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Office of Government Liaison

—
Frank J. Monahan
Director

FYI

3211 4th Street N.E. Washington, DC 20017-1194
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STATEMENT ON SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

Embargoed until July 24, 1996 6:00 AM

The Roman Catholic Church believes that marriage is a faithful, exclusive, and lifelong union between one man and one woman, joined as husband and wife in an intimate partnership of life and love. This union was established by God with its own proper laws. By reason of its very nature, therefore, marriage exists for the mutual love and support of the spouses and for the procreation and education of children. These two purposes, the unitive and the procreative, are equal and inseparable. The institution of marriage has a very important relationship to the continuation of the human race, to the total development of the human person, and to the dignity, stability, peace, and prosperity of the family and of society.

Furthermore, we believe the natural institution of marriage has been blessed and elevated by Christ to the dignity of a sacrament. This means that Christian marriage is more than a contract. Because they are married in the Lord, the spouses acquire a special relationship to each other and to society. Their love becomes a living image of the manner in which the Lord personally loves his people and is united with them. Living a Christian sacramental marriage becomes their fundamental way of attaining salvation.

Because the marital relationship offers benefits, unlike any other, to persons, to society, and to the church, we wish to make it clear that the institution of marriage, as the union of one man and one woman, must be preserved, protected, and promoted in both private and public realms. At a time when family life is under significant stress, the principled defense of marriage is an urgent necessity for the wellbeing of children and families, and for the common good of society.

Thus, we oppose attempts to grant the legal status of marriage to a relationship between persons of the same sex. No same-sex union can realize the unique and full potential which the marital relationship expresses. For this reason, our opposition to "same-sex marriage" is not an instance of unjust discrimination or animosity toward homosexual persons. In fact, the Catholic Church teaches emphatically that individuals and society must respect the basic human dignity of all persons, including those with a homosexual orientation. Homosexual persons have a right to and deserve our respect, compassion, understanding, and defense against bigotry, attacks and abuse.

We therefore urge Catholics and all our fellow citizens to commit themselves both to upholding the human dignity of every person and to upholding the distinct and irreplaceable community of marriage.

Most Reverend Joseph L. Charron, CPPS
Chairman, NCCB Committee on
Marriage and Family

Most Reverend William S. Skylstad
Chairman, USCC Committee on
Domestic Policy

RESOLUTION:
To Call upon President Clinton to Veto Anti-Gay Marriage Legislation

Whereas the radical Right and the Republican Party have devised an election-year strategy to divide the country with hot-button wedge issues such as the prospect of same-sex marriages; and

Whereas any federal legislation prohibiting same-sex marriages is unnecessary and inappropriate in that it is already impermissible for people of the same sex to legally marry and that civil laws governing marriage and divorce have *always* been the province of The States; and

Whereas actively supporting legislation that would codify a public policy based on prejudice and misinformation sends a dangerous message from the President of the United States, signaling the acceptability of discrimination, and that this might embolden those previously disposed to hatred and homophobia to commit violent acts against those whom they perceive to be lesbian or gay;

Now, therefore, be it RESOLVED

that the Executive Board of the King County Democratic Central Committee (KCDCC) calls upon President Bill Clinton to veto all anti-gay marriage legislation, including the proposed Defense of Marriage Act;

And be it further RESOLVED

that the Executive Board of the KCDCC calls upon the Washington State Democratic Party in convention this Saturday, June 1, 1996, to adopt this resolution.

-- submitted for consideration by the Harvey Muggy Lesbian/Gay Democrats --

Debbie Senn



Office of Government Liaison

3211 4th Street N.E. Washington, DC 20017-1194 (202)541-3140 FAX (202)541-3322 TELEX 7400424

To Mr

Attached is background
info on same sex marriage.
The trial has been set for
Sept 10. If it loses the
State could appeal to the Supreme
Court - There is no intermediate
appellate court. There is an
effort underway to pass a Constitutional
Amendment in the legislature (see
attached also)

Also enclosed is info on Ex. 1005010.

Good to see you again - call if
you need anything else

Frank

Background

Three gay and lesbian couples sought a marriage license in Hawaii. State officials denied the applications because, as in other states, only male-female couples are eligible to marry in Hawaii. The aggrieved couples filed suit in State court, seeking a declaration that the Hawaii marriage statute, by restricting marriage licenses to male-female couples, violates the plaintiffs' right to privacy and equal protection of the law as guaranteed by the Hawaii Constitution. The case, captioned *Baehr v. Lewin*, was dismissed, and the plaintiffs appealed.

