

MAKE CIVIL UNIONS INCLUSIVE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on civil unions for homosexuals:

When it comes to marriage and the family, heterosexuals are entitled to a privileged position in law. Only a man and a woman can reproduce, without which the population ends, making it nonsensical not to codify their special gift in law. But our legal and cultural elites have decided otherwise, pretending human nature does not exist. Hence, the reality of gay marriage.

Pope Francis opposes gay marriage. In fact, he calls it the work of the Devil. But he is open to civil unions for homosexuals. This is, of course, a moot issue in the Western world where two men can legally marry. But in other parts of the world, civil unions for homosexuals seem like an attractive alternative. However, those inclined to accept this proposal should not do so unless civil unions are open to everyone, not simply homosexuals.

San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone has released a statement, "[The Role of Civil Unions](#)," that makes a great deal of sense. Why should access to benefits that civil unions entail, e.g., healthcare and tax breaks, be limited to homosexual couples? Cordileone, who discussed this matter with Pope Francis earlier this year, argues that this initiative is too narrowly drawn. Why, for example, cannot an unmarried brother and sister who live together not be eligible?

This inclusive approach was broached by San Francisco Archbishop William Levada back in the 1990s. The issue at that time, when gay marriage was still illegal, was whether straight or gay couples could qualify for the benefits afforded by domestic partnerships; gays were pushing this issue. In 1990, the proposal won in a referendum.

Then city authorities tried to force any institution that did business with the city to recognize domestic partnerships in their benefit plans. Levada met with Mayor Willie Brown and a compromise was reached: each employee was allowed to name a legally domiciled member of his household to be eligible for spousal equivalent benefits.

Civil unions have taken the place of domestic partnerships, but the concept is similar. What Cordileone is now proposing is similar to what Levada offered.

There are millions of Americans who live with their father or mother, or their sibling, or other relatives, providing much needed care. Why should they be shut out from a program designed to make spousal benefits more extensive? Why should we be speaking only about homosexuals?

Archbishop Cordileone knows the difference between civil unions and marriage, and will never support any measure that would dilute the latter. "Marriage is unique because it is the only institution that connects children to their mothers and fathers, and therefore *is* presumed to be a sexual relationship. Indeed, the sexual relationship that marriage is presumed to involve is the only kind by which children are naturally made" (his *italic*).

Legal fictions are nothing new. Every honest person knows that a certificate of marriage granted by the state to persons of the same sex cannot change what nature and nature's God have ordained. The biological and social purpose of marriage is the family, something which two men and two women can never naturally create. Providing for inclusive civil unions do nothing to vitiate this verity.

Kudos to Archbishop Cordileone for mapping out a realistic proposal.