

## To have and to hold from this day forward

World Marriage Day was February 8, and St. Valentine's Day was February 14. The connection between marriage and romantic love makes the personal sacrifice required for a good marriage a source of joy for husband and wife. But while our calendar celebrates the experience of love and marriage, the very nature of marriage is questioned today.

A recent statement by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith speaks clearly to the question:

"Marriage is not just any relationship between human beings. It was established by the Creator with its own nature, essential properties and purpose. No ideology can erase from the human spirit the certainty that marriage exists solely between a man and a woman, who by mutual, personal gift, proper and exclusive to themselves, tend toward the communion of their persons. In this way, they mutually perfect each other in order to cooperate with God in the procreation and upbringing of new human lives."

There is nothing specifically Catholic about such a statement. It's the understanding of marriage that can be found among Chinese Confucians, Sri Lanka Buddhists and Indian Hindus. Our own faith teaches us that Christ raised the natural institution of marriage to a sacrament, gracing it as a symbol of his own love for his Church; but the Church did not invent marriage. And neither did the State, ours or any other. In reminding the courts and the citizens of this country about the nature of marriage, the Church is once again being accused of imposing "her" ideas on society. But if

the courts should declare that a circle is really a square, that wouldn't make it so. The same is true of marriage. No matter what any court or government says, there is no such reality as a marriage between homosexuals, a so-called "gay marriage."

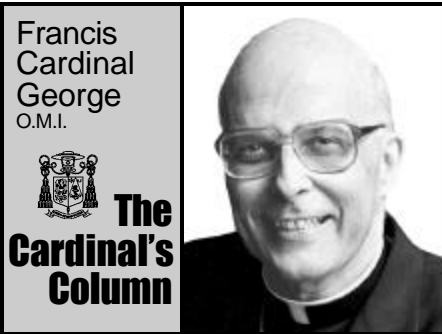
What there is between homosexuals, as between heterosexuals, is friendship. At its best, friendship humanizes people, drawing them out of themselves, stabilizing their lives and gracing them with

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a sense of the relationship God calls all to enjoy with himself. But not every sort of friendship, honest enough in itself, can be expressed erotically. A married man, for example, can be a good friend to a woman not his wife.

But he cannot have sexual relations with her. Two homosexuals can be friends and even sacrifice for one another. What they cannot do is express that love and respect through sexual relations. This is difficult if not impossible to understand in a culture that says sexual activity means nothing except what the people engaged in it choose to make it mean. It is a difficult if not impossible teaching to live by if we are left to our own devices and strength. But we are not. Because Christ is risen from the dead, we are never alone. The power of God's grace makes possible what would otherwise be impossible. Our faith not only instructs us about the proper use of the gift of human sexuality, it also brings us into the presence and power of a teacher who is also our savior and our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Not only individuals have rights; so have institutions and groups, such as the family. They have, first of all, the right



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not to be manipulated by legal legerdemain. The family is not one among a number of different kinds of human groups and relationships or equally acceptable lifestyles. The family is founded on the community of husband and wife, whose love for one another as "two in one flesh" (Mt. 19:6) brings children into the world and into God's own family. Love for one's spouse is the best gift a parent can give to children.

In a recent newspaper column, Dennis Byrne wrote: "My reasoning and my experience tell me that we (he and his wife) could not have raised our own children without the life-molding power of different sexual roles. A mother and a father are important for children, at various stages of their lives, precisely because they are a mother and father, a man and a woman. Each sex brings something different, important and wonderful to the lives of their children." This is the overwhelming experience of the entire human race. The differences between men and women cannot be eradicated in the language of merely individual rights. We should do what we can to help all those, married or unmarried, to take the best possible care of children they love and are responsible for; but it is not bigoted, despite the pressures from some in the media and universities and elsewhere, to work to prevent any group of judges from arbitrarily redefining the nature of marriage and family.

Richard Posner, himself a distinguished jurist and judge of the U.S.

Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, a man with no ties to the Catholic Church, recently wrote in careful fashion that nothing "in the (U.S.) Constitution or its history suggests the right to homosexual marriage. Recognizing homosexual marriage would place a very public stamp of approval on homosexual relationships—which is the principal reason why heterosexuals tend by quite large margins to oppose not only homosexual marriage but even 'civil unions' and other marriage simulacra ... It could be said that these are issues too important to be left to a committee of lawyers—which is what the Supreme Court is after all."

Nevertheless, the Church's efforts to remind Americans of what the history and wisdom of the rest of the human race, as well as divine revelation itself, take for granted will be caricatured as a breach of the distinction between civil and religious realms. Thus will the nature of marriage become one more instance of a battle for understanding religious liberty. We are becoming a society where individual conscience might still have "rights" but where religious institutions as such have only the rights that secularists deem appropriate. That's no reason to back away from the argument on marriage, but it is reason to go into it well-informed. A good place to start is with the USCCB statement "Between Man and Woman: Questions and Answers About Marriage and Same-Sex Unions." It can be accessed from the Archdiocese's Family Ministries web site, [www.familyministries.org](http://www.familyministries.org).

