



Will Supreme Court's marriage ruling threaten religious freedom?

Ruling will challenge Catholics and people of faith and traditional values

Many expect the Supreme Court's looming decision on "same sex marriage" will be a troubling milestone in a larger cultural war. Catholics and people of faith and traditional values could find the freedom to practice their faith and maintain a religious identity at risk.

Threat to religious freedom

The Supreme Court is about to finesse a clash between civil rights and civil liberties. SSM advocates want statutory rights, created by laws against discrimination, made equal to constitutional rights by a favorable court ruling. Thus protected, advocates believe these rights would then be compelling enough to trump the First Amendment's actual constitutional rights—freedom of association and free exercise of religion.

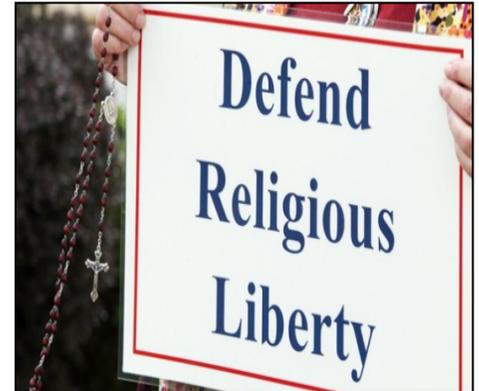
If granted, such protection could bar SSM being contested in the public square.

Even then, having the "freedom to marry" will not suffice. SSM advocates also want to get rid of any trace of moral objection traditionally attached to homosexual conduct. It would be replaced with a compulsory new morality requiring respect from everyone—especially from those who don't agree with it. Expressions to the contrary become "hate speech."

Responding

Activists for SSM will be fired up regardless of how the Court rules. How will Catholics respond?

CDL's mission to defend the Catholic Church from attacks includes response to threats to religious freedom. "Bringing the voice of Catholic laity into the public square" is a political and legal response. CDL is providing tools to help, such as talking points or legislative scorecards.



"some suggest withdrawal from the public square. They believe that in reality we must look this conflict as a spiritual war."

As losses in this conflict mount, some suggest withdrawal from the public square. They believe that in reality we must look at this conflict as a "spiritual war." Ultimately there is no better vantage point. Still, neither view need rule out the other.

On the spiritual front

It will take a vibrant faith to support the commitment to stand firm in the face of a huge cultural shift. It means preaching the gospel by example and living our faith out loud. It means praying more and giving more: in our family life, in strengthening our parishes, and in reaching out to the needy in our communities.

This can be done while remaining active in the public square whether in politics, legislation, or elections. It can be done by speaking up with friends or in public.

Prepare for the long haul by joining those engaged in the public square and culture war. Join us in the search for strategies that allow for expressing our faith in a culture that's becoming ever more anti-Christian and anti-Catholic.

Introducing two new CDL Board members



Mark Sellner is a consultant on business and tax matters. He also conducts training for leading CPA firms nationwide. Mark has Big Four and Fortune 500 experience with

Ernst & Young in Washington, DC, Ecolab in St. Paul, KPMG in New York, and Larson Allen in Minneapolis.

Mark was adjunct professor of business taxation at St. Thomas Law School. He also was Director of Graduate Studies in Taxation at the U of M Carlson School of Management in the Master of Business Taxation Program.

Mark's CPA degree, with high honors, is from the University of Illinois, his JD from the U of M, and Master of Laws in Taxation from Georgetown Law Center. He is a member of of St. Anne's in Hamel.



Jeremy Lagasse comes to Minnesota from New Hampshire.

Jeremy met his wife Jacinta while at the Thomas More College of Liberal Arts where he studied political philosophy and the humanities.

Jeremy also taught classes at a private Catholic school in the Connecticut River Valley, including classes about the Catholic faith.

Jeremy attended Hamline University School of law, graduating magna cum laude. He then interned at the Institute for Justice. Jeremy has passed bar exams for Minnesota and Wisconsin. He is now employed as an Associate Attorney with Hansen, Dordell, Bradt, Odlaug & Bradt in the Twin Cities. He is a member of St. Agnes Parish in St. Paul.

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Family is topic at Knights of Columbus Event



CDL Board member Patrick Shannon recently gave the Keynote address at the Lakeville Knights of Columbus Annual Spring Dinner. The Knights are a kindred organization in that they also are active in defending the Faith and upholding the Catholic position on public policy and social issues.

Shannon gave an overview of CDL's mission and efforts in response to attacks on the Church, our faith, and religious freedom. He then focused on the decline of the family as being of particular concern.

“Family is the DNA of our society,”

“Family is the DNA of our society,” he said, through which the Church passes on our Faith.” Therefore, overt threats to this cornerstone of society are attacks on our Faith and religious liberty.

