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17/971

Circular – Plebiscite on Marriage

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

We are about to enter into a dialogue as a nation on legislation for marriage. It is imperative, and an obligation upon us from our faith and the Gospel, that we conduct this dialogue with a deep sense of reverence and respect for every person in the nation, and for the choices that they are free to make.

The Catholic tradition on marriage is based on the long experience of humanity from the beginning. We believe that God blesses as a sacrament the love between a man and a woman which gives witness to God's faithful and enduring love for all humanity. This relationship between a man and woman brings life and grace to them as a couple, and brings life and hope to the world through the birth of children. We believe deeply in the holiness of marriage as part of God's divine plan for the human family.

As we enter into this national dialogue I invite all Catholics to exercise their right and duty as citizens to engage in this community discernment. I ask Catholics to do so in the spirit of grace, calm reverence and respect. There will be no place in this dialogue for criticism, abuse or denigration of other people or their individual choices. This is an opportunity for us to witness to our deep commitment to marriage in a way that might convince others by the depth of our faith and our respect for all.

It is imperative that everyone ensures that they are enrolled and registered to participate in this plebiscite. The details for enrolling with the Australian Electoral Commission can be found at http://www.aec.gov.au/FAQs/amlps.htm.

You can access the Adelaide Archdiocesan website at www.adelaide.catholic.org.au to find further information on the plebiscite from other sources such as the ACBC and the Australian Christian Lobby. The website will be updated with relevant information as it comes through.

Yours sincerely,

+ Philip Wilson.

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Archbishop of Adelaide

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