

THE CHURCH AND THE INSTITUTION OF SAME-SEX MARRIAGE¹

Metropolitan of Messogaia & Nikolaos of Lavreotiki

I would like to thank You, Your Beatitude, for the honour and the trust to present before the Most Venerable Metropolitan brethren, who constitute the sacred body of the Hierarchy of the Church of Greece, in the particularly charged atmosphere of these days, some thoughts on the much-discussed issue of the announced passage of the law which for the first time establishes same-sex marriage in our country. I have your blessing.

I think there is not much room to say things that have not been heard so far. No. 6315/286/18.12.2023 Circular Note of the Holy Synod '*On the positions of the Church of Greece on marriage and adoption by same-sex couples*', the Announcement of the Holy Synod of the Church of Crete, the statements by a number of brother archpriests, either by means of circulars, publications and publications or by means of interviews, as well as interventions by approved lawyers, have, I believe, exhausted the subject. Everyone is aware of the position of the Church.

I will therefore try to summarise the above, to give an assessment of the whole situation and the relevant problems from a bioethical, scientific, socio-psychological and political point of view, without repeating the theological analyses with which we are all familiar, leaving for discussion the proposals for dealing with the whole situation from the point of view of our Church.

¹ Address to the Extraordinary Synod of the Hierarchy of the Church of Greece, 23 January 2024.

TODAY'S REALITY

Gender debates are increasingly becoming part of everyday life, in a way unprecedented in human history. Novel terms such as gender choice, gender redefinition, orientation, fluidity and gender identity, as well as related terms such as gender identities, transgenderism, intersexism, homophobia, with their corresponding ^{derivatives2}, appear in publications, debates and political debates, not only at a theoretical level but also in practice. All these issues do not concern a few individuals or a few families, nor are they marginalised in social life, but they raise rights, social demands and political controversies, it has given rise to movements with followers and opponents, it has a profound influence on human relations and legal thought, it shapes new moral concepts on a global scale, it changes society and has a profound effect on the relationship between the world and the Church.

Thus, in the last few years, in the great cities of the world, there have been organized events and celebrations, called 'pride parades', which, under the pretext of claiming recognition and rights, which have already been largely successful, in fact promote defiant views, with the support of prominent representatives of the political world, prime ministers, presidents of states, academic personalities, funded by major organisations of all kinds. The issue has moved beyond the level of dialogue and has now taken the form of a persistent and aggressive proselytising ideology, often with a clear anti-religious and atheist slant, which has also led leaders of the Christian world³ to adopt tolerant or supportive views of these movements, and recently has also caused serious concern among the Orthodox.

² Also: social gender, binary, genderqueer, genderqueer, androgynous, gender nonconforming, transgender

"transition", pansexual, polysexual, coming out, "heteronormativity", transphobia, etc.

³ Only recently, on 18.12.2023, Pope Francis gave his consent to allow Catholic priests to bless same-sex couples, giving a blessing "beyond the boundaries of the Church".

It is worth noting that more and more often persons who identify themselves as members of the LGBT community are occupying positions of high responsibility in public life, such as members of parliament, senators, ministers, prime ministers, presidents of states, etc., many of them with a particularly activist attitude ⁴. According to information, the LGBT Secretariat in the European Parliament reportedly has 157 MEPs from the 27 EU Member States and almost all political groups⁵.

Children, from pre-school age, through films, cartoons, school textbooks, are exposed to impressions that justify the phenomenon, presenting it either as something natural or as a 'respect and tolerance of diversity' or 'entitlement', in effect causing confusion and addiction, with potentially disastrous consequences.

In addition, same-sex marriage and childbearing, as well as so-called 'gender reassignment' and free choice of sexual orientation, even from the age of 15 and above, have been legislated in

health, mutual aid, companionship and peace of mind", but without allowing religious ceremonies that could be confused with the marriage ceremony, <https://www.cnn.gr/kosmos/>.

