

## DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO

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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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### Pastoral Message from Bishop William K. Weigand and Bishop Jaime Soto to the Faithful of the Diocese of Sacramento

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

The decision of the California Supreme Court in mid-May legalizing so-called same-sex “marriage” is a profoundly disturbing matter. As your bishops, we want to offer you our pastoral support and guidance on this matter.

For Catholics, marriage is a reality authored by God in his very act of creating the human race, and the marriage relationship is only possible between one man and one woman. In Catholic teaching, the purposes of this relationship are (1) the mutual, loving support of husband and wife and (2) their loving service of life by bringing children into the world and raising them to be virtuous and productive. No government can change the irrevocable order which God has inscribed in our nature.

That a same-sex union is not a marriage is a conviction which all Catholics implicitly affirm when, in our baptismal promises, we profess that we share the Church’s faith that the “Father Almighty [is] the Creator of heaven and earth.” The recent court action removed the language to speak of that which is an essential building block of society, the sacred union of a man and woman for the sake of creating a family. Our own values and vision about the family are, in effect, now deemed private. Yet, the Gospel we preach and the Gospel we are called to live is a Gospel of life. It is a Gospel that says “yes” to life. Our “no” to same sex unions is defined by our “yes” to human life as God created it. We cannot be indifferent about something that ultimately will be detrimental to human life and society. As Pope Benedict recently reminded us, ours is a message of hope because it is ultimately rooted in the love of God made manifest, made public, through the person of Jesus.

Our understanding of marriage, while confirmed by faith, can be known also from reason. Therefore, efforts to enshrine this truth about marriage in the laws of our society are not an imposition of an ideology but a service of the truth which we make for the common good. This effort is not a form of discrimination. As Catholic disciples, we treat all people with respect, but we must live out and promote God’s plan for the human person.

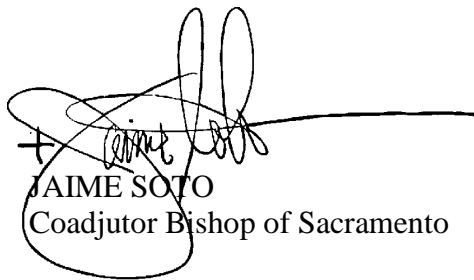
We pledge to support you as you exercise your baptismal vocation to work to bring the civil order into harmony with God’s design for marriage. An important way of doing this is to join

the state-wide effort to promote and pass the initiative that has qualified for the November ballot which would amend the California constitution so as to restrict the institution of marriage to a man and a woman. As bishops of the Diocese of Sacramento, we will do our best to lead you in your response. Your parish clergy will do the same.

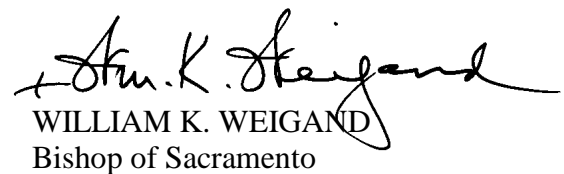
Let us keep in mind the encouraging words of the Holy Father during his recent visit to the United States: "Any tendency to treat religion as a private matter must be resisted. Only when their faith permeates every aspect of our lives do Christians become truly open to the transforming power of the Gospel."

Please join us in praying fervently and frequently, "Father...Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Sincerely in Christ,



JAIME SOTO  
Coadjutor Bishop of Sacramento



WILLIAM K. WEIGAND  
Bishop of Sacramento