

# MCC supports traditional marriage

Testifying in favor of a constitutional amendment to define marriage as a union between a man and a woman, Richard J. Dowling told members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee it is proper to codify a historical definition of marriage that has withstood the test of time.

Speaking on behalf of the Catholic bishops of Maryland at a March 1 hearing on Senate Bill 564, the executive director of the Maryland Catholic Conference told lawmakers the church's position derives from a view that is "not merely the religious outlook of the Roman Catholic Church."

"The church is the inheritor of the Western moral tradition; as such, it lifts up moral principles that are based on truths evident to reason and, therefore, accessible to all people of good will," he said.

In marriage, a husband and a wife make a "public and reciprocal commitment," he said.

"Society and the law rightly reciprocate by bestowing on marriage a juridical status that recognizes the essential role that families play in society," he said.

The church's position is not about denying rights to homosexuals or barring citizens from participation in public or private programs, Mr. Dowling said. The church opposes unions that confer marriage status to de-facto unions, whether they are homosexual or heterosexual, he said.

"Our position is one of affirmation," he explained. "We affirm the historic understanding and status of marriage."