



PETITION AGAINST THE SCOTTISH AND UK GOVERNMENTS' PROPOSALS TO LEGISLATE IN FAVOUR OF SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

"Knowing the value of **marriage and the family**, we as Christians attach great importance to defending the integrity and uniqueness of marriage between one man and one woman from any kind of misrepresentation". **Pope Benedict XVI**

In the light of both the Scottish and UK Governments determination to redefine marriage to include same-sex couples, the Catholic Bishops of Scotland have given notice that they will "strenuously oppose" this hostile attack on **the Christian model of marriage** as the state mobilises to enforce a new more aggressive position in support of same-sex marriage.

While doing so, we wish to appeal to everyone to recognise the immeasurable personal dignity and equal worth of all individuals, including those with same-sex attraction. We reject all hatred, mockery and abuse against any person.

Regrettably, however, in today's society people of faith are vilified and smeared as bigots for upholding Christian values. We have reached the stage in Britain when in a landmark case the High Court in England was asked to rule on whether **practising Christians** were "**fit people to adopt or foster children**"! Nothing better illustrates the times we live in and the extent to which the historic Christian identity of Britain is under assault. We now have a straight fight between faith and atheism, morality and amorality, a culture of life and a culture of death.

The view of the Church is clear. No government can rewrite human nature; the family and marriage existed before the state. Marriage is a unique relationship ordained by God to form a sacred union between a man and a woman to love and cherish each other and to nurture the human race through the procreation of children. The institution of marriage should not be corrupted by the transient fashions of society or by malevolent forces seeking to undermine the place of religious faith in society.

This attempt to redefine marriage is, of course, nothing to do with "gay rights". All the legal rights of marriage are already available to homosexual couples through civil partnership registrations. This is everything to do with dismantling and rejecting two thousand years of Christianity. The small but vociferous secular gay lobby, aided and abetted by powerful political forces, successfully and selfishly destroyed Catholic adoption agencies that placed thousands of abandoned children in loving family homes. Now, buoyed up with their success, they are intent on violating Christian marriage. And it will not stop there. We should learn well the lesson of the 1967 Abortion Act.

I now appeal to all Catholics in the Diocese of Motherwell, and indeed to all people of faith, to register their opposition to the Scottish and UK Governments advocacy of **same-sex marriage** by signing the petition sheets available at all churches throughout the Diocese.

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Bishop of Motherwell