



I Never Would Have Imagined

Archbishop Michael J. Sheehan, *People of God*, October 2012

It is certainly true that moral values in our country have dropped terribly in recent years. When I was ordained a priest in 1964, I would never have thought abortion, the killing of an unborn child in the womb, would become legal. I would never have imagined the definition of marriage would become a topic of great disagreement and that so many states would approve of same-sex marriage. Cohabitation was rare and there were few births out of wedlock. Christian families were strong and secure. Marriage and family life were the backbone of our church and of our society. But look at what has happened now. Millions of abortions, and cohabitation is not seen as “living in sin” but rather quite acceptable. Same-sex marriage is acclaimed as being just as fair as could be. Family life is indeed in trouble. Secular and materialistic value systems are accepted, it seems, by the majority.

I believe we need to draw upon the teachings of our Catholic faith and to strongly support the dignity of human life from conception to natural death and to support the biblical definition of marriage being between one man and one woman. I believe we have seen recently attacks on our religious freedom by our government. The government, through the HHS mandate for contraception, sterilization and abortion causing drugs, is demanding that Catholic groups violate their conscience because they are forced to provide health insurance that includes contraception and abortion causing drugs. This is an unprecedented attack on religious freedom and is of great concern to the Catholic Bishops of the United States and many others.

If the biblical definition of marriage is changed to include same-sex couples, the effect on our society will be terrible. The oldest institution of humanity is the marriage of a man and a woman. When we tamper with this definition, we are in for big trouble. I love my gay and lesbian Catholics but I won't witness their marriage!

In a short time we will be having important elections. I hope that every one of you reading this column will exercise your right to vote. It is not only a right but a duty for us to take part in the democratic process. The church can't say to vote for this politician or for that political party, but we certainly do strongly encourage you to vote. Please inform yourselves on the issues like the ones I have mentioned and many other issues such as immigration and care for the poor. Keep your Catholic principles in mind as you cast your vote! Vote pro-life and pro-traditional marriage.