

Brief summary of some of the arguments against and for

Against extending the sacrament

For extending the sacrament

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| Genesis 1 and 2 evidence God's plan for the union of men and women, male and female, not of same-gender unions. Genesis also emphasizes one of the purposes of marriage as procreation. | Genesis 1 says to be fruitful and multiply; its emphasis is on God as Creator, women and men made in his image, and stewardship of creation. Genesis 2 is about companionship. Neither chapter mentions marriage. |
| Texts in both the Old and New Testaments condemn homosexuality. In trying to read and understand those scriptures, it is not accurate to say that they condemn only cultic homosexual acts or are a form of the purity laws. These verses read in context of the Bible as a whole support the traditional interpretation. | The verses in the Old and New Testaments condemning homosexuality, and there are few, are prohibiting non-Israelite cultic practices, a form of idolatry. Further, the Bible condemns murderers, liars, adulterers, etc, yet the church does not withhold the sacraments from them. |
| In Mark 10, Jesus says that the laws on divorce were created due to fallen man's hardness of heart; he then quotes from Genesis 1 and 2, thus indicating that marriage is appropriate only between a man and woman. | Jesus does not mention or condemn homosexuality, and his vision of family goes beyond our notions of biological family to embrace all those who aspire to love and follow God. |
| The scientific evidence about same-gender attraction is not conclusive and, from current scientific knowledge, appears to be a varying combination of genetic and environmental factors. | Whatever the mix of genetic and environmental factors is, just as with many character traits, orientation to same-gender sexual relationships is not a 'choice' easily unmade, but a basic reality. |
| As a matter of natural law and Christian tradition, human sexual relationships have two fundamental purposes: to produce children and to create a special bond of mutual affection and support. Same-gender marriages cannot fulfill one of those two fundamentals. | Our understanding of marriage has evolved over time. In the Old Testament, men practiced polygamy. We now allow divorce. We also support the marriage of couples who could not have children. |
| The sacrament of marriage should be restricted to couples who can fulfill its fundamental purposes. Extension of the sacrament of marriage to same-gender couples undermines marriage and its Christian purposes. It also undermines the promise to children that they will be raised by biological parents who will love and raise them. | The two great sacraments given by Christ to his Church are Holy Baptism and the Holy Eucharist. Marriage is one of five other sacramental rites which evolved later in the Church. Marriage is a sign of God's fidelity towards us; it is also a sign of our own fidelity to another that draws us closer to God. There is no reason to withhold the sacrament from same-gender couples; it strengthens all marriages. It also strengthens the cause of love. |
| Although the Bible has been used in the past in ways we now deem inappropriate, this issue is not the same as the issues of condoning slavery and subordination of women. There is no hint of servitude in human relationships in Genesis 1, the creation ideal, and Genesis 3 makes it clear that the suggestion men should rule over women occurred because of human disobedience. No parallel biblical principles show that the creation ideal embraces same-gender relationships. | The Bible has been used in the past to condone slavery and apartheid, the subordination of women, and other matters. In light of the lived Gospel and human experience, the church's understanding changed, as it should on this issue. |