In May 1993, the Hawaii Supreme Court reversed the judgment of the trial court. The Supreme Court held that there is no "fundamental right" to "marry" someone of the same sex under the State Constitution's guarantee of privacy. Nevertheless, the court held that by denying couples of the same sex the legal rights and benefits that flow from marital status, the Hawaii marriage statute violates the State Constitution's guarantee of equal protection *unless* the State can demonstrate that (a) compelling state interests justify unequal treatment, and (b) the statute is narrowly drawn to accomplish those interests. Since the trial court earlier had dismissed the case on the pleadings, *i.e.*, without hearing any evidence, the Supreme Court remanded the case to the trial court to give the State an opportunity to prove whether the Hawaii marriage statute meets this two-pronged test. The case is currently pending in the trial court where it awaits further submissions by the parties and eventual trial.

BAEHR V. MIKE, THE HAWAII SAME-SEX MARRIAGE CASE - A QUICK SUMMARY

In 1990, three same-sex couples applied for marriage licenses and were denied. In 1991, they sued the State of Hawaii in state court, challenging the constitutionality, under the Hawaii State Constitution, of a marriage law that would deny them the right to marry. The trial court granted the State's motion to dismiss the case for failure to state a legitimate legal claim.

The plaintiffs appealed the dismissal of the case to the Hawaii Supreme Court. In early 1992, the plaintiffs and the State presented their arguments orally before the Supreme Court. Briefs were also filed by the ACLU Foundation of Hawaii, the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, and the Rutherford Institute.

In May 1993, the Supreme Court shocked everyone with its decision, Baehr v. Lewin 852 P.2d 44 (1993). The Supreme Court held that the plaintiffs had potentially made a valid legal claim, and that the case should be sent back to the trial court to be given a full trial. The Court held, paradoxically, (1) that there was no fundamental right to same-sex marriage in the Hawaii State Constitution, but that (2) a marriage law that limits marriage to male-female couples is sex discrimination, and can only be justified if the State shows a "compelling state interest" for it. This standard, known as "strict scrutiny," puts the burden of proof on the state, and is very tough. The State Attorney General filed a motion for reconsideration, which the Supreme Court denied.

The decision unleashed a firestorm of controversy which has only grown since 1993. As of mid-1996, the trial court had not yet heard the case. Meanwhile, much else has happened.

In 1994 the Hawaii State Legislature responded by passing a law condemning the decision of the Hawaii Supreme Court, restating the male-female definition of marriage, and setting up the first Commission on Sexual Orientation on the Law. This group began meeting in late 1994, but was successfully challenged on church-state grounds, and abolished by the legislature in its 1995 session. At that time, the legislature created the second Commission, appointed by the Governor, charged to consider the pros and cons of giving marital status and benefits to same-sex couples.

The second Commission met during the fall of 1995 and, in a 5-2 decision, recommended the full legalization of same-sex marriage and/or a marriage-like domestic partnership bill. The minority vigorously challenged both the process and the content of the majority's recommendations. The report of the Commission was issued in December of 1995 and drew national attention.

Meanwhile, early in 1995 the LDS Church (Mormons) filed a petition to intervene as a third party in the case, claiming that the State was not willing to wholeheartedly defend its own law. The trial court denied their petition, and this denial was affirmed by the Supreme Court. Nine state legislators filed a similar petition in early 1996, were denied, and have also appealed.

In the 1996 legislative session, the Senate passed a Domestic Partnership bill 14-11, and the House passed a male-female marriage Constitutional Amendment 37-14, but both bills died. The case has been set to go forward in the First Circuit Court of Honolulu on September 10th.



WASHINGTON STATE CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

January 31, 1996

The Honorable Larry Sheahan
Chair, House Law and Justice Committee
John L. O'Brien Building, # 331
P.O. Box 40600
Olympia, Washington 98504

Dear Representative Sheahan and Committee Members:

RE: HB 2262 - SAME GENDER MARRIAGES

The Washington State Catholic Conference is generally in support of HB 2262.