Pope says Roman Catholic priests can bless same-sex couples, <https://www.bbc.com/news> ⁴ There is not one of the 50 US states in which openly gay people have not been elected to a political office in recent years, and in 48 of the 50 states, the LGBT community has elected either senators or members of parliament or both, while in three of the ten most populous US cities (Chicago, San Diego, Houston), openly gay people have been elected mayors (see also the "LGBT community"). List of first cities in the United States

Openly LGBT politicians in the United States (en.m.wikipedia.org).

In Europe there are also presidents, prime ministers, etc. at the highest level, such as the prime minister of Luxembourg and only recently (31.5.2023) the president of Latvia and the prime minister of France (9.1.2024). In Serbia the accession negotiations were delayed because the government banned the "pride parade" in Belgrade (cf. Statement by the former head of the EU delegation in Serbia Vensan Dežer, Antivirus, <https://avmag.gr/> 8.9.2013). Once allowed in September 2014, they started, and what is striking is that in 2017 a well-known lesbian activist (Ana Brnabic) was appointed prime minister, who even had a child in February 2019!

No comment is needed on the events in Greece.

⁵ Out of 705 Members of the European Parliament, 17.1.2024, <https://www.bvoltaire.fr>

most countries, while 'conversion therapies' are severely criminalised.

The whole issue has become highly politicised, as the so-called "Christian" countries of Europe, Australia and Canada, rejecting their cultural tradition, are gradually promoting laws, policies and concepts based on human rights, and even with a moral overlay of sympathy and understanding for the supposedly weak, and in the United States of America the two major parties are in constant conflict over this.

On the contrary, countries such as Russia, Hungary, the Muslim countries of Africa and the Middle East are resisting with clear and harsh bans on the new practices, considered by their opponents as obscurantist and promoting racism and hatred.

The LGBTI movement has developed into an ideology with fanatic supporters, has become a fashionable phenomenon and is now a rushing torrent in the sea of social life, defending everything.

Contemporary gender issues are combined with a powerful lobbying, a propaganda machine of one-sided promotion of views, which seeks to shake the clear distinction and sexual identity of gender and impose an ideology of arbitrary change, selection or redefinition of gender, which exploits the indifference of society, as described by Olivier Clerk in his article "An endless frenzy"⁶ by His Eminence, Metropolitan of Argolida, Mr. K.G. G. G. G. G., in his article "A vast frenzy". Nektarios, and of course the exploitation of political and economic interests. The LGBT movement is probably the most powerful lobby in the world.

⁶ Metropolitan Argolida Nektarios, A infinite lunatic asylum, 18.1.2024, <https://www.argolidaportal.gr>

All of this is expressed in the form of globally disseminated fashion and the momentum of political propaganda, emanating from unauthorised centres with unknown aims, accompanied on the one hand by directed misinformation (falsified statistics, distorted data, scientific evaluations, over-emphasis on exceptionally extreme and rare cases which expose the family and the magnification of supposedly positive examples of homosexual partnerships, etc. and so on), and on the other hand, the opposite: bullying with irony, threats, intimidation and ruthless exclusion.

Any counter-argument is described as ^{homophobic}⁷, any counter-argument as conspiracy theories. Thus, while it appears to be based on social sensitivity towards some people who are actually in trouble and need support or on the protection of the rights of a similar minority, it is in fact a restriction of human freedom and an attack on human nature with **worse consequences than climate change**, since it does not alter man's environment but attacks his very ontology.

Finally, in 1973, the American Psychiatric Association made the decision to remove homosexuality as a mental disorder. Later, in 1992, it published the following statement: "*Homosexuality does not in itself undermine judgment, stability, stability, worthiness, or general social or occupational competence*"⁸.

GREEK NEWS

What seems to be of particular concern to the public in our country and has recently emerged is the issue of the legalisation of same-sex marriage.

⁷ The term is a Greek word (*homo-* (idio) and *phobia*), first introduced from the English language (*homophobia*) in 1969 by George Weinberg and made famous by his book *Society and the Healthy Homosexual* (1971).

