in the law will make the Church's teaching, as well as any public witness to the natural moral law like a bigotry today. It will cause innumerable conflicts between the State and religious institutions and individuals.

We have to affirm the true definition of marriage. By doing so, we do not deny any right to anybody. Rather, we affirm the equal dignity of women and men and safeguard the rights of children as intended by God from the creation of the world. May we come together as people of God in order to defend God's rules! God bless you all!

St Michael Parish, July 5, 2015

Rev. Felicien I. Mbala, PhD, STD