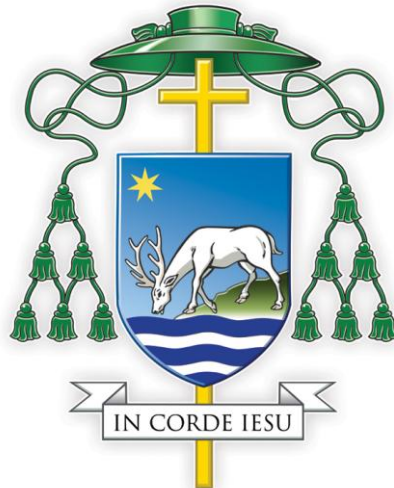


BISHOP OF PORTSMOUTH
Rt. Rev. Philip A. Egan BA, STL, PhD



STATEMENT ON "GAY MARRIAGE"

13th December 2012, Memorial of St. Lucy

In response to a recent TV interview with David Cameron in which he gave his backing to gay marriage in church (BBC News, 7th December) and the outcome of the so-called consultation process, Bishop Philip Egan has issued the following statement to the priests and people of the Diocese and to all people of good will:

David Cameron has said that he is an enthusiastic supporter of marriage and that he does not want "gay people to be excluded from a great institution." Yet however well-intentioned, and despite huge opposition from Christians, Jews and Muslims alike, by attempting to change the natural meaning of marriage, he seems utterly determined to undermine one of the key foundations of our society. Such a change is of immense significance. By this change, he is luring the people of England away from their common Christian values and Christian patrimony, and forcing upon us a brave new world, artificially engineered. To "extend marriage to gay people", he intends to impose the will of a tiny minority on the vast majority. If the Prime Minister proceeds with these intentions, he will pervert authentic family values, with catastrophic consequences for the well-being and behaviour of future generations. He will smother the traditional Christian ethos of our society and strangle the religious freedom of the Catholic Church in Britain to conduct its mission. I would like to ask Mr. Cameron: What about the rights of Christians? Will you exempt the Church, its preachers, resources and premises, from having to support your harmful ideology? Will Catholic schools, societies and institutions be free (and legally safeguarded) to teach the full truth of Christ and the real meaning of life and love? The institution of marriage has had its ups and downs, but will we ever forget that it was the leader of the Conservative Party who finally destroyed marriage as a lasting, loving and life-giving union between a man and a woman?

+Philip

Bishop of Portsmouth