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**Excerpts from Vatican Document on Legal Recognition of Homosexual Unions**

**CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING PROPOSALS TO GIVE LEGAL RECOGNITION TO UNIONS BETWEEN HOMOSEXUAL PERSONS**  
(excerpts)  
*Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith*

Since this question relates to the natural moral law, **the arguments that follow are addressed not only to those who believe in Christ, but to all persons committed to promoting and defending the common good of society.**

[Read the whole document](#)

The Church's teaching on marriage and on the complementarity of the sexes reiterates a **truth that is evident to right reason and recognized as such by all the major cultures of the world.** Marriage is not just any relationship between human beings. It was established by the Creator with its own nature, essential properties and purpose. **No ideology can erase from the human spirit the certainty that marriage exists solely between a man and a woman, who by mutual personal gift, proper and exclusive to themselves, tend toward the communion of their persons.** In this way, they mutually perfect each other, in order to cooperate with God in the procreation and upbringing of new human lives.

LORD, INSPIRE ALL WE DO AND HELP US AS WE DO IT, SO THAT EVERYTHING WE UNDERTAKE BEGINS FROM YOU AND REACHES ITS COMPLETION THROUGH YOU.

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**No ideology can erase from the human spirit the certainty that marriage exists solely between a man and a woman, who by mutual personal gift, proper and exclusive to themselves, tend toward the communion of their persons.**

**There are absolutely no grounds for considering homosexual unions to be in any way similar or even remotely analogous to God's plan for marriage and family.** Marriage is holy, while homosexual acts go against the natural moral law. Homosexual acts 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.

[A]ccording to the teaching of the Church, **men and women with homosexual tendencies must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided.** They are called, like other Christians, to live the virtue of chastity. The homosexual inclination is however objectively disordered and homosexual practices are sins gravely contrary to chastity.

Moral conscience requires that, in every occasion, Christians give witness to the whole moral truth, which is contradicted both by approval of homosexual acts and unjust discrimination against homosexual persons. Therefore, discreet and prudent measures can be effective; these might involve: unmasking which such tolerance might be exploited or used as an ideology; stating clearly the immoral nature of the phenomenon **within certain limits so as to safeguard public morality and, above all, to avoid exposing**

**people to erroneous ideas about sexuality and marriage that would deprive necessary defences and contribute to the spread of the phenomenon.** Those who move from tolerance to the legitimization of specific rights for cohabiting homosexuals must be reminded that the approval or legalization of evil is something far different from the tolerance of evil.

**In those situations where homosexual unions have been legally recognized given the legal status and rights belonging to marriage, clear and emphatic a duty.** One must refrain from any kind of formal cooperation in the enactment or enforcement of such gravely unjust laws and, as far as possible, from material cooperation on the level of the individual.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF  
CALIFORNIA

Case number: 3:09-cv-02292-VRW

PLTF EXHIBIT NO. PX0301

Date admitted: \_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_



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Moral conscience requires that, in every occasion, Christians give witness to the whole moral truth, which is contradicted both by approval of homosexual acts and unjust discrimination against homosexual persons. Therefore, discreet and prudent actions can be effective; these might involve: unmasking the way in which such tolerance might be exploited or used in the service of ideology; stating clearly the immoral nature of these unions; **reminding the government of the need to contain the phenomenon within certain limits so as to safeguard public morality and, above all, to avoid exposing young**

**people to erroneous ideas about sexuality and marriage that would deprive them of their necessary defences and contribute to the spread of the phenomenon.** Those who would move from tolerance to the legitimization of specific rights for cohabiting homosexual persons need to be reminded that the approval or legalization of evil is something far different from the toleration of evil.

**In those situations where homosexual unions have been legally recognized or have been given the legal status and rights belonging to marriage, clear and emphatic opposition is a duty.** One must refrain from any kind of formal cooperation in the enactment or application of such gravely unjust laws and, as far as possible, from material cooperation on the level of their

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application. In this area, everyone can exercise the right to conscientious objection.

The scope of the civil law is certainly more limited than that of the moral law, but civil law cannot contradict right reason without losing its binding force on conscience. **Every humanly-created law is legitimate insofar as it is consistent with the natural moral law, recognized by right reason, and insofar as it respects the inalienable rights of every person. Laws in favour of homosexual unions are contrary to right reason** because they confer legal guarantees, analogous to those granted to marriage, to unions between persons of the same sex. Given the values at stake in this question, the State could not grant legal standing to such unions without failing in its duty to promote and defend marriage as an institution essential to the common good.

[Read the whole document](#) Civil laws are structuring principles of man's life in society, for good or for ill. They play a very important and sometimes decisive role in influencing patterns of thought and behaviour. Lifestyles and the underlying presuppositions these express not only externally shape the life of society, but also tend to modify the younger generation's perception and evaluation of forms of behaviour. **Legal recognition of homosexual unions would obscure certain basic moral values and cause a devaluation of the institution of marriage.**

**Homosexual unions are totally lacking in the biological and anthropological elements of marriage and family which would be the basis, on the level of reason, for granting them legal recognition.** Such unions are not able to contribute in a proper way to the procreation and survival of the human race. The possibility of using recently discovered methods of artificial reproduction, beyond involving a grave lack of respect for human dignity, does nothing to alter this inadequacy.

**The common good requires that laws recognize, promote and protect marriage as the basis of the family, the primary unit of society. Legal recognition of homosexual unions or placing them on the same level as marriage would mean not only the approval of deviant behaviour, with the consequence of making it a model in present-day society, but would also obscure basic values which belong to the common inheritance of humanity.**

**institutional recognition.** Homosexual unions, on the other hand, do not need specific attention from the legal standpoint since they do not exercise this function for the common good.

Nor is the argument valid according to which legal recognition of homosexual unions is necessary to avoid situations in which cohabiting homosexual persons, simply because they live together, might be deprived of real recognition of their rights as persons and citizens. In reality, they can always make use of the provisions of law like all citizens from the standpoint of their private autonomy to protect their rights in matters of common interest. **It would be gravely unjust to sacrifice the common good and just laws on the family in order to protect personal goods**

**Homosexual unions are totally lacking in the biological and anthropological elements of marriage and family which would be the basis, on the level of reason, for granting them legal recognition.**

[T]he absence of sexual complementarity in these unions creates obstacles in the normal development of children who would be placed in the care of such persons. They would be deprived of the experience of either fatherhood or motherhood. **Allowing children to be adopted by persons living in such unions would actually mean doing violence to these children,** in the sense that their condition of dependency would be used to place them in an environment that is not conducive to their full human development.

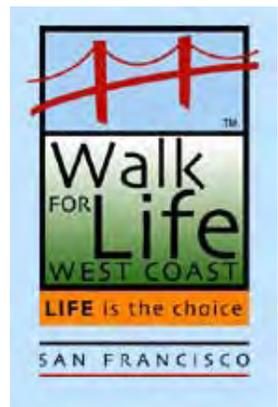
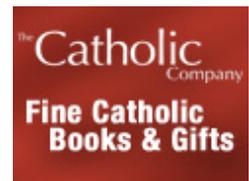
Society owes its continued survival to the family, founded on marriage. **The inevitable consequence of legal recognition of homosexual unions would be the redefinition of marriage,** which would become, in its legal status, an institution devoid of essential reference to factors linked to heterosexuality; for example, procreation and raising children. **If, from the legal standpoint, marriage between a man and a woman were to be considered just one possible form of marriage, the concept of marriage would undergo a radical transformation, with grave detriment to the common good.** By putting homosexual unions on a legal plane analogous to that of marriage and the family, the State acts arbitrarily and in contradiction with its duties.

**Because married couples ensure the succession of generations and are therefore eminently within the public interest, civil law grants them**

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that can and must be guaranteed in ways that do not harm the body of society.

The Church teaches that respect for homosexual persons cannot lead in any way to approval of homosexual behaviour or to legal recognition of homosexual unions. **The common good requires that laws recognize, promote and protect marriage as the basis of the family, the primary unit of society. Legal recognition of homosexual unions or placing them on the same level as marriage would mean not only the approval of deviant behaviour, with the consequence of making it a model in present-day society, but would also obscure basic values which belong to the common inheritance of humanity.** The Church cannot fail to defend these values, for the good of men and women and for the good of society itself.

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