⁸ <https://el.wikipedia.org>, <https://www.psychology.gr/sexualikotita>

The last parliamentary elections were held on 25 June 2023. On 4 July, just a few days later, the Prime Minister-elect in an interview with Bloomberg said: *"same-sex marriage will happen at some point and it is part of our strategy... Greek society is much more ready and mature."* So it seemed to be a disguised priority of the government, which is now preparing to proceed.

Of the 27 countries of the European Union, 18 have legalised same-sex marriage. This alone justifies the pressure on governments and people from the surrounding perceptions. There is no need for directives and other pressures.

However, the fact that our neighbouring countries belonging to the European Union, such as Italy, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Cyprus, etc., have either not yet adopted any legislation or are reacting, as the Italian and ^{Hungarian} governments have done⁹, means that there is no reason for study, while there is even room for refusal and objections.

The question that hangs over us is why the Government, or rather the Prime Minister and his entourage, insist so much on ignoring opposing voices even within the Government and their party, moreover, have they become ideological preachers of such legislative compliance, at a time when the cultural, social and religious tradition of our country is completely alien and opposed to such practices and beliefs?

⁹ The **European countries** allowed are: the Netherlands (2001), Belgium (2003), Spain (2005), Sweden (2009), Norway (2009), Finland (2010), Portugal (2010), Denmark (2012), France (2013), Ireland (2015), Luxembourg (2015), Germany (2017), Malta (2017), Austria (2019), United Kingdom (2014/2020), Slovenia (2022), Switzerland (2022), Estonia (2023)

Countries in the world that allow same-sex marriage:

Canada (2005), South Africa (2006), Argentina (2010), Iceland (2010), Brazil (2013), Uruguay (2013), New Zealand (2013), United States (2015), Colombia (2016), Australia (2017), Taiwan (2019), Ecuador (2019), Costa Rica (2020), Chile (2022), Mexico (2022), Cuba (2022), Andorra (2023)

RIGHT AND DUTY OF THE HOLY CONVENTION

In the intense atmosphere of the last few weeks it seemed that the right and obligation of the Church to express its reservations and of course to react was questioned.

We believe that the State, whose purpose is to protect the dignity of the citizens, **should seek the help of the Church**, and its advice and contribution, especially when the Prime Minister invokes freedom of conscience for the members of his party, i.e. their inner sense of human worth and dignity. That is a conscience.

Therefore, when the Church argues that the legislation and the attempted intervention in the principles of family law, as it is presented, severely affects human dignity and the family, it must naturally raise its voice and even forcefully exert its influence. **If it remains silent or inactive, it will destroy itself.**

The family is a culture cell for its members, spouses and children. It is essential for the family to maintain the moral principles that are in harmony with natural conditions. Any violation and alteration of physiology is contrary to ethics. **Any subversion of morality degrades the value of man.** When the human value for which the Church strives is destroyed, then the dignity of which the State is the guardian is also destroyed.

In addition, the State asks the Church, among others, **to support the family.** And the Church has been doing this for centuries, even with great joy and care, so much so that everyone recognises it, **long before the Government thought of setting up a Ministry of the Family**, and has reduced marriage, its foundation, to a mystery. So why are they now opposing the testimony of her long experience and seeking to silence her speech? We are not advocating a dead ideology or political expediency. Nor are we protecting our conservatism. The family and marriage

They are not "rights" of some, they are institutions. It is for them that we are fighting and responsibly offering our appreciation and experience. They cannot claim in cold blood that *they "legislate for the whole of society. The perspective of a State is necessarily wider than that of a religion"*¹⁰. Is that what they've understood all these years? Those who think so are both unwise and unjust. That's why they legislate both arbitrarily and wrongly.

Let's move on to some first basic thoughts, which do not exhaust the subject, but I think they contribute to the whole debate.

BIOLOGICAL BACKGROUND OF THE BREED

Anatomical characteristics

What is gender identity? Is there anything other than male and female? Is gender eligible? Are there multiple genders for the same person, biological, social, emotional, conflicting? Is one born with a particular sexual orientation or is it subsequently shaped by a variety of factors? How natural is abnormal?

