

# Search for truth on same-sex marriage

Same-sex marriage, like most issues involving sexuality, is a tough one for today's Catholics. I am an American and I am a Catholic. I realize that while the church condemns many behaviors as "sins," our government allows many behaviors as "freedoms." I hear Jesus say, "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's."

I reply, "Huh?"

Well, let's see ...

On the one hand, we all have acquaintances, friends or relatives who are homosexual. They have not willfully chosen to be homosexual. We want them to be happy; we understand their desire that the government recognize that their relationship is legal, has certain rights, has "dignity." After all, a democratic government is in the business of maximizing freedom (whilst protecting rights of minorities). And this includes the right to be free to be "sinner" or "saint."

On the other hand, the church is in the business of interpreting Jesus' will and teaching religious doctrine (faith) and consequent behavior (morals). The church has taught for nearly 2,000 years that marriage is a "sacrament," not just a contract between two persons, but a covenant with God who gives grace to the couple in both expressions of intimacy (sex) and children (family). Thus the church teaches that sex before marriage and artificial birth control (even in a marriage) is detrimental ("sin") to the relationship. So, too, the church teaches that abortion, including "Plan B," including embryonic stem cell destruction, is wrong (even if the purposes are praiseworthy). And yes, too, the church teaches the marriage covenant is only possible between a man and a woman.

O my, what to do ... Civil union? Marriage? Nothing (again)?

“What’s a good Catholic to do?” I ask. The answer is to follow my own conscience, not just my offhand opinion posing as conscience, but an “informed conscience.” And so my search for the “truth” begins: the Catholic catechism, papal encyclicals (Humane Vitae; Theology of the Body), Catholic Review, Internet ... discussions with my bishop, my priest ... prayer.

The devils says, “Sssssst, that’s too much trouble. In matters of sex it’s none of the church’s business what I do and none of my business what others do.” (Rev 3: 15-16)

A referendum is coming on the issue of same-sex marriage. Don’t be indifferent. Care!

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