

Amendment 2 – Marriage Protection Questions & Answers

Ballot Language

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF FLORIDA THAT:
A new section for Article 1 is hereby created to add the following:

Inasmuch as marriage is the legal union of only one man and one woman as husband and wife, no other legal union that is treated as marriage or the substantial equivalent thereof shall be valid or recognized.

Q1: What is the purpose of this amendment?

A1: This amendment to the Florida constitution reaffirms Florida's existing marriage law (Section 741.212 FS), and protects marriage as currently defined in law as the union of one man and one woman from being negated or overturned by legislative process or judicial ruling.

Q2: Why are the bishops of Florida supporting this amendment?

A2: The Church's mission is to faithfully make the Gospel known to all people of every age. Fidelity to her mission demands that the Church speak with clarity and charity about the matrimonial covenant which has been established by God and endowed with its own laws. Our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI reminds us that it is important to share with others what we as Catholics understand to be true and what we who strive, with God's grace, to live. As such we're grateful for the gift of marriage which in God's plan must be ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of children.

Q3: How does the Catholic Church define or describe marriage?

A3: It is the understanding and belief of the Catholic Church that marriage is not now nor has it ever been a purely human institution, but is rather a gift of God who is the creator of this reality. (GS 48:1) This intimate union of life and love is established by a man and woman between themselves as a partnership for their whole life, while by its very nature is ordered toward their mutual good and for the procreation and education of children. (GS 48:1; CGG 1601; CIC 105551) In our Catholic tradition, marriage is a sacrament, a sacred bond of husband and wife publicly witnessed in a church in the presence of the Lord. It is within this nuptial covenant that the gift of children is received and nurtured.

Q4: What does the bible say about marriage?

A4: Throughout scripture we read of marriage and its mystery and affirm that man and woman were created for each other. Found in scripture, God shows us his plan for marriage as the joining of a man and a woman, and it is, therefore, not ours to change. *"For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh."* (Genesis 2:24) Additional references include: Gen 1: 26-27, Gen 1:28, Gen 2:18-25, MT 19:6, 1 Cor 7:39

Q5: Why is the Catholic Church opposed to same sex marriage or partnerships?

A5: Marriage stipulates of its very nature indissolubility, faithfulness and an openness of fertility. The Church reserves the expression of sexuality to the conjugal union of a man and a woman joined in marriage. The complementarity of the sexes enables the procreation of children as a couple joins with God as co-creators to perpetuate humanity.

Q6: If the Catholic faith teaches us to love and accept everyone despite their sexual orientation, then is the Church being discriminatory towards homosexuals for taking a stand on this issue?

A6: Our support for this proposed constitutional amendment is not motivated by discrimination or animosity toward any group. The Church's teaching about the dignity of homosexual persons is clear. "They must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided." (Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 2358) To uphold God's intent for marriage in which sexual relations have their proper and exclusive place is not to offend the dignity of persons with same sex attraction. Christians must give witness to the whole moral truth and proclaim as immoral all sexual activity outside of marriage, as well as any unjust actions and hateful attitudes toward homosexual persons. While the Church teaches we are to love our brothers and sisters in Christ, we also affirm and defend its teaching on marriage.

Q7: If the Catholic Church is against same sex marriage or partnerships then does it also oppose same sex couples from beginning a family either through adoption or a surrogate?

A7: Marriage and family life are essential to the health and well being of our nation. The common good and the future of our society are served best through the natural order of a union of a man and a woman. Research and history support the traditional family as the best environment to nurture and raise healthy children who thrive both physically and emotionally. The best interest of a child is the primary consideration in his or her placement for adoption. When children are not possible through a conjugal union, reproductive techniques such as surrogate motherhood or artificial fertilization are considered unacceptable as the result of technology rather than the fruit of the human act.

Q8: Will this amendment impose restrictions on the receipt of certain benefits by individuals?

A8: This amendment does not affect benefits offered or contracted in the private sector. Health care and government benefits currently being received by individuals, including seniors, will not be impacted. Through proper legal consultation for estate planning, health and end-of-life care, family members or loved ones may be granted many of the same rights and privileges available to a spouse.

Q9: Will priests talk about this amendment from the pulpit?

A9: Among the duties of a parish priest is to teach the faith. The Homily, given on a Sunday Mass, is to help the faithful better understand the Scripture proclaimed at the Mass. Scripture readings will provide an occasion to speak on marriage and God's plan. The Florida bishops are designating October 19 as Marriage Sunday, and a bishops' statement on marriage will be available in parish bulletins.

Q10: If the amendment fails to pass and subsequently the State legislature issues a bill giving same sex couples similar rights as married couples; would the Catholic Church acknowledge these couples as married?

A10: Marriage as understood and used by the Catholic Church refers to and only to that reality which has been established by God and endowed by Him with its own laws, a "matrimonial covenant" by which a man and woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring. This was, is and will remain the meaning of the word marriage when used by the Church.