Biologically there are two sexes, as in higher mammals: male and female. All the systems that make up the human organism have at their base the same anatomical morphology and physiology in both sexes. All functions, cardiac, respiratory, renal, follow the same mechanisms regardless of sex.

An exception to this rule is the reproductive system and everything related to the reproductive function (genetic background, hormones, etc.). The reproductive organs of women are completely different from those of men.

¹⁰ Interview with Mr. Adonis Georgiadis on Sky, Sat 20.1.2024.

Thus, what differentiates **the sexes** and identifies them is their reproductive system. Indeed, their basic characteristic is not only that **they are different** and thus distinguishable from each other, but that the sexes **are only two**, there is no third, and above all that **they are complementary**, which means that the anatomical differentiation serves the possibility not of contact but of union of the bodies. **Two female bodies have no natural way of joining together, neither do two male bodies.**

Also, all organs and functions are absolutely necessary for the survival of the human organism to which they belong - that is why they are called vital. This is not the case with the reproductive organs. They are neither essential nor useful for the survival of the organism, but it **is possible to live a healthy life without ever using their function**. Their sole purpose is to work together, male and female, in order to give birth to a new life from two humans. Every life, every human being thus comes into existence, from the physical union of a man and a woman. **Physiology knows no other way.**

Genetic characteristics

All somatic cells (heart, liver, kidney, etc.) do not differ from sex to sex, and they have a double genome, are complete, integrated and self-sufficient. Exceptions are the genetic cells, the female egg cell and the male sperm cell, which are also **different and complementary, but also simple**, i.e. not sufficient on their own to fulfil their purpose. And these require unity. **Two that are alike cannot be united. Each seeks its complement.** The union of the two creates the miracle of life, a new man with an eternal perspective comes into the world.

Also,

- The ovum is the largest cell in the body (about 120-150µm when mature) with a completely different morphology from the sperm cell (small head with a protruding tail).
- The ova are few and present in the female body from embryonic age, the spermatozoa are constantly being produced and in each ejaculation their number is 100-200 million.
- The man produces sperm until an advanced age, while the woman has used up her eggs about 35 years after the onset of her reproductive function.
- The man determines the sex of the child, the woman bears, gives life, feeds and suckles. She raises the child. The nine-month pregnancy, breastfeeding, creates a deep inner relationship with the mother.
- The man reaches orgasm very easily and quickly, while the woman takes several times longer.
- Beauty, grace are characteristics of womanhood to attract.

The mode of attraction is from man to woman.

- The hormones of both sexes have similarly differentiated characteristics¹¹.

All of the above gender idioms have their reason and naturally shape the personality and the general psychology of the sexes accordingly. For example, there is a different relationship with time, which explains why female nature is characterised by patience and endurance, while male nature is characterised by impetus and strength, and why emotion and logic function differently. Women are more sensitive and sensitive, more prone to emotional weaknesses, but also more easily acquainted with virtues, such as faith, faithfulness, courage, and the ability to act.

¹¹ <https://www.hometest.gr>

diligence, loyalty, dedication and sacrifice. **The two sexes have a complementary psychology.**

Following all this, we could say that gender identity has an inalienable biological basis and is based on bio-genetic diversity and especially on the complementarity of the two sexes, obeying the general Complimentarity Principle, which constitutes the natural world (atoms, molecules, matter), and according to which the heteronyms are attracted and the homonyms are repelled. **Gender identity is not selectable; it is a given.**

Erotic attraction, sexual desire

In order for the union of bodies to take place, there must be a mutual attraction of the spiritual world of men, one must desire the other, move towards him. This movement of one towards the other is the erotic attraction which gives rise to sexual desire and which, obviously, and since man is psychosomatic, must be in harmony with the biological identity of each of them. **A relationship in which the soul is not in harmony with the body causes a rupture in personhood, ambiguity and identity division and is, of course, unnatural and undesirable.**