At this time there is no such legal reality as "same gender" marriages, "homosexual marriages" or "gay and lesbian marriages". However, the prospect that the State may find itself in a legally untenable position regarding its own marriage laws invites this legislation and the surrounding debate. Proponents and opponents of "same gender marriage" could probably agree that if and when another State chooses to recognize "same gender marriages", the "full faith and credit laws" will present a difficult legal reality for States who don't make such clear and definitive decisions. If this law were to pass, it would certainly lead to legal action. That may be an unavoidable and necessary first step.

The intention of HB 2262 is to clarify that the State of Washington does not legally define such "same gender" partnership as a marriage and proposes to make clear that such an arrangement is prohibited and "shall not be recognized as a valid marriage in this state". Why should we do this?

Our reflections for the debate:

No government to date has redefined the institution of marriage. None should. Marriage between a man and a woman is a fundamental institution of civil society. It is the basis for healthy individuals, a stable community and a responsible society. The State chooses to honor particular contracts, but it has given special attention and privilege to the marriage contract because marriage between a man and a woman is inherently natural, predates all civil recognition, and is essential to our social well being. Because this formal marriage commitment is so essential to our biological and social future, it has been and continues to be preserved, protected, and promoted by the laws of the State.

The relationship between a woman and a man is complementary. The natures of woman and man, equal yet unique, complement one another, and in marital love humanize and civilize each other and society. No same-sex relationship can realize the genuine potential of a relationship between a man and a woman. Nor should society expect it to do so. Because of the obvious complementary natures of a woman and a man, society reaps many benefits.

A committed, faithful, life-giving, and lifelong relationship between a man and a woman is the best environment for children. All the research proves this. Despite the heroic efforts of single parents raising children, the normative, best experience for healthy children is the stable two parent family, which provides the love and example of a woman and a man. The marriage law and the natural law connect sex, commitment, and children. We hold parents responsible for supporting and educating their children, both within marriage and even if the marriage breaks down. If the law were to redefine marriage and send a message that marriage has no relationship to sex, commitment, or children, it will only add to the current problems in our society and perhaps undermine the healthy relationships that exists.

House Law and Justice Committee - HB 2262

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Our society has a tradition of protecting individual rights and respecting the pluralism reflected in our communities. We respect the private choices of others, even if we disagree with them. We accord each individual equal rights and dignity before the law. We know the difference between human rights and civil rights. We know the difference between males and females. We know the difference between tolerance and endorsement. We know the difference between friendship and marriage. We must act accordingly.

There are other arguments which could be presented. Some of us would appeal to religious or moral beliefs regarding human sexuality, human sexual behavior and our relationships to each other and to God. They are strong beliefs and they inform our arguments. But in our current cultural milieu they are sometimes dismissed as irrelevant or prejudiced. That is truly unfortunate.

Perhaps, the best we can do at this point is to ask all of us to move the discussion beyond arguing privacy, individual rights, or religious beliefs. Perhaps we could find common ground by focusing instead on the common good...the well being of our children, traditional family values, and our social structures.

This is a difficult and, at times, contentious debate. We pledge our honesty and civility to the effort. Thank you for your dedicated service.

Sincerely,

Edward Dolejsi
Executive Director
Washington State Catholic Conference
on behalf of:

Archbishop Thomas Murphy
Archdiocese of Seattle

Bishop Francis George, O.M.I.
Diocese of Yakima

Bishop William Skylstad
Diocese of Spokane



TO: Pastoral Leaders - Sept. 7, 1995

**FROM: Roman Catholic Bishops of
Washington State**

**RE: Church Teaching on Human
Dignity and Sexuality and its
Impact on Legislative Initiatives**

Introduction:

A primary responsibility of Bishops in the Roman Catholic Church is to preach the Gospel to all people. We exercise this responsibility especially with the priests who are our co-workers, as well as with deacons, religious and laity who share in the teaching ministry of the Bishop. It is essential to have a spirit of unity among all involved in the teaching mission of the Church which preserves the core truths and values of the Gospel and the tradition of the Church.

We are blessed to live at a time when the teachings of the Church are accessible to us in many ways. We have the benefit of our long and rich tradition of faith, and especially the Vatican II and post-conciliar documents. We are the beneficiaries of the Catechism of the Catholic Church which Pope John Paul II calls "a sure norm for teaching the faith and thus a valid and legitimate instrument for ecclesial communion." (Apostolic Constitution, Fidei Depositum, John Paul II, October 11, 1992)

It is important that as Bishops we share with you the teaching of the Catholic Church on issues that are the basis for discussion, political action, and decision making in our own individual lives, as well as in the life of our community. At this time, we choose to offer some reflections on the teaching of the Catholic Church regarding (1) The Dignity of the human person; (2) the Family; (3) Human rights; (4) Human rights and homosexual persons, and; (5) Church teaching on Human Sexuality. It is only when we have a grasp and appreciation of the teaching of the Church that we can respond with faith and assurance to the questions that confront us in today's world.

