

On Same Sex Marriage I

The Roman Catholic Church is opposed to same sex marriage (SSM). Individual Catholics may not be, but the Church is, because she sees even the desire for homosexuality as intrinsically disordered. Just opening up a Bible will demonstrate that position, coupled with the clear statements of the Magisterium on the subject. But in places like our secular courts, arguments from Revelation carry no weight. What follows is an attempt to frame an argument against SSM without relying on Faith.

The argument will be about the common good. Laws are designed for the common good though they benefit individuals too, but at the same time there are laws for the common good from which some individuals will experience no tangible benefit; perhaps even seeing some disadvantage. When I refer to the common good, I mean that which is beneficial not only for adults, but also for (and even primarily for) children. Needless to say, I suppose, but I think it rather easy to prove that the institution of marriage between a man and a woman is a crucial element for the common good of our nation.

Notice that I will not argue against SSM in the way that conservatives normally do, viz. in the way of judicial usurpation or activism. “The courts are taking away the will of the people!” This argument is not at all good in my opinion, because it seems to me to lead inexorably to legal positivism (see Christopher Ferrara’s article on this in the latest *Latin Mass Magazine*).

Proponents for SSM seem convinced that love (though this term is usually undefined) is all children really need. Based on that assumption, they propose that this love can come either from heterosexual or same sex married couples. But this as-

sumption is false. Decades of research consistently shows that the ideal family structure is a two-parent, mother-father family. And the common good is about the ideal. Children are more likely to thrive (mentally, psychologically and physically) in such families than in any other configuration. Medical research confirms that genetically determined differences between men and women help explain why mothers and fathers bring unique characteristics to parenting which cannot be replicated by the other sex. Two women can be good mothers. But neither can be a good father.

This is somewhat on the level of common sense, I must admit. And many common sense truths – what C.S. Lewis called the Tao of living – lie partly beyond our ken. But in a book by Felix Adler, Marriage and Divorce, we find a good insight:

The child needs father and mother; but it does not need them only as some think, alternately, now the father’s influence and now the mother’s or in some things the father’s influence and in other things the mother’s. The child needs the father’s masculine influence and the mother’s feminine influence always together, the two streams uniting to pour their fructifying influence through the child’s life into the life of humanity.

It may not be possible to appeal to studies about children raised in SSM (legal or otherwise), simply because those studies are extremely limited. And there is every indication that what study has been done on this is scientifically flawed, due to such factors of political correctness, which greatly influences scientific research.

What studies there are indicate that

homosexually raised children are at increased risk for a variety of negative outcomes: psychiatric disorders, sexual experimentation of all kinds, abuse of alcohol and drugs, attempted suicide, domestic violence and sexual assault, chronic diseases, AIDS and shortened life spans, among others.

Pro-SSM researchers (to their credit) admit that there is no definitive evidence as to the impact of homosexual parenting on children. Regardless, some of them advocate SSM because they believe it offers a natural laboratory in which to assess the long-term impact on children. Any rational person should be able to see that goal as unconscionable and indefensible. With that being said, will SSM destroy the institution of marriage? I doubt it. But I do think that it will *harm* the institution of marriage, and damage it even further than it is already damaged. I say further because I see SSM in the context of the Sexual Revolution. I don't think we need to define that Revolution at this point, so I'll skip a definition.

Proponents of SSM ridicule the notion that it will harm marriage. "How does it hurt your marriage if I marry someone I love?" This sort of question ignores the common good of course – meaning it ignores children who are always ignored in all aspects of the Sexual Revolution. So it isn't much of an argument, though I'll make some responses to it as we go along. But proponents of SSM do have one challenging argument which should be considered, and it usually goes something like this: "If marriage is being undermined, it isn't gays who are doing this. It's heterosexuals with their divorces, adulteries, and so on." This retort has some validity, and should be answered.

In our society, marriage once had privi-

leges reserved to it: living day and night with one's beloved, sexual intimacy, childbirth and parenthood to name a few. But the Sexual Revolution has de-privileged marriage. Consider the following:

1. No-fault divorce. Marriage was traditionally seen as a permanent thing ("until death do us part"), but it came to be seen as readily dissolvable for a number of "faults," (adultery, alcoholism, desertion, nonsupport, physical and mental abuse and so on). I'm sure legislators who legalized divorce thought that things would just stay there, and that the result of their laws would be only to "help" poor women trapped in a "bad marriage." But these laws had consequences – side effects if you will – which are far away from their original intent. So once the momentum started with "fault" divorce, it was just a matter of time before "no fault" divorce became the rule. With the Sexual Revolution (SR), marriage could be dissolved simply because it pleased the spouses, or even if only one spouse thought that it should be terminated.

A rational man should be able to see the question of "How can my divorce harm your marriage?" as an absurd question. And at the same time he should be able to see harm to the common good – namely families and children – that comes with easily obtainable divorce. He should also be able so see a principle – that freedom of divorce might not destroy marriage, but it will and has certainly harmed it. And another principle at work here is that any change as a result of the SR will not remain as it was originally intended. Other changes will surely follow it. A law of unintended consequences will be seen.