At this point it should be noted that there are no sexual organs, but only reproductive organs and sexual senses, sensory organs, sensory stimulation points, just as there are no taste organs but digestive organs and taste sensory organs. Just as **the** purpose is not taste but digestion, so **sexual attraction cannot be independent** of the reproductive aspect of the organism. Sexual vibration cannot be an end in itself, it is not autonomous, it coexists with the responsibility of new life and even in the protective context of a family. Children are not born and abandoned to their fate, but are protected within the family environment. This leads to the institution of marriage. Marriage is not the satisfaction of the need for

companionship, but a responsibility before God, is *"lawful marriage and childbearing."* **Consequently, the sexual relationship is not conceived outside of marriage, and marriage is necessarily heterosexual.**

Gender identity is defined by biological factors, anatomy, physiology, genetic make-up, hormones, not by sexual orientation or inclination. It is not defined by appetites, by what I think of myself or how I feel, but by what I am. I can feel healthy or very smart or sane and of course not be. **Identity is defined by counter-textual criteria. Nor can a normal person have several genders,** possibly mutually contradictory: biological, emotional, social.

Finally, as His Eminence Metropolitan Ierotheos of Nafpaktos writes, *"the reality is that there are only two sexes from the biological point of view and many "sexual orientations", which are the passions of human beings"*.

WHAT IS MARRIAGE - SANCTIFICATION OF THE RACE

The use of the body must lead to sanctification, since man is sanctified psychosomatically. Says the Apostle Paul:

*"Give glory to God in your body and in your spirit, which is God's "*¹² and in the Divine Liturgy we pray for the sanctification of souls and ^{bodies}¹³. In other words, since **man** is made "in the image of God" and has received the breath of God, the **whole, body and soul, body and spirit, is holy,** because *"your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit in you "*¹⁴ and *"your bodies are members of Christ "*¹⁵, every union of bodies must reflect this holiness.

¹² Aug. f. 19-20.

¹³ *"Sanctify our souls and bodies"* (Divine Liturgy of Chrysostom, Blessing of the Holy Trinity).

¹⁴ 1 Cor. f. 19.

¹⁵ Aug. f. 15.

In the understanding of the Church, what is said about spouses that *"two are one flesh"* ¹⁶ **also** means **"one soul"**, not two souls stuck together, but one soul regenerated, coming from two *"changed"* towards the good; two people sanctified, *"fellow-souls, caring for one another"*, *"one soul united"* ¹⁷. Marital love is like fertilisation, the genetic cells are joined together without being able to be separated again, creating something completely new with the characteristics of the original. This perspective makes union a mystery.

The natural attraction was given to unite two people. Natural law exists to constitute, to unite, to harmonize man psychologically. **To stray from the natural path, instead of uniting the two, divides them.** And instead of becoming *'two in one flesh'*, each is divided into two, being the man with male biological characteristics and female desires and the woman with male biological characteristics and female desires.

For the Church, **marriage is marriage, not companionship**, it is responsibility, not pleasure; it is contemplative union, not selfish sympathy; it is life and sanctification, it is unbreakable union, and union is a sacrificial emptying of the ego, it is love that *"always standing, always believing, always hoping, always enduring"*, a love that *"never falls away"* ¹⁸. The first and necessary condition for a relationship to become a marriage is the possibility of normal physical union. For it to become a sacrament there must also be loving communion in the Lord. Only in this way can marriage be a *"great mystery in Christ and in the Church"*, ¹⁹ and according to St. Gregory the Theologian, *"the father of saints"* ²⁰ and the family *"the church at home"* ²¹.

In all of the above it is obvious that **marriage means union of man and woman**, who are clearly distinguished from each other in terms of

¹⁶ Eph. v. 31.

¹⁷ Philippians 2:2, 1:27.

¹⁸ 1 Cor. iv. 7, 8.

¹⁹ Eph. e 32

²⁰ Gregory the Theologian, Epi theologica-morica III, To the virgins, Parentheticus, *BEPES* 61.101.

²¹ Rom. iv. 4.

gender and are both created *"in the image and likeness of the Triune Godhead"*²².

Therefore, the terms "family" and "marriage" are unique. They describe something extremely sacred, which should in no way be distorted and its content confused.

