



Background Information to Help Process Homosexuality and Marriage Equality in Light of the SCOTUS Ruling

—Fr. Mike Ratajczak

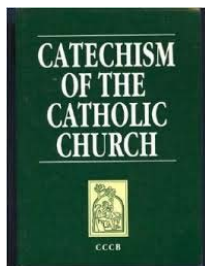
In this Pastor's Column today, I share some information that I hope will be helpful as you process the US Supreme Court's recent decision on Marriage Equality.

As you read through these documents, please note the constant challenge to which we are called is to eliminate all forms of discrimination in regard to gay men and women and to welcome them into the circles of our families, friends, and churches.

For those who know people in the LGBT community, be it members of our families, or our friends, or those with whom we work, the challenge not to discriminate and call to love is much easier.

Unfortunately, many Catholics who do not know a gay man or woman, find it much easier to judge, and to discriminate.

I call to your attention the last document, which was written by Fr. James Martin, S.J., Editor at Large of *America* magazine. His views echo mine. Where does it all begin? It begins by getting to know gay men and women, and to welcome them into the life of our family, our neighborhood, and our Church, and to love them as we love all others.



From the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, published in 1994:

2357 Homosexuality refers to relations between men or between women who experience an exclusive or predominant sexual attraction toward persons of the same sex. It

has taken a great variety of forms through the centuries and in different cultures. Its psychological genesis remains largely unexplained. Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, tradition has always declared that "homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered." They are contrary to the natural law. They close the

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

2358 The number of men and women who have deep-seated homosexual tendencies is not negligible. They do not choose their homosexual condition, for most of them it is a trial. They must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard must be avoided. These persons are called to fulfill God's will in their lives, and, if they are Christians, to unite to the sacrifice of the Lord's Cross the difficulties they may encounter from their condition.

2359 Homosexual persons are called to chastity. By the virtues of self-mastery that teach them inner freedom, at times by the support of disinterested friendship, by prayer and sacramental grace, they can and should gradually and resolutely approach Christian perfection.



From the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Marriage and Family's 1997 statement entitled "Always Our Children: A Pastoral Message to Parents of Homosexual Children and Suggestions for Pastoral Ministries":



For St. Paul, love is the greatest of spiritual gifts. St. John considers love to be the most certain sign of God's presence. Jesus proposes it as the basis of his two great commandments, which fulfill all the law and the prophets.

Love, too, is the continuing story of every family's life. Love can be shared, nurtured, rejected, and sometimes lost. To follow Christ's way of love is the challenge before every family today. Your family now has an added opportunity to share love and to accept love. Our Church communities are likewise called to an exemplary standard of love and justice.

Our homosexual sisters and brothers—indeed, all people—are summoned into responsible ways of loving.

To our homosexual brothers and sisters we offer a concluding word. This message has been an outstretched hand to your parents and families inviting them to accept God's grace present in their lives now and to trust in the unfailing mercy of Jesus our Lord. Now we stretch out our hands and invite you to do the same. We are called to become one body, one spirit in Christ. We need one another if we are to "...grow in every way into him who is the head, Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, with the proper functioning of each part, brings about the body's growth and builds itself up in love" (Ephesians 4:15-16).

Though at times you may feel discouraged, hurt, or angry, do not walk away from your families, from the Christian community, from all those who love you. In you God's love is revealed. You are always our children.



Statement by Bishop Robert McElroy on the Supreme Court of the United States Ruling on Same Sex Marriage, dated June 26, 2015:

Today the United States Supreme Court ruled that the historic definition of marriage as a relationship between one man and one woman is unconstitutional.

The Catholic Church, along with other faith traditions, teaches that the nature of marriage and the family cannot be redefined by society, as God is the author of marriage and its corresponding gift of co-creating human life. The legal recognition of marriage is not only about personal commitment but also about the social commitment that husband and wife make to the well-being of their children. It is for this reason that it is important for government to give a unique status to marriage between one man and one woman both in law and in public policy.

The Catholic community of San Diego and Imperial counties will continue to honor and embody the uniqueness of marriage between one man and one woman as a gift from God—in our teaching, our sacramental life and our witness to the world. We will do so in a manner which profoundly respects at every moment the loving and familial relationships which enrich the lives of so many gay men and women who are our sons and daughters, our sisters and brothers, and ultimately our fellow pilgrims on this earthly journey of life. And commanded by the Gospel of Jesus Christ we will continue to reach out to families of every kind who are encountering poverty, addictions, violence, emotional stress or the threat of deportation, and to attempt to bring them faith and care, service and solidarity.



Facebook post by Fr. James Martin, S.J., Editor at Large of the Jesuit magazine, *America*, dated June 26, 2015:

America
THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC REVIEW



No issue brings out so much hatred from so many Catholics as homosexuality. Even after over 25 years as a Jesuit, the level of hatred around homosexuality is nearly unbelievable to me, especially when I think of all of the wonderful LGBT friends I have.

The Catholic Church must do a much better job of teaching what the Catechism says: that we should treat our LGBT brothers and sisters with "respect, sensitivity, and compassion."

But God wants more. God wants us to love. And not a twisted, crabbed, narrow tolerance, which often comes in the guise of condemnations, instructions, and admonitions that try to masquerade as love, but actual love.

Love means: getting to know LGBT men and women, spending time with them, listening to them, being challenged by them, hoping the best for them, and wanting them to be a part of your lives, every bit as much as straight friends are part of your lives.

Love first... Everything else later... In fact, everything else is meaningless without love.