



Stand Up for Marriage

February 20, 2004

The Most Reverend Charles J. Chaput, Archbishop of Denver, spoke at the "Stand Up for Marriage" rally on the west steps of the state capitol in Denver on Friday, February 20.

Here are his remarks.

Recent events around our country have directly challenged marriage as we've understood it and lived it for many centuries -- the union of one man and one woman. These challenges to the natural meaning of marriage are very real, very damaging, and our children and families will pay a very costly price as a result.

We need to wake people up, now. We need to organize and act, now. Too much is at stake to sit on the sidelines. Social science, the wisdom of our religious traditions, and the simple common sense of our lived experience, all point in one direction - that marriage is the union of one man and one woman for the sake of raising children in a stable family, and it's vital for the well being of society. Our goal in defending marriage is to defend children and families. Our goal in defending marriage is to ensure that we have a healthy future as a people.

Catholics also stand together with millions of other men and women of good will in believing that marriage is a divine gift. Marriage nurtures life and advances the dignity of the human person. And neither the Church; nor any individual or couple; nor any court or civil authority, has the right or the power to change its definition.

Stable family life flows from the love of one man and one woman in marriage. If we undermine this understanding of marriage, we undermine the family. And in doing that, we harm ourselves and our children in ways we can't fully imagine.

The Christian Scriptures tell us to "speak the truth in love." That verse needs to be our inspiration every day as we move forward on this issue. We have the duty to love those people with whom we disagree - and maybe especially those people. But real love is always rooted in truth. Real love can never be separated from telling the truth about the human person, the meaning of human sexuality and the nature of human relationships.

Beginning right here and right now, may God grant us the courage to "speak the truth in love," and in speaking the truth about marriage and the family, we will also support the best ideals of our nation.