Sadly, the family today is in great decline. Major causes include no-fault divorce, cohabitation, contraception, in vitro fertilization, and now, “same sex marriage.” The Catholic Church is resented for its objection to the first four causes. But its objection to “same sex marriage” is branded as bigotry.

This led to the question, what will the Supreme Court do in its ruling on “same sex marriage”? “The truth about marriage will never change,” Shannon said, but an adverse ruling would repeat the tragedy of a Roe v Wade decision.”

Catholics face an increasingly hostile society, which threatens the freedom to maintain our religious identity. CDL is one voice in responding. Shannon called on those present to be eyes and ears monitoring the press and media—encouraging them to respond as well.

Gifts in Memory of:

Jerry Halloran
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James Schwebach
Ann Marie Sevenich
Vivian & Andrew Steiner
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Our Catholic Faith

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Marlene Reid
Melita Rosenthal

Thank you for your generous support for the Catholic Defense League!
Please keep CDL in your prayers for our continued success.

From

— Carol Halloran
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— Renee Schwebach
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Contact **Catholic United Financial Foundation** for a no-obligation discussion about the benefits of a estate plan and planned charitable giving. Call **800-568-6670**.

Will you help?

“In reality, a ‘cultural’ effect can be accomplished through work done not so much by an individual alone but ... as a member of a group, of a community, of an association or of a movement.” St John Paul II



That means you are a vital part of our mission. Will you help? Will you use the enclosed envelope or visit cdlmmn.org and make a gift to Catholic Defense League?

And whether or not you contribute, please pray for the Catholic Defense League and for success in its mission.

Thank you for your support.

Kelly Rowe, Esq., President

Save the date! Monday, September 29 Catholic Defense League ANNUAL DINNER

St John the Baptist Church



2015 Catholic Defender of the Year Kent Wuchterl

Kent Wuchterl is Co-founder and Director of Argument of the Month Club. For almost 15 years he has fostered defenders of the faith through AOTM's debate, discussion, and fellowship of men. The AOTM experience prepares men to “wage war on all the evils of our day,” including anti-Catholic bigotry and the assault on religious freedom.



Keynote Presentation — Dale Ahlquist Glorious Side of Social Decline: Being a Light in the New Dark Ages

Dale Ahlquist is an author, speaker, Catholic convert, and apologist. He has written, edited, or contributed to more than 15 books on G.K. Chesterton. He will provide inspiration and a few “tools” from G. K. Chesterton to empower Catholics in the public square.

Legislation that Threatens or Protects Religious Freedom

THREAT — Contraception Health Equity and Employee Rights Act

This “Hobby Lobby Fix” bill largely overturns the Supreme Court’s “Hobby Lobby” ruling when applied to Minnesota citizens. The CHEER Act reinforces certain coverage including “for all Food and Drug Administration-approved contraceptive methods and sterilization procedures.” The Act applies restrictions to the ruling’s exemption of “closely-held” for-profit corporations, and “religious organizations” which undermine exemptions in the Supreme Court’s ruling. Carries over to next session.

PROTECT — Student Safety and Physical Privacy Act

These bills (SF 1543, HF 1546) overturn the State High School League’s decision to allow boys who think they are girls to play on the girls’ sports team. It would also require public schools to provide restrooms, locker rooms, changing rooms and shower rooms for the exclusive use of either males or females, and allowing for more accommodations if needed. A recent poll found 90% of voters support student physical privacy. Carries to next session.

THREAT — U.N. Convention to Eliminate Discrimination Against Women Treaty

The U.S. Senate’s decades-long refusal to ratify the CEDAW Treaty, has led to activists asking local governments to adopt the treaty as a city ordinance. CEDAW includes a thinly veiled expansion of abortion rights. The “100 Cities for CEDAW” campaign mirrors the sanctuary city tactic in which cities follow practices to protect illegal immigration. Activists hope this will create pressure on the Senate to ratify CEDAW. Minneapolis, Saint Paul, and Duluth are possible cities.

PROTECT — Health Care Conscience Rights Act

Growth of state health mandates without exemption for religious or moral reasons led to H.R. 940 and S.1204. Supported by USSCB and Susan B Anthony List, it:

- Forbids agencies receiving federal funds to discriminate against those who decline to take part in abortion or abortion coverage.
- Adds rights of conscience to the Affordable Care Act, allowing people

to opt out of abortion or other items that violate moral and religious convictions.

- Recognizes a private right of action for victims of discrimination who can go to court to defend their rights.

THREAT — Beyond Marriage Equality

Lawsuits over religious objections to providing services for same sex marriage (SSM) vary by state. Now the Human Rights Campaign, America’s largest LGBT rights group, has launched “Beyond Marriage Equality.” The project seeks a federal law that would trump any state’s defense of their citizens’ religious liberty.

