

Cardinal Maida calls for support of Federal Marriage Amendment

AN OPEN LETTER TO MICHIGAN'S UNITED STATES
SENATORS

July 2, 2004

Dear Senators Levin and Stabenow:

It has come to my attention that the United States Senate will soon begin debating the Federal Marriage Amendment. Along with my brother Catholic bishops, we support providing constitutional protection of the definition of marriage as a union between one man and one woman. We do so because of what we stand for, not whom we stand against.

Marriage makes a unique and irreplaceable contribution to the common good of society, especially through the procreation and education of children. It is the very foundation of the family. If we look to marriage as something beyond the union of one man and one woman, we essentially change the societal equation.

Marriage is a natural, human institution which precedes any social or legal system; it is as old as human beings themselves because it flows from the natural complementarity and sexual differentiation and attraction of man and woman. Since marriage is the creation neither of the state nor the Church, neither the government nor the Church can redefine it. Marriage – the union of man and woman in a permanent and exclusive way – has been part of the natural reality of life from the beginning.

In addition, marriage is not only about a personal commitment between two persons; it is also a *social* commitment with a specific contribution to society. Marriage between man and woman serves a unique place in society by allowing for the creation and education of children within the context of a family. While recognizing that many children find themselves in non-traditional settings, studies and common sense indicate that the ideal environment in which to raise a child is in a family with both a mother and a father committed in a lifelong marriage. Without marriage as a union of man and woman, the family, a major building block of society, would be jeopardized.

One often hears as defense for calling same-sex unions a marriage that such couples need the protection of the law for social benefits. Such a view reduces marriage to a mere bundle of state benefits and loses sight of the deeper meaning of marriage. Moreover, many of these benefits can be provided for, and obtained for, persons – whether homosexual or otherwise – without their need of being in a “marriage” or a state sanctioned “civil union.”

In summary, human reason and the natural order over the centuries and in every culture have clearly proclaimed that marriage is a union of man and woman. I would urge you to support the Federal Marriage Amendment so that we can defend the authentic definition of marriage and promote its benefits for future generations. Please know of my prayers as you serve the citizens of the State of Michigan.

Sincerely yours in the Lord,

Cardinal Adam Maida
Archbishop of Detroit