Happy Valentine's Day, and God bless you and those you love.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Francis Cardinal George, OMI  
Archbishop of Chicago

### CARDINAL GEORGE'S SCHEDULE

- Sunday, Feb. 15:** 9 a.m., Mass at St. Martha. 2 p.m., LOSS 25th anniversary prayer service, Old St. Pat's.
- Monday, Feb. 16:** 9 a.m., Vicariate report, Residence.
- Tuesday, Feb. 17:** 9 a.m., Administrative team meeting, Residence. 10 a.m., Episcopal Council meeting, Residence.
- Thursday, Feb. 19:** 9 a.m., Vicariate report, Residence. 1 p.m., Office of Catholic Schools workshop, Quigley Seminary. 6 p.m., Amate House volunteers' dinner.
- Friday, Feb. 20:** 8 a.m., Mass with Missionaries of Charity. 6:45 p.m., Evening prayer with Diaconate Council leadership, the Cenacle.
- Saturday, Feb. 21:** Vicariate V and VI winter meeting, St. Rita High School. 6 p.m., Casa Jesus anniversary gala, the Mayfield.
- Sunday, Feb. 22:** 10:30 a.m., Mass at St. Christopher, Midlothian. 6 p.m., Association of Chicago Priests Mardi Gras dinner, St. Sylvester.
- Monday, Feb. 23:** 7:30 a.m., Big Shoulders executive committee meeting. 9:30 a.m., Human Dignity and Health Science Conference, UIC. 3 p.m., Finance Council meeting, Catholic Charities.
- Tuesday, Feb. 24:** 9 a.m., Vicariate report, Residence. 1 p.m., Administrative Council meeting, Pastoral Center. 7 p.m., Catholic university faculty meeting, De Paul University.
- Wednesday, Feb. 25:** 12:10 p.m., Ash Wednesday Mass at Holy Name Cathedral. 5 p.m., Ash Wednesday Liturgy, UIC.
- Thursday, Feb. 26:** 5 p.m., Region VII Bishops' prayer/dinner.
- Friday, Feb. 27:** 7 p.m., Solidarity Bridge reception, Old St. Mary.
- Saturday, Feb. 28:** 9 a.m., Archdiocesan Pastoral Council executive committee meeting, Pastoral Center. 5 p.m., Mass at Divine Providence, Westchester.

Feb. 6, 2004

*His Eminence, Francis Cardinal George announces the following appointments:*



#### Administrator

Rev. Thomas Cima, to be administrator of Queen of Apostles Parish, Riverdale, while retaining his current duties as pastor of St. Victor Parish, Calumet City and dean of VI-D, effective immediately.

#### Pastor Emeritus

Rev. Edward McLaughlin, from pastor, St. Michael Parish, Orland Park, to retire after 45 years of service to the Archdiocese of Chicago,

and be pastor emeritus of the same, effective immediately.

Rev. Richard Shannon, from pastor of St. Patrick Parish, Lemont, to retire after 45 years of service to the Archdiocese of Chicago, and be pastor emeritus of the same, effective immediately.

#### Director

Rev. Thomas Franzman, from sabbatical, to be the director of the Department of Evangelization, Catechesis and Worship for the Archdiocese of Chicago, effective immediately.

#### Sabbatical

Rev. Daniel Tomich, from pastor of Queen of Apostles Parish, Riverdale, to be on sabbatical until July 15, effective immediately.

## Two named pastor emeritus

Father Edward McLaughlin is retiring after 45 years of service to the Archdiocese of Chicago.

Ordained in 1959, he served as associate pastor at St. Juliana until 1964. He served at Quigley Seminary South from 1964 and pursued post-graduate studies at Loyola University from 1966-69. He then was a professor at St. Mary of the Lake Seminary (Niles), 1969-75.

He served as associate pastor at St. Michael, Orland Park, from 1975-79. He was named pastor at

St. Maurice in 1979, a position he held until 1986, when he returned to St. Michael to be pastor there. He will now serve as pastor emeritus at St. Michael.

Father Richard Shannon is retiring after 45 years of service to the Archdiocese of Chicago.

Ordained in 1959, he served as associate pastor of St. Bride until 1960, and then at St. Joseph and St. Anne from 1960-67. From 1967-71 he served as a military chaplain. He returned to parish ministry in 1971

and served as associate pastor at St. John Baptist Vianney, Northlake, until 1975, and then at St. Alphonsus Liguori, Mt. Prospect, in 1975. He was administrator at St. Bernard from 1975-82, and associate at St. Cletus, LaGrange, from 1982-83. He served as pastor at St. Walter from 1983-95; associate pastor at St. Ann, Lansing, from 1995-96; and then as pastor at St. Patrick, Lemont from 1996 until his recent retirement. He will now serve as pastor emeritus at St. Patrick.