

## **OUR STAND ON MARRIAGE, FAMILY AND HUMAN SOCIETY**

The Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria would like to once again reiterate the perspective of the Church on more recent developments concerning the sanctity and dignity of human life and the institutions of marriage and the family all across the world. The recent rise in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender activism, the popular vote in the Republic of Ireland and the Supreme Court decision in the United States of America will tend to provoke a notable and rapid shift in public opinion about the nature and meaning of marriage and family as it has been known for millennia. This, in many countries, has inevitably led to powerful legislative and judicial manoeuvres to redefine marriage in order to include "same-sex marriage". We wish to state that this is a sad, unjust and lamentable situation based largely upon a distorted perception of natural law, the will of God and human nature.

Canada, Spain, France, United Kingdom, Ireland and most recently United States of America are some of the countries that have gone down this path. They are nations who undeniably have cultural, social and economic influence upon many African nations including Nigeria. Mozambique has not yet accepted same-sex marriage instead they have struck down their legal ban on sodomy, thereby opening the door to the festering of the homosexual culture/subculture within their society. Our people daily interact with the Western nations mentioned above at different levels. These countries also generate a lot of the media content consumed in our country and continent as well as much of the educational materials used in our schools. They also give generous humanitarian aid to various establishments and projects in our country and continent. In these ways, their views, thoughts and trends are easily embedded into the heart of our society and influence many people especially the impressionable young ones.

As Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria, we are grateful for these interactions and support. We are however also concerned for the influence which some of these trends could have on morality and values. We therefore hereby express our concern with regard to the persistent and continuous propagation and globalization of the homosexual lifestyle

and the effort to redefine marriage which is a distorted view of human sexuality, coming especially from the Western world.

We call on our leaders to be circumspect. Accepting this western trend by officially endorsing homosexual unions or "same-sex marriage" will be devastating and detrimental to our nation, Nigeria as it will lead to the inevitable deconstruction of the family and the society at large with other serious but negative implications.

On our part we hereby re-emphasize that Marriage is the sacred union of one man and one woman for the begetting and care of children. It forms the core of the family which is the bedrock and foundational cell of our civilization and as such it is sanctioned by God, upheld by our culture, celebrated in our society and protected by our government. The family deserves the protection from all civilized institutions as it predates society and is not subject to it. So our role is to promote it, protect it and preserve it at a time like this when many countries have unfortunately chosen a different path.

We call upon President Muhammadu Buhari and all our esteemed leaders, legislators and judges to shun all pressures and protect all Nigerians from the growing but dangerous influence of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender propaganda. We appeal to professionals in the domains of media, music, entertainment, education, medicine, marketing and business to become faithful gatekeepers by protecting the public from the infiltration of this propaganda which is often spread through various media and fora. We encourage parents to teach their children the immutable meaning of marriage so as to strengthen them to stand fearless by the indelible truth in a rapidly changing world. We urge young people to learn and hold firmly unto sound religious and cultural values that celebrate the beauty and blessings of marriage as the lifelong union between one man and one woman.

Finally we pray that God will grant us all the courage, integrity and perseverance needed at this time to uphold the unchangeable truth about the dignity of human sexuality and the sanctity of the institution of marriage.



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