

"Nature itself, not society, religion or government, created marriage"

Washington, D.C., March 25, 2014

Here is the statement issued Friday by the seven bishops of Michigan in response to the decision that day from U.S. District Judge Bernard Friedman to overturn the Michigan Constitution, which voters chose to amend in 2004 by defining marriage as between one man and one woman.

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Marriage is and can only ever be a unique relationship solely between one man and one woman, regardless of the decision of a judge or future electoral vote. Nature itself, not society, religion or government, created marriage. Nature, the very essence of humanity as understood through historical experience and reason, is the arbiter of marriage, and we uphold this truth for the sake of the common good. The biological realities of male and female and the complementarity they each bring to marriage uniquely allows for the procreation of children.

". . . this decision advances a misunderstanding of marriage, and mistakenly proposes that marriage is an emotional arrangement that can simply be redefined to accommodate the dictates of culture and the wants of adults . . . "

Every child has the right to both a mother and a father and, indeed, every child does have lineage to both. We recognize not every child has the opportunity to grow in this environment, and we pray for those single mothers and fathers who labor each day to care for their children at times amid great challenges and difficulties. They deserve our constant support and

encouragement.

Today's decision from federal district court Judge Bernard Friedman to redefine the institution of marriage by declaring Michigan's Marriage Amendment unconstitutional strikes at the very essence of family, community and human nature. In effect, this decision advances a misunderstanding of marriage, and mistakenly proposes that marriage is an emotional arrangement that can simply be redefined to accommodate the dictates of culture and the wants of adults. Judge Friedman's ruling that also finds unconstitutional the state's adoption law is equally of grave concern.

As this case will likely move forward through the courts, it is necessary to state clearly that persons with same-sex attraction should not be judged, but rather accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity. We rejoice with those brothers and sisters in Christ living with same sex attraction who have found great freedom through Jesus' call to chastity communicated through the Church. We equally encourage those who are struggling in good conscience to live in harmony with the Church's teaching about sexuality, along with their families, to continue praying and to continue seeking the Lord with the help and guidance of the Church.

Going forward, we, the Catholic bishops of this state, working through the Michigan Catholic Conference, will collaborate with those who are upholding Michigan's Marriage Amendment and adoption statute and will assist to the greatest extent possible efforts to appeal Judge Friedman's most regrettable ruling. ZENIT