I. Church Teaching:

A. The Dignity of the Human Person:

Each and every human being has a basic dignity because all men and women are created in the image of God. (cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, United States Catholic Conference, 1994, 1700-1715) The Catholic Church respects the dignity of all people. "The human person made in the image and likeness of God can hardly be adequately described by...his or her sexual orientation. Everyone living on the face of the earth has personal problems and difficulties, but has challenges to growth, strengths, talents and gifts as well. Today the church provides a badly needed context for the care of the human person when she refuses to consider the person as heterosexual or homosexual and insists that every person has a fundamental identity: a creature of God, and by grace, his child and heir to eternal life." (Letter on the Care of Homosexual Persons, Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1986) We emphasize that each person is made in the image and likeness of God and cannot be adequately defined in terms of his or her sexual orientation alone.

B. The Family:

The Catholic Church affirms the preeminent role of the family in society. "The family is the original cell of social life. It is the natural society in which husband and wife are called to give themselves in love and in the gift of life." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2207) A healthy family with a loving mother and father is the best environment for raising children. Certainly the current reality does not always provide such nurturing opportunities. Nevertheless, our public policies should support and promote that ideal.

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C. Human Rights:

The Catholic Church advocates and defends the human rights of every person. It is a fundamental human right, regardless of sexual orientation, to be treated with dignity and respect. The Catechism of the Catholic Church recalls the words of the Vatican II Constitution on the Church in the Modern World which tells us: "Every form of social or cultural discrimination in fundamental personal rights on the grounds of sex, race, color, social conditions, language or religion must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God's designs." (Vatican II, Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, 29, 2) Unjust discrimination and violence towards individuals because of their sexual orientation are wrong. The Church continues to request that public laws and actions reflect that understanding.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church goes on to state: "(Homosexual persons) must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2358)

D. Human Rights and Homosexual Persons:

Without doubt, homosexual persons endure harassment. "It is deplorable that homosexual persons have been and are the object of violent malice in speech and action. Such treatment deserves condemnation from the church's pastors wherever it occurs. It reveals a kind of disregard for others which endangers the most fundamental principles of a healthy society. The intrinsic dignity of each person must always be respected in work, in action and in law." (Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1992).

E. Human Sexuality:

The Church emphasizes the goodness of sexuality as an integral and essential component of the human person. Yet, men and women are expected to use the gift of sexuality, as well as all the gifts of being a human being, with responsibility and accountability according to God's plan. "God inscribed in the humanity of man and woman the vocation, and thus the capacity and responsibility, of love and communion...Physical, moral, and spiritual difference and complementarity are oriented towards the goods of marriage and the flourishing of family life." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2331, 2333)

As Cardinal Basil Hume of England said so clearly in his recently published Note on Church Teaching Concerning Homosexual People, 1995: "First, the church has always taught that the sexual (genital) expression of love is intended by God's plan of creation to find its place exclusively within marriage between a man and a woman. The church therefore cannot in any way equate a homosexual partnership with a heterosexual marriage. Second, the sexual (genital) expression of love must be open to the possible transmission of new life. For these two reasons the church does not approve of homosexual genital acts."

The Catechism of the Catholic Church is clear in its teaching on chastity and sexuality. The "carnal union between an unmarried man and an unmarried woman...is gravely contrary to the dignity of persons and of human sexuality which is naturally ordered to the good of spouses and the generation and education of children." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2353)

"Homosexuality refers to relations between men or between women who experience an exclusive or predominant sexual attraction toward persons of the same sex...Its psychological genesis remains largely unexplained...(Our) tradition has always declared that 'homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered.' They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2357)

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II. Proposed Initiatives 166 and 167: Description and Brief Commentary

We have summarized Church teaching on the above issues because such teaching helps us address two Initiatives that are being proposed for consideration by citizens of Washington State between now and December of 1995 that would establish new public laws pertaining to homosexual persons. The two Initiatives are:

I-166: Shall Government be prohibited from according rights or protections based on sexual orientation, and schools from presenting homosexuality as acceptable?

