



Two Supreme Court Decisions Support Religious Freedom and Freedom of Speech

Two June decisions by the Supreme Court of the United States will provide protection for pro-life people across the nation. In a 5-to-4 decision, the Supreme Court ruled in support of religious freedom for owners of Hobby Lobby and Conestoga Wood Specialties Corporation, two family-owned businesses. The owners challenged the Health and Human Services' contraceptive mandate stating that the mandate is a violation of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. The Supreme Court affirmed that closely held companies, such as these two family-owned businesses, are protected under the Religious Freedom Amendment and therefore do not have to provide insurance coverage for contraceptives that are in violation of their religious beliefs. It did not, however, decide on the Amendment as it applies to other religious-based charities, hospitals and schools. Hence, the challenge brought by the Little Sisters of the Poor and others will be decided at a later date.

In a different unanimous decision, the Court found unconstitutional a Massachusetts law that mandated that pro-life Americans holding peaceful prayer vigils or offering counsel to women approaching abortion clinics were prohibited from coming within 35 feet of the building. In its ruling the Court stated that the so-called "35-foot buffer zone" clearly violated the pro-life Americans' freedom of speech.

The following is an excerpt from the June 26, 2014 statement issued by Cardinal Seán P. O'Malley of Boston, chairman of the U.S. Bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities: "This now overturned legislation reflects an ominous trend in our society. Abortion supporters, having long denied that unborn children have a right to life, would deny that their fellow Americans who seek to protect the unborn have the same rights as other Americans—the right to freedom of speech and freedom of

association: the right to participate in the public square and serve the vulnerable in accord with our moral convictions. Increasingly we see this trend evidenced at various levels of government. We are encouraged and pleased to know that with regard to this particular issue, our highest court has affirmed the American tradition of basic constitutional rights for all." (from USCCB website)

Legislative Workshop Promotes Marriage

In every state efforts are being made to redefine marriage. What are the rights of children, and what will happen to them if the only institution that unites children with their moms and dads no longer exists?

The legislative workshop at the national convention was based on the book, *Getting the Marriage Conversation Right* by William May, founder of Catholics for the Common Good. He insightfully teaches readers how to navigate the common pitfalls that lead to conflict, and he gives readers the words to use to defend and witness the truth about marriage.

Catholics for the Common Good is trying to organize faith and action circles in parishes, dioceses, and Catholic organizations such as Catholic Daughters. Pamphlets, booklets and accompanying DVDs are available in bulk at minimal cost. See page 2 for more information.

A Reminder: Political Year Guidelines

Because of tax-exempt status, Catholic Daughters of the Americas cannot and does not endorse or support any political party or political candidate at federal, state or local levels, including judicial nominees. Since our organization does take stands on issues, it is appropriate to research past votes on issues and to inform members of how elected officials have voted.

The Reality Series: Reframing the Marriage Issue Reveals Reality

Every child has the right to be brought up within marriage, the Catholic Church teaches. “It is through the secure and recognized relationship to his own parents that the child can discover his own identity and achieve his own proper human development.” This natural right can be verified by our human yearning to know and be connected with our origins. After all, **each of us carries the flesh of our mother and father for all eternity.**

Since **marriage between a man and a woman is the only institution that unites children with their moms and dads,** society is obligated to recognize, protect and promote its *reality* as the foundation of the family.

How we frame the questions we ask directly impacts the way we understand and discuss issues. Currently, the issue is being framed by an *idea*: **“Should same-sex couples be permitted to marry, and if no, then why not?”** This framing favors those proposing a redefinition of marriage. ...The question itself actually misrepresents the issue.

Responding by arguing why same-sex relationships are different from man-woman relationships and what kind of parenting most benefits children invariably leads to conflict and misunderstandings, including the claim that marriage supporters are prejudiced against people who have adopted homosexual lifestyles.

Consider reframing the issue by asking: **“Do we need a civil institution specifically geared to unite children with their moms and dads, and if no, then why not?”** This question reveals the *reality* of marriage—i.e., what it is and what it does—and expresses the unity and procreative end of the marital embrace. It also highlights marriage’s inherent public interest and brings the consequences of redefining marriage to the forefront in a way that respects the sincere desires of same-sex couples. The current framing of one being either for or against the idea of “same-sex marriage” can cause us to miss some crucial points, including that when same-sex couples are permitted to marry, nothing called “same-sex

marriage” is added to the law. Instead, marriage is redefined by replacing “a man and a woman” with “two people.” **We must be aware that if recognizing marriage between a man and a woman creates a civil institution that unites kids with their moms and dads, redefining marriage eliminates that good.**

Only one definition will exist in the law. The consequences cannot be fully appreciated outside of the context of how young people learn about what marriage is and why it is important to marry before having children. This influences the choices they make in their lives.

When marriage is redefined, attempts to

promote the norm of men and women marrying before having children becomes discriminatory against same-sex couples due to lack of a legal basis for connecting marriage with the conception, birth and rearing of children in the family of common ancestry.

Remember, every child has a mother and father, and marriage is the only civil institution that unites them in a communion of persons. This is reality, not an idea. As a general rule, when arguments favoring marriage redefinition are expressed, search out the truth by asking: “What does this have to do with the reality of marriage—the only institution that unites kids with their moms and dads?”

Even where marriage has been redefined, the question of whether we need a civil institution that unites children with their mothers and fathers must continue to be asked until the reality of marriage is once again recognized by the law, public and private institutions, and society as a whole. Marriage may even have to become known by a different name if the word “marriage” becomes merely an idea disconnected from reality.

(This information is taken from a pamphlet of the same title published by Catholics for the Common Good Institute. Email: info@ccgaction.org to order in bulk.)

Realities simply are, whereas ideas are worked out...realities are greater than ideas.” —Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium