

Catholic Theological Defense of Same-sex Marriage

Catholic theologian Daniel Maguire of Marquette University has recently issued a well-presented defense of same-sex marriage. He states that in time the Roman Catholic Church will come to accept equality in marriage. This, of course, is already a reality for the Eucharistic Catholic Church and many other Independent Catholic Churches. As such, we stand as witnesses to God's infinite love. Maguire asserts that the desire to bond lovingly and sexually with persons of the same sex or of the opposite sex, is a fact of life, a fact of God's creation. Referring to the Acts of the Apostles 10: 15, he emphasizes that we have no right to declare unclean anything that God has made; to do so, in fact, is a sin.

Maguire defines marriage in no heterosexist terms as the unique and special form of committed friendship between sexually attracted persons. He states that "marriage is a supreme human good involving exclusive, committed, enduring, generous, and faithful love, and that kind of love is not something that only heterosexuals can achieve." He forcefully declares: "We have no moral right to declare marriage off limits to persons whom God has made gay. We have no right to say that marriage, with all of its advantages and beauty, is a reward for being heterosexual."

Professor Maguire then proceeds to discuss the objections presented against marriage equality, taking as his guide St. Thomas Aquinas. The main objection is the one arising from Biblical texts. Maguire follows a Catholic interpretation in pointing out that Biblical texts need to be interpreted in the context of the times when they were written. Therefore, in understanding how the Bible can treat slavery as a fact of life and condone capital punishment in certain cases, we have come to the position that Biblical texts often "*described* the way life was lived at that time but did not *prescribe* that we should live that way." This is the case with the Biblical texts used as grounds for condemning homosexuality.

Maguire then asks the question whether the Pope is wrong on this issue. Consonant with our position he answers: "I would join many other Catholic theologians in saying that he is definitely wrong and he will be corrected some day by one of his successors and by the rest of the church as previous popes who permitted slavery etc. were corrected."

In conclusion, Maguire rightly states that "homosexuality is not a sin. Heterosexism (prejudice against people who are homosexual) is a sin. It is a serious sin because it violates justice, truth, and love. It also distorts the true meaning of sex and thus also harms everyone, including heterosexuals."

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