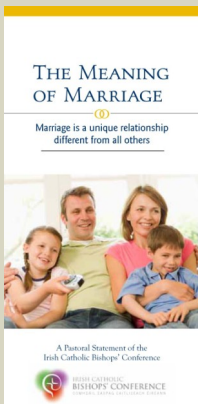




The Meaning of Marriage Newsletter



Prayer for Married Couples

We thank you, O God, for the love you have implanted in our hearts.

May it inspire us to be kind in our words, considerate of feelings and concerned with each other's feelings and wishes.

Help us to be understanding and forgiving of human weakness and failings.

Bless our marriage, O God, with peace and happiness, and make our love fruitful for your glory and our joy both here and in eternity.

Amen

Prayer by Stephen Cummins from *The Family Prayer Book*



Produced by the Catholic Communications Office of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference. See www.catholicbishops.ie.

Bishops' Pastoral Statement *The Meaning of Marriage*

"As Catholics, it is not sufficient for us to talk about the importance of family. We also have a responsibility to do all that we can do to offer practical support for marriage and family in our parish communities, in our liturgies and our pastoral action and as individual members of society, through our social and political actions. In seeking to reaffirm the unique value to children and society of the mutual and complementary roles of a mother and father, we ask that the principle of equality not be undermined by applying it inappropriately to two fundamentally different types of relationship. Marriage is a unique relationship different from all others for a reason."

Please read the full text of *The Meaning of Marriage* which is available in English, Irish and Polish on www.catholicbishops.ie

Marriage is important - Reflect before you change it

Marriage is of fundamental importance for children, mothers and fathers, and society – all of us need to reflect deeply before changing it. Ahead of the referendum in May, bishops ask the faithful to carefully consider:

- that the union of a man and a woman in marriage, open to the procreation of children, is a gift from God who created us male and female.
- that reason points to the truth about human sexuality that makes the relationship between a man and a woman unique.
- that mothers and fathers bring different, yet complementary gifts and strengths into a child's life.
- the profound implications which this constitutional amendment would have on the family environment and on our understanding of parenthood.

Protecting marriage is a matter of justice

"Religious and non-religious people alike have long acknowledged and know from their experience that the family, based on the marriage of a woman and a man, is the best and ideal place for children. It is a fundamental building block of society which makes a unique and irreplaceable contribution to the common good. It is therefore deserving of special recognition and promotion by the State.

Proposals to change the meaning of marriage effectively say to parents, children and society that the State should not, and will not, promote any normative or ideal family environment for raising children. It therefore implies that the biological bond and natural ties between a child and its mother and father have no intrinsic value for the child or for society."



(Excerpt from *The Meaning of Marriage* pastoral statement)



"We must reaffirm the right of children to grow up in a family with a father and a mother capable of creating a suitable environment for the child's development and emotional maturity." - Pope Francis.