

CATHOLICS FOR MARRIAGE EQUALITY

GOD IS LOVE

Maine Marriage Initiative: What the Bishop Said in Our Parish Bulletins

Cost to Children

Legalizing same-sex marriage can negatively impact children in several ways, here are two examples; State-sanctioned same-sex marriage can have horrible implications on the successful placement of adoptable children. It's happened in Massachusetts. At one time, Catholic Charities of Boston actively placed hundreds of orphaned children with loving families. But after the Massachusetts Supreme Court ruled same-sex marriage legal in the state, Catholic Charities was forced, by conscience, to stop placing children - because state law said that any agency managing the adoption of children cannot deny adoption to a same-sex couple. In a March 10, 2006 statement, Cardinal Sean O'Malley, archbishop of Boston, pointed to the history of Catholic Charities in the United States as an agency "exercising constitutionally guaranteed religious freedom" that "stepped forward to provide placement for orphaned children." "Sadly," he said, "we have come to a moment when Catholic Charities in the Archdiocese of Boston must withdraw from the work of adoptions, in order to exercise (that) religious freedom."

Catholics for Marriage Equality: What We Know

Benefits for More Children

- In Maine, same-sex couples are allowed to adopt children with or without same-sex marriage when a judge determines it in the child's best interest (the same criterion used for adoptions by hetero-sexual couples).
- Based on voluminous evidence that same-sex couples are as capable as straight couples to parent, Maine's highest court held in 2007 there is no reasonable excuse for denying them the right to adopt.
- Same-sex marriage increases the number of households with two parents in a state-recognized, loving relationship into which children can be adopted.

*It is critical that faithful Catholics trust the accuracy of our bishop's information. The Bishop's account above is not complete: *Prior to 2006 Catholic Charities placed children in the Massachusetts homes of gay and lesbian parents. Because Catholic Charities dealt only with special needs children, yearly placements were few. When this became public the archbishop of Boston, Sean O'Malley, instructed Catholic Charities to cease adoptions rather than continue placing any child with a qualified gay or lesbian couple. The Catholic Charities adoption staff and their caseloads transferred to New Bedford Child and Family Services who picked up the work abandoned by Cardinal O'Malley. As a result, no children were harmed by his decision and no gay or lesbian couples were denied children, special needs or otherwise.**

Maine Marriage Initiative: What the Bishop Said - *continued*

Furthermore, the affects of same-sex couples raising children can be seen in the parenting literature produced by those who support same-sex parenting. In *The Lesbian and Gay Parenting Handbook*, same-sex partners who are attempting to raise children are told that —some children do express an intense longing for the other biological parent, talking about it frequently and emotionally . . . The innate need of children for both a mother and a father is acknowledged and something about which same-sex couples are

warned. This is also seen in *For Lesbian Parents: Your Guide to Helping your Family Grow Up Happy, Healthy, and Proud*. In this book, mothers who prefer their own homosexual behavior over the needs of their children are encouraged to deal with their daughters in this fashion: —If it's hard sometimes not having a father. Let her know that you understand that sometimes it is hard. *The Lesbian Parenting Book* goes further than a mere warning, but states that —[i]t is very normal for children to long about and ask for a father It is natural to feel defensive when your child longs for a father. We encourage you to remain patient while she asks questions, sorts out information and comes to terms without knowing her father's identity, or not having her biological father in her life. She needs to do it . . . [Artificially Inseminated] children of lesbian parents may grieve never knowing their biological father.

This book warns of the problem, but then encourages same-sex couples to push their children to come to terms with the fact that they will never know their father's identity, The lesson is that the parents continue to place their own desires over those of the child.

Catholics for Marriage Equality: What We Know - *continued*

- The innate need of every child is to know that she or he is loved, wanted, and accepted unconditionally.
- Mental health literature affirms that children who grow up in homes with two parents who love each other and their children are more likely to have their innate needs most fully met.
- Many single parents, gay, lesbian, or straight, can also meet their children's needs while some hetero-sexual, two-parent couples cannot.
- The professional associations of psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers and pediatricians all affirm that same-sex couples are as equally capable of caring well for children as straight couples. The quality of the relationship between the parents is determinative of healthy parenting.

In spite of the Catholic Church's traditional respect for the extended family and high value placed on communitarian responsibility for childrearing, the Bishop implies that children can have their needs met only by a biological father living with the biological mother. The Bishop chooses in relation to same-sex couples to ignore siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, neighbors, teachers, church workers -- the wide community parents cultivate to enrich their own nurturing of their children. While discounting the compassionate advice given by the gay community to its parents, the bishop withholds positive counsel and ignores the reality of parenting for parishioners who are widowed, separated, annulled, divorced, or abandoned by a spouse.

Forty percent of U.S. births are now to single mothers (CDC, 03/18/09), many of whom are Catholic. The Bishop is placing current Vatican teaching over loving, committed same-sex partners and the needs of their children. Further, he hears not the needs of his own parishioners who live outside the Bishop's limited definition of "traditional family."

Jesus admonished: love one another, even as I have loved you.

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