I-167: Shall government be prohibited from placing children for adoption or foster care with any homosexual or with cohabiting unmarried persons?

As Catholic Bishops, we are often asked to take a specific position on proposed Initiatives when proponents and opponents seek our endorsement and/or practical political assistance for their efforts. Proponents of Initiatives 166 and 167 are now seeking signatures through December of 1995 to ask the people to establish new public laws pertaining to homosexual persons in Washington State.

There will be many arguments put forward by proponents and opponents of these two proposed Initiatives. We recognize and share the frustration of people on how best to respond to legitimate anxieties and concerns. However, Initiative proposals are often presented with dubious legal and societal impact. At times, the contentious process that accompanies Initiative electioneering in our State tends to obscure the fundamental moral issues important to us as believers.

We believe that Initiatives 166 and 167 are inadequately crafted. Both proposals could benefit from civil, responsible dialogue and amendment. Unfortunately, amendments are not possible in the Initiative process.

Initiative 166: This Initiative is similar to an Initiative we opposed last year, but the debate that ensued caused confusion and misunderstanding about our teaching and the reason for our position. This Initiative would eliminate the use of sexual orientation as a basis for legal protections against discrimination, but it fails to distinguish between sexual orientation and sexual activity. Supporting the Initiative, therefore, would cause us to condemn homosexuals as well as their sexual activity. This is not acceptable. The Initiative would probably void anti-harassment laws which we have supported and further the harsh rhetoric that accompanies this issue. Opposing Initiative 166, on the other hand, would give the appearance of condoning homosexual conduct to those who do not distinguish between the orientation and the activity. This is also unacceptable.

Initiative 166 also prohibits schools from presenting homosexuality as appropriate behavior. Schools should not present homosexual behavior as acceptable, nor should they condemn homosexual persons for who they are.

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I-167: This Initiative would prohibit the State from placing children for adoption and foster care into the custody of homosexual persons or a heterosexual couple who are living as domestic partners. Initiative 167, like Initiative 166, makes no distinction between orientation and behavior.

We must hold up the ideal of children experiencing love and growth in the traditional family. Our own Catholic agencies only place children in home settings consonant with our teaching. There are many children waiting and needing loving homes, and we are troubled that the Initiative may make it more difficult and time consuming to place them. Further, the definitions do not appear to distinguish between "those who practice homosexuality and those who acknowledge" a sexual desire for a person of the same gender. This lack of clarity makes it difficult to either oppose or support this Initiative.

We hope that our summary of Church teaching and reflections will help shape the debate on these Initiatives. While people of good will may disagree with the application of these principles, we hope our reflections will help people appreciate the teaching and tradition of our Church in a thoughtful and prayerful way. We share the teaching of the Church and our reflections to help people discern the human impact of policy decisions and the moral implications of the choices we make.

III. Our Pastoral Reflection on the Proposed Initiatives:

The teaching of the Catholic Church continues to distinguish between homosexual orientation and engaging in homosexual genital activity. As Catholic Bishops we are aware that every person regardless of sexual orientation needs spiritual, social and emotional nourishment. We recognize our obligation of offering pastoral care to all people, while at the same time fulfilling our responsibility as teachers within the Catholic faith community.

The Catholic Church is especially concerned with the "well-being" of children. Our constant efforts to assure their basic human needs, our involvement in adoption, foster care, day care and education speak directly of our commitment to children, particularly to those most in need. It is wrong to teach children that immoral behavior is acceptable. To place children intentionally in adoptive and foster care homes where immoral behavior is acknowledged as appropriate is wrong. To have our State engage in these activities is also wrong. Our Church understands all too well the tremendous need for quality foster and adoptive homes for so many of our children. We ask the strong and loving families in our parish and faith communities to consider their call to share their love and faith with a child who needs a home.

At this time, as Catholic Bishops, we find ourselves in the position of neither supporting nor opposing the proposed Initiatives 166 and 167 in their entirety.

We are each called, as citizens and disciples of Jesus, to make moral judgments and to assess the social consequences of these two Initiatives. It is obvious, at times, this can be a difficult and complex task. For this reason, it will require each of us to understand our Church's teaching and tradition, to be informed regarding the issues, and to turn to God in prayer. As you form your conscience in this manner on these Initiatives, be assured of our prayers for you and the people of our State.

