



Marriage – What Can I Do?

Today we need to do all we can to cherish and foster marriage, and ensure that the true meaning of marriage is not lost for future generations. And we need to do this without losing pastoral support for those of a same-sex orientation.

Archbishop Vincent Nichols

What does the Government want to do?

The Government is consulting on 'Equal Civil Marriage' because it wants to extend the right to a civil marriage to same-sex couples. The public consultation runs until June 14th 2012 and is open to anyone.

What can I do?

The Government needs to know your views.

1. **Do write to your MP** (MP for Anytown, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA, or find your MP's name from local information or via www.findyourmp.parliament.uk). This is the most important action you can take.

Here are some points you can draw on in your letter:

The law helps to shape and form social and cultural values. A change in the law would gradually and inevitably transform society's understanding of the purpose of marriage.

A change in the law which allowed same-sex marriage would:

- Change the meaning of marriage for everyone
- Break the connection between marriage and child-bearing;
- Disregard the fundamental complementarity of male and female and its creativity;
- Reduce the meaning of marriage solely to the commitment of the two people involved.

Further briefing is available on the Bishops' Conference website www.catholicnews.org.uk

2. **You can also respond to the Consultation document** – follow the links from ‘Government Consultation’ at www.catholicnews.org.uk . The most important question in the Consultation is the first: ‘Do you agree or disagree with enabling all couples, regardless of their gender, to have a civil marriage ceremony?’ You do not need to answer all questions. Further detailed arguments about the policy will be found at www.catholicnews.org.uk
3. **If you do nothing else, please sign the Coalition for Marriage petition at the back of church or on-line via www.c4m.org.uk**

Why should I get involved?

Marriage is the one institution which exists to recognise and protect the creation and up-bringing of children, and research confirms that it provides the best circumstances in which children can be raised. It is vital for the future of any society, and that is why it has always had special protection.

Is this legal change necessary?

The Civil Partnerships Act 2004 already enables same-sex couples to enjoy all the legal and practical benefits of marriage such as inheritance, pension and next-of-kin rights. The changes proposed would not increase the legal protection for those in civil partnerships.

Does it matter, if only civil marriages are affected?

The Church is opposing the Government’s policy because it cares for the common good of society. Society should support the best means of raising the next generation. It’s about what marriage means for all – it’s not just about what happens in Churches.

**PLEASE THINK AND PRAY
PLEASE ACT NOW
SO THAT THE MEANING OF MARRIAGE
IS PRESERVED FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS**

If you would like to read and hear the Letter on Marriage or know more about the support available within the Catholic Church for marriage and for Catholics who are homosexual in their sexual orientation please visit www.catholicnews.org.uk

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