

ONTARIO CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

To: Diocesan Marriage Contacts

Re: Update #16, May 2, 2005

The Vote on Second Reading

The indications are that this vote will be taken in the week of May 2, 2005. Whichever way the vote goes, it is not the end the end of the matter. To paraphrase Winston Churchill on the victory at El Alamein over Rommel in North Africa, "This is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is the end of the beginning." This vote will be an indicator of where MP's stand on the issue.

For our part we need to continue to speak for marriage in two ways.

The first is to continue to put our case for the heterosexual definition of marriage; its key role in society; and its central function of providing a special place in which children can be nourished.

The second is to continue our efforts within the Church to teach about marriage, to celebrate marriage and to stand up for families. In the company of a few other religious groups, we may be the only community in which marriage retains its sacred and privileged status as a vocation and a road to sanctity. In the month of June we can take up again this task of highlighting marriage.

Celebration

In the month of June, it would be very fitting is every parish had some kind of celebration of marriage. This proposal was discussed by the Diocesan Representatives. They are of the opinion that it is worth promoting. Material will be forwarded to dioceses asking for cooperation in reaching parishes.

Catechesis

More than ever, we need to remind ourselves constantly about the meaning of the sacrament of marriage. The group of diocesan representatives has produced a one-page summary of some essential Church teachings and common sense observations about marriage. This will be suitable for attachment to a bulletin or other means of distribution. This will also be made available to dioceses for distribution to parishes.

At this moment, there is available use by parishes a letter from the Episcopal Task Force on marriage. This letter urges parishioners to continue to support traditional marriage and directs their attention to material from the Catholic Office for Life and the Family.

Court Cases

Court cases are being pursued by same-sex partnerships in New Brunswick and Newfoundland to have same-sex marriage introduced through the courts as has happened in Ontario and six other provinces and territories.

This is clearly a back-up to the C-38 legislative route. If it does not happen one way, other ways will be tried.

Additions to the OCCB Web Site

English

- “Liaison” – a short report on the April Plenary of the Ontario bishops
- A new Pastoral Letter by Bishop Henry on “equal marriage”.

French

- “Liaison”

Tom Reilly