

July 14, 2015
Feast of Saint Kateri Tekakwitha

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus,

I write this letter to offer you a prayerful encouragement to continue to live our Faith in true marriage and family life. As disappointing as the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision which redefined the State's definition of marriage has been, we need not lose heart nor should we ever think that the final word has been spoken. All of us who are Catholics know that there is just one true marriage union and that it is between a man and a woman and it binds them to each other for as long as they live.

On Ash Wednesday of this year you will recall that I published a Pastoral Letter on the Church's belief in Marriage and its constant practice with regard to true marriage. The title given to this Letter is "And the Two shall become One". At that time I did not know how timely it would be and, if you have not yet had a chance to read it, I urge you to do so. Your Parish may have some copies left and you can certainly read it by going to our Diocesan website. The message of this Letter is, simply put, that there is only one true marriage relationship and that it is God Who created it for a man and a woman. The reason God created this marriage relationship is twofold: for the mutual and lasting good of the man and woman, and for the creation of new human life through the full and complete act of marital sexual love in intercourse.

You and I are living proof of this unchangeable truth. Each of us is the result of the marital love of our fathers and mothers. As much as each of us needs our natural parents so do they need each of us. We assist each other as families to grow and prosper in those natural and supernatural virtues which manifest themselves in good, wholesome and holy daily living of our vocations. No individual person, no civil court, no special interest group or misguided ideology can change what is objectively true about marriage. True marriage is the one state in life which connects children to their mothers and fathers and bonds husbands and wives to each other in a permanent, faithful and fruitful union. Mothers and fathers are irreplaceable both for each other and for their children.

The U.S. Supreme Court's decision to redefine marriage to be something that it is physically impossible to be, has done a tremendous disservice to all of us, especially to children. Simply stated, the Court is wrong. To treat the impossibility of same-sex marriage as an impossibility is neither unjust nor is it discriminatory. The secular progressive ideology which was the driving force in this matter never had the good of individuals in mind, but it was always all about imposing on Americans and our society a different and wholly unnatural definition of marriage.

Our Catholic faith is what we must rely on for our strength and the Church's authoritative teachings are what give us guidance as we face this assault on true marriage and the stable family. This attempt to redefine marriage will have serious consequences for all Americans and it will have a direct impact on the religious liberty of every person who in good conscience cannot accept this wrong definition of marriage.

As the Bishop of the Diocese of Bismarck I wish to assure you that I, along with our good priests and deacons, will continue to teach the truth of marriage and all of our pastoral practices will remain true to and in communion with the authentic teaching of the Church.

However, as your Bishop I need to ask you for your immediate help. All of you whom God has called to that life-long, faithful and fruitful vocation of true marriage, I ask you to live your married life to the full as the wives and husbands you are. All of you young adult men and women, who are now single and contemplating true marriage, please be chaste in all of your relationships with others. There is no better way to prepare for true marriage than to live a chaste single life by respecting the dignity of others as well as your own wonderful dignity as a child of our good God. All of you who are single and not contemplating marriage please continue to be chaste in your relationships. The Church is here to help all of you live your chastity in a wonderfully fulfilling way.

To all of you men and women who may be experiencing a same-sex attraction, please know that you, too, are called to live a truly chaste life and we are here as your Church to help you to do so in such a way that you come to know even better how much God loves each of you for who you are as His beloved children. The Church, our Diocese, is your family and I want to support you with my prayers and loving concern in your daily lives as you strive to be holy and virtuous.

My dear brothers and sisters, let us rededicate ourselves more by what we do than by what we say to supporting one another in living faithfully true marriage as husbands and wives, as sons and daughters and as brothers and sisters. In this way, with the immediate help of God's grace, we will rebuild and foster the culture of life and the culture of marriage!

With a promise to you of my daily prayers and asking for your prayers, I remain

Gratefully yours in Christ Jesus,

The Most Reverend David D. Kagan
Bishop of Bismarck