

MARRIAGE AS COVENANT BETWEEN ONE MAN AND ONE WOMAN  
A PASTORAL STATEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF INDIANA

The dignity of the human person, rooted in his or her creation in the image and likeness of God, is a fundamental principle of Catholic social teaching. The Church upholds the dignity of every human person, including persons with same-sex attraction, who “must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity.” (CCC2358)

At the same time, the Church upholds the dignity and sanctity of marriage, a natural institution established by God. By its very nature, marriage is a permanent partnership between one man and one woman ordered to the good of the couple and the procreation and education of children. It is the foundation of the family, where children are raised and nurtured, and learn values and virtues that help them to grow in maturity.

It is not within the power of either the Church or the State to redefine marriage since God is its author. Male-female complementarity is essential to marriage. Marriage is a “unique” communion of persons with the potential to bring forth human life.

With deep respect for all our brothers and sisters, we affirm the institution of marriage as the intimate communion of life and love between one man and one woman. Marriage is an intimate sharing of conjugal life and love. It involves the total gift of self in a partnership for the whole of life. Only by means of the complementarity between a man and a woman can this total gift of self be fully given and received.

We respect the equal dignity of all persons while upholding the uniqueness of the covenant of marriage as established by our Creator. The wellbeing of children, of the family and of society is closely bound to the healthy state of marriage and respect for its true nature and purposes.

We urge the people of Indiana to respect and defend the dignity and equality of all persons as well as the truth about marriage, according to God’s plan and laws, with charity towards all.

Given at the Catholic Center in Indianapolis on this, the 4<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2013.

Signed:

Most Reverend Joseph W. Tobin  
Archbishop of Indianapolis

Most Reverend Dale J. Melczek  
Bishop of Gary

Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades  
Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend

Most Reverend Timothy L. Doherty  
Bishop of Lafayette-in-Indiana

Most Reverend Charles C. Thompson  
Bishop of Evansville

Most Reverend Christopher J. Coyne  
Auxiliary Bishop of Indianapolis