

September 22, 2006

### The Nature of Marriage

Observation and common sense tell us that marriage is the life long commitment of a woman and a man to each other and to the children with which they are blessed. This remains the relationship to which young people aspire. It is the healthiest form of relationship for the spouses and the best setting in which to bring up children. This is an institution which serves both individuals and society. It is well worth preserving, supporting, celebrating and enhancing. You are requested to point out these simple facts to your MP and to request that he or she vote to re-open the issue of marriage.

### Why we need to talk about marriage again

In the year 2005 the Parliament of Canada changed the legal definition of marriage. Numerous polls at the time and since indicated that this was a decision taken against the will of the majority of Canadian people. The polls indicated that the people, by majorities ranging from 51% to 60%, were in favour of the preservation of the standard definition of marriage as an exclusive relationship between one man and one woman. This is the definition that agrees with common experience. A significant number of MP's (almost one third) were not given a free vote. Their consciences, in some cases at least, were overruled. The issue needs to be opened again so that a truly free vote can be held. Please urge your MP to vote for the issue to be discussed again.

### How Important is Marriage?

For Catholics marriage is a sacrament. It is a sacred covenant and a vocation for the wife and husband. It creates and unites families, providing an extended group within which young people can lay the foundations of spiritual formation and social interaction. The learning and development that takes place within the extended family is the gift that one generation has given to the next from the beginning of time. The change in definition made by the courts and the government has not destroyed this opportunity for our children and grandchildren overnight but there are already signs that it is undermining it. Civil marriage has become nothing more than a "living arrangement" for any two adults. We owe it to future generations to demand that our politicians discuss the issue again and that our representatives be allowed a free vote uninfluenced by party considerations.