Thomas J. Murphy
Archbishop of Seattle

Francis E. George, OMI
Bishop of Yakima

William S. Skylstad
Bishop of Spokane



4.01

COPY

April 9, 1996

The Honorable Charles M. Calderon
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee
State Capitol, Room 4039
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 1982 Knight: (Domestic Relationships)

Dear Senator Calderon,

The California Catholic Conference supports AB 1982 by Assemblyman Knight. The lasting commitment of marriage, while distinct from family, is nonetheless its bedrock. The passage of this bill will clearly strengthen that bedrock and consequently family life itself. There has been much press that division over single-sex "marriage" is basically a conflict between homosexual and heterosexual rights. This is not the case. Recognition of single sex "marriage" would be damaging to society, because it would further weaken the institution of marriage.

The state has a compelling responsibility to support and bolster marriage and family and has done so throughout history. The state in fact is indebted to family, for it is in the arms of family that citizens learn language, responsibility, loyalty and honor. Indeed the strength of society and of the state itself rests on the health and stability of family life, and the state has traditionally recognized its vested interest in supporting strong, stable, committed marital relationships between men and women, which provide a stable and nurturing environment for children. To this end government extends to married men and women and their families benefits that aid them in their essential role of preparing future citizens and understands the importance of doing everything possible to reinforce this cornerstone of society.

The benefits accorded to families by government and society are not primarily benefits rendered to individuals who are married. It is impossible to justify special benefits to married couples if these benefits are seen first and foremost as benefits to the spouses themselves. Why should the single person be denied benefits extended to individuals living together whether married or not? Only in the context of a relationship that intends to or has produced future citizens is the state able to justify special benefits.

A relationship between two people is essentially a private concern and not the business of the state. Opponents of AB 1982 hope to provide for more stable relationships by defeat of the measure. The cart is before the horse. Law will never lend permanence to a relationship. Law may demand acceptance of responsibility for the consequences of a relationship that is already there, but law will never effect permanence of the relationship itself. In marriage the couple, on the basis of a pre-existing commitment, enter a legally enforceable contract to support each other in times of illness or unemployment; to share community property obligations and joint responsibility for debts incurred by a spouse so that they may jointly provide for offspring that may result from the union.

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The definition of marriage in the California Code is "a contract arising from a relationship between a man and a woman." With this definition in mind, the Governor in a veto message in 1994 said: "We need to strengthen, not weaken, the institution of marriage. In virtually every culture, marriage has been deservedly celebrated as a relationship demanding commitment and unselfish giving to one's family -- especially to one's children. Government policy ought not to discount marriage by offering a substitute relationship that demands much less--and provides much less than is needed both by the children of such relationships, and ultimately much less than is needed by society."

Several years ago an attempt was made in our legislature to redefine marriage as "a contract arising from a relationship between two persons." It got nowhere--to the credit of the Democratically controlled legislature. The possible change of that age old concept in the state of Hawaii or elsewhere will create public policy havoc in that state. It would be absurdity to undermine our own policy by granting recognition to "marriages" which deviate from our own definition. A quick flight to Hawaii would allow for disregard of public policy and California legislation and create chaos due to the confusion arising from two different definitions for the same term. Even in Hawaii there is an initiative effort underway to test this judicial and legislative action against the will of the people.

I recognize that many will see our position as a denial of legitimate rights to gay men and women. I regret this. Single sex marriage is not just a gay issue but one that affects all society. I also regret it because we believe that the establishment and protection of the legitimate rights of homosexual men and women is an important challenge facing us as a state. We have spoken out consistently and repeatedly in the past condemning violence and ballot initiatives that would have resulted in unjust discrimination against homosexual men and women. All of these issues touch upon legitimate civil and social rights of the gay and lesbian communities, but I cannot believe that the recognition of single-sex marriages constitutes a civil right for any community in the state, or that this equation should be enshrined in law.

I ask you to give this matter long and thoughtful consideration. Marriage and family are critically weakened already. Passage of this measure will at least keep them from being further undermined, and will allow the people of our state and their elected officials to debate the issues on their merits rather than having our public policy and law determined by bodies outside the state. We ask that you support AB 1982.

Sincerely yours,



Reverend Monsignor E. James Petersen
Executive Director

EJP/dp

cc: Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee
Assemblyman William J. Knight, author
Mikki Sorensen, Consultant