



Archdiocese of Newark

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

September 29, 2012

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This week, I published a pastoral reflection on the definition, purpose and sanctity of marriage. The reflection, *When Two Become One*, reaffirms the two millennia-old teaching of the Church on marriage as the union of one man and one woman. It also addresses how civilizations throughout and even before the days of recorded history have viewed marriage, and why this definition must remain so today and into the future.

Marriage – the union of man and woman -- is as old as mankind. Sexual difference and complementarity have been present from the beginning as part of God's creative plan. Marriage --the union of man and woman -- reflects a communion of life, permanence, fidelity and an ordering of fruitfulness. There are, indeed, other forms of relationship, but they are not and never can be considered marriage.

We, the Church, view marriage as a Sacrament, but it is also a natural human good established before any form of government and well before the Abrahamic covenant that Christians, Jews and Muslims alike recognize as foundational to salvific faith.

Marriage – the union of man and woman -- is based on natural law. Secular and religious philosophers have through the ages recognized natural law and the unique relationship that only man and woman united as one flesh create.

Today there are some who seek to change what we have always known about marriage. They want us to believe and accept that the definition of marriage is malleable to personal preference, merely a matter of choice. They want us to believe that any form of personal relationship can be considered marriage. That simply is not the case.

Today, I urge each of you to read *When Two Become One*, which is available as part of this week's edition of *The Catholic Advocate* and on the Archdiocesan website – www.rcan.org. I also call on all of the clergy of this Archdiocese to continue to preach and teach on this great moral issue, fundamental not only to the Church but to society. I have also prepared a shorter *Summary* of the reflection, copies of which are available in the back of the church or on the Archdiocesan website as well.

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As I begin my 26th year in the Episcopacy and continue to work toward the 50th anniversary of my priesthood, I am reminded of the words of St. Paul in his second letter to Timothy: "Proclaim the Word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching." (2 Tim. 4:1-2)

Today, each of us faces continual challenges and pressures from a society that grows more secular, more materialistic, more willing to erode what is right and truthful in favor of the merely convenient and transitory. Let us instead heed Paul's reassuring words to Timothy in the same letter: "But you, remain faithful to what you have learned and believed, because you know from whom you learned it." (2 Tim. 4:14)

With kindest personal regards, I am

Sincerely in the Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John J. Myers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

✠Most Reverend John J. Myers
Archbishop of Newark

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