

# Upholding teaching on marriage is good for all

On Nov. 6, we will be making a very important decision regarding the definition of marriage in our state. Voters will be asked to “approve” or “reject” a new law that completely changes the definition of marriage.

As disciples of the Lord Jesus, we face a decision that is about much more than one’s politics, party affiliation, or one’s feelings. Our vote on Referendum 74 is about what we believe God has been doing from the creation of the world and how he invites us to be partners in continuing his work until the end of time.

We love and cherish the ancient gift that is marriage between one man and one woman. Such a gift, which is the foundation of all human society, must be protected, nurtured and held as sacred by us all.

## The gift of marriage

Marriage cannot be *redefined*. It is the foundational unit of all human society. The vocation of marriage is written in the very nature of man and woman as they come from the creative hand of God.

In fact, just as God is the creator of man and woman, so is he the author of marriage. Thus, marriage is not a



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purely human institution. It springs from God’s own plan for the world, for the good of married couples, for the birth and rearing of children and for the good of all society.

By redefining marriage as a mere contract between two persons, the new Washington state law would legalize marriage between couples of the

same sex. In effect, this new law is saying that the loving, permanent and faithful union of a man and woman in marriage, the unique pattern of spousal and family love, and the generation of new life are only of *relative* importance rather than being *fundamental* to the existence and well-being of society as a whole.

It is important to state that the Catholic Church’s stance on Referendum 74 is not “against” anything, and especially not “against” *anyone*.

To the contrary, it is our stance “for” the gift of marriage, “for” God’s plan for human society, “for” husbands and wives, “for” children. To suddenly

change the God-given and time-honored understanding of marriage would be a very harmful thing for our state and for the world.

## Centuries of common law

Put simply, it is not in the compelling interest of the state to change the definition of marriage. There are many ramifications of such a redefinition. Suffice it to say that should marriage be redefined in our state, the very foundational nature of marriage for the good and strength of human society would be harmed beyond repair.

I join with all the Catholic bishops of Washington in saying that as teachers and Church leaders, we reaffirm the need to recognize and defend the rights of all people. We sincerely regret the unjust discrimination, bigotry and even violence that many people with same-sex attraction have experienced for many years.

However, as we stated in our pastoral statement “Marriage and the Good of Society,” redefining marriage as a means of dealing with important issues of equality and respect for all persons will not achieve the goal of defending the rights of all and would

## DO YOU HAVE AN INTENTION FOR ARCHBISHOP SARTAIN’S PRAYER LIST?

You may send it to him at Archbishop Sartain’s Prayer List, Archdiocese of Seattle, 710 Ninth Ave., Seattle, WA 98104.

overturn centuries of common law.

We are deeply concerned about equality, justice and the good of society and the family. Our purpose is a positive one: to support the legal definition of marriage as the union of one man and one woman in order to promote the common good.

**We are deeply concerned about equality, justice and the good of society and the family.**

We urge our Catholic people to uphold our consistent teaching on marriage for the good of the Church, society, husbands and wives, and their children. Therefore, we bishops *reject* the redefinition of marriage as a “civil contract between two persons.”

I recognize that the issue before us is a sensitive one, one that touches many families and many individuals. My heart and my prayers go out to you all as you pray about your vote on Referendum 74.