

# Know the FACTS About...

## Protecting Marriage in Pennsylvania

Over the years and across cultures and very different religious beliefs, marriage has been and is the foundation of the family. The family, in turn, is the basic unit of society. Thus, marriage is a personal relationship with public significance.

Catholic doctrine teaches us that marriage is a sacred union between one man and one woman. This natural institution is rooted in God's divine plan for creation -- an exclusive lifelong union of one man and one woman joined in an intimate communion of life and love.

### Why is the Pennsylvania Marriage Protection Amendment necessary?

Nationwide, activist groups are asking courts to redefine marriage as something other than a relationship between one man and one woman. The legalization of same-sex marriages in Massachusetts and the creation of "civil unions" in Vermont have created an urgent need for Pennsylvania to join 19 other states that have voted to protect the institution of marriage by amending their state constitutions.

### What the Pennsylvania Marriage Protection Amendment will do...

- Allow the voters of Pennsylvania to define marriage as the union of one man and one woman.
- Protect the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania from having to legally recognize civil unions as "marriages" in Pennsylvania.
- Protect the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania from having to recognize alternative or non-traditional "marriages" performed in other states or foreign countries.

### Proposed Pennsylvania Constitutional Amendment:

Only a marriage between one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as a marriage in this Commonwealth, and neither the Commonwealth nor any of its political subdivisions shall create or recognize a legal status identical or substantially equivalent to that of marriage for unmarried individuals.

- Protect Pennsylvania's present marriage law (the Defense of Marriage Act of 1996) from court challenge.

### What the Pennsylvania Marriage Protection Amendment will NOT do...

- It will NOT take any existing rights away from anyone.
- It will NOT affect benefits offered by private employers.
- It will NOT affect wills, joint ownership of property, contracts or agreements between unmarried individuals.
- It will NOT unfairly discriminate against anyone.

### Why should the Church be involved in the discussion of protecting marriage?

Precisely because the family is the primary cell of human society we all must be involved in establishing the definition of marriage which reflects the values of the people of the Commonwealth. But, the Church has an additional reason to join the debate. The truth in our faith about marriage is confirmed by God's word in Scripture:

God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him, male and female he created them. God blessed them, saying to them: "Be fertile and

multiply; fill the earth and subdue it" *Gen. 1: 27-28\**

The Lord God said: "It is not good for the man to be alone, I will make a suitable partner for him." The Lord God then built up into a woman the rib that he had taken from the man. *Gen. 2:18, 22\**

Jesus said, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together no human being must separate." *Matt. 19:5-6\**

### What can you do to help?

House Bill 2381 in the General Assembly proposes that an amendment to the state constitution protecting marriage should be placed before the voters. The Pennsylvania Catholic Conference (PCC) strongly supports this bill and asks Catholics to contact their local state legislators expressing support. Contact information for legislators is in the local telephone directory, or concerned citizens can send an e-mail simply using their zip code by logging on to: [www.pacatholic.org](http://www.pacatholic.org)

\*Scripture references are from the New American Bible



March 2006

Published by the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference, the public affairs agency of Pennsylvania's Catholic Bishops. For more information, contact PCC at PO Box 2835, Harrisburg, PA 17105 717-238-9613, [staff@pacatholic.org](mailto:staff@pacatholic.org), or log on to [www.pacatholic.org](http://www.pacatholic.org).