Legislation would cover credit, education, employment, federal funding, housing, jury duty, and public accommodations. If passed, charges of LGBT discrimination could also trump lawful reasons for denying requests. Loan officers, employers, grant agencies, and landlords for example, could be pressured to cut corners in the face of threatened lawsuits. In education, remedies for discrimination in sexual orientation, and the increasingly amorphous “gender identity,” would also cover “harassment.”

Catholic Defenders in the Public Square

What makes a Defender?

Each year CDL recognizes someone having qualities for which they can be called “Catholic Defender of the Year. But what makes a Defender?

Everything about a Catholic Defender starts with being firmly rooted in the Catholic faith. It includes a willingness to answer the call to conversion.

Pope Francis calls us to conversion. He asks us to make a far-reaching change in our lives, one that includes the cross. He asks us to turn away from “spiritual worldliness.” This self-satisfied complacency is nurtured by secular society’s demand for “moral neutrality.” It then becomes easily governed by a militant political correctness.

Catholic Defenders are willing to answer the challenge of “faithful citizenship.” The US Council of Catholic Bishops considers it a “political responsibility” to be more involved in public life.

Catholics have much to offer. Bringing an informed moral framework to the formation of public policy advances the common good. Highlighting the Church’s teachings answers calls for renewed evangelization. Catholic Defenders also provide example and inspiration for those

who may be disposed to “rediscover Catholicism.”

Making the case

According to the Church’s Magisterium:

- “It is the laity’s “special vocation . . . to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God’s will” (Lumen Gentium)

- Similarly, “the laity must take up the renewal of the temporal order as their own special obligation . . .” Note: not by bishops or priests, but the laity. (Apostolate of the Laity, Vatican II)

- Again, “The direct duty to work for a just ordering of society is proper to the lay faithful.” And, “A just society must be the achievement of politics, not of the Church.” (Deus Caritas Est, Pope Benedict XVI)

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC):

- “It is not the role of the Pastors of the Church to intervene directly in the political structuring and organization of social life. This task is part of the vocation of the lay faithful.” (CCC 2442)

- “It is necessary that all members of society . . . help, through the means of

social communication, in the formation and diffusion of sound public opinion.” (CCC 2495)

“The direct duty to work for a just ordering of society is proper to the lay faithful.”

Catholics need to come together

“... It is our duty to engage the culture, not run from it. . . .It is also the duty of the Catholic faithful to support courageous people who do this through both our actions and prayers.” (Most Rev. Thomas J. Olmsted, *Catholics in the Public Square*)

Join us! Defend the Church. Protect religious freedom. Bring the voice of Catholic laity into the public square.

“In reality, a ‘cultural’ effect can be accomplished through work done not so much by an individual alone but . . . as a member of a group, of a community, of an association or of a movement.” (St John Paul II Apostolic Exhortation on the Role of the Laity)

Join the Catholic Defense League: with prayers, volunteering, funding, expertise, writing, social media, or Internet.

Recent religious freedom protection laws that made it

The Supreme Court may soon recognize a constitutional right to same sex marriage that applies to all states. However, only 22 states have laws against discrimination due to sexual orientation in all arenas.

Passing a religious protection law in states without laws against discrimination was much more difficult. Indiana and Arkansas, for example, are among the 28 states that do not have such laws.

Utah compromise links both sides

In Utah, advocates from both sides of the SSM issue worked together to bridge the gap between having some protection for religious freedom, without creating opportunities for more discrimination. That was a major reason for the law’s passage. Two other factors helped. One was to focus on rules over principles making them specific enough to prevent

needing courts to interpret. The law exempted, for example, religious organizations and schools and specifically the Boy Scouts of America.

North Carolina overrides veto

Strong bipartisan in both houses allowed North Carolina’s legislature to override a Governor’s veto to pass a religious freedom bill. The new law upholds the rights of public officials to opt out of marriage ceremonies due to sincerely held religious beliefs.

Although controversial, proponents pointed out that it does not hinder same sex couples wanting to get married. Those recusing themselves will have other judges stepping in to perform the weddings.

Texas gets Pastor Protection law

In Texas, the governor signed a “Pastor Protection Bill.” It protects pastors,

churches, and religious groups from being forced to perform a marriage that violates their religious beliefs. But it also adds other services related to a marriage if it violated a sincerely held religious belief.

Bipartisan support in the Texas House and Senate coordinated with pastors, churches, and advocacy groups from around the state.

Religious freedom protection laws have succeeded but for different reasons. Success may have been most likely when the laws were limited in scope, well defined with specific rules, or integrated with protection against discrimination in all or most other arenas.

The coordination of effort among groups was a major reason religious freedom protection laws could be passed in the face of the growing SSM trend.