DEVIATIONS FROM NORMALITY

On the opposite side of the sanctifying goal there is the enslavement to passions, the dehumanization of the relationship, the diversion of sexual life and disrespect for nature.

Typically, Paul in the Letter to the Romans²³,

(a) While he lists by simple reference a variety of insidious situations²⁴, when he refers to those who *"have gone out of their appetites to others, men in their arsenal working out their ugliness"* he is analytical, and the language he uses is harsh and excoriating.

(b) Making a clear reference to the natural affinity of persons of the same sex, he characterizes it with heavy terms, such as *"ugliness"* (1:27), *"impurity"* (1:24) and *"dishonesty"* (1:26), i.e. loss of the glory and honour of the body and of man himself²⁵.

(c) He not only condemns the act as sin, but refers mainly to the people who commit it, without any extenuating circumstances, saying *"that the wicked shall not inherit the kingdom of God"*²⁶ and that - *"those who do such things are worthy of death"* (v. 32).

²² "Gen. 1:26

²³ Rom. 1:20-32

²⁴ "Paid iniquity, unrighteousness, fornication, covetousness, covetousness, wickedness, wickedness, midst of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice, whisperers, whisperers, whisperers, cursers, revilers, revilers, proud, haughty, haughty, devisers of evil, devisers of parents, inconsistent, inconsistent, unprofitable, unprofitable, unmerciful" (Rev. v. 29,30).

²⁵ "A man in the honour of whom he was joined, he was joined to foolish possessions, and became like them", Psa. MH 13.

²⁶ 1 Cor. f. 9.

(d) He considers that *"the change of the natural use to the unnatural"* relationship (a. 26) is the consequence of *"the change of the truth of God in the lie"* (a. 25) and of the conversion from faith in the true God, *"not as God glorified"* (a. 21), as well as of a purposeless and unwise heart, *"but their unwise heart was cut off"* (a. 21). Non-natural intercourse is a moral forfeiture and is the consequence of turning away from God, of rejecting His truth²⁷.

(e) The relationship with the true God is broken to such an extent, that God abandons them, He *"delivers"* them *"to uncleanness of their bodies in Him"* (1:24), *"to passions of dishonor"* (1:26) and *"to unprofessional duties"* (1:28).

(f) Finally, the natural relevance is called *"utility"*, which means that the purpose of the intercourse is the utilization of the physical function and not the satisfaction of the pleasurable desire. Eden serves the 'utility' and seals love. But to love does not mean to like, but to offer, to give what I have, myself, to give, to keep nothing for myself, that is kenosis; and to receive what is offered to me as a corresponding kenotic response, not as a return. It is like emptying myself of my blood and filling myself with the blood of another.

St. Chrysostom takes a similar approach to the issue, as he recalls Paul's letter to the Romans, considering the sexual relationship **to be the greatest sin. Unity by nature gives rise to life both for and by the individual.** A study on this subject has been written by His Eminence, Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Mani²⁸, to which, in order to save time, I refer without commenting further on the subject.

Ultimately, what is called in modern society *right, love, orientation, identity, pride*, the very same character that is the basis for the

²⁷ Appropriate the illegality of disrespect. For as they have changed the truth of God in lying, so have they changed the legitimate pleasure of lust into unrighteousness (Theodoret, PG 83).

²⁸ Chrysostom of Manis: The Holy Chrysostom on homosexuality (Contribution to the pertinence of the subject), 2024.

It is confessed by the Apostle Paul as *dishonesty, ugliness, uncleanness, unprofessionalism*, and by Chrysostom as *mania, hubris, uncleanness and rage*²⁹. And since the departure from nature **offends the core of man's relationship with God**, we cannot claim that these positions reflect the moral concepts of the time and could therefore be disregarded.

THE VALUE OF MAN

Man is made *"in the image and likeness of the Triune God."* This image has been corrupted by sin. The purpose of the Church is *"the resurrection of the image that fell before"*, i.e. the promotion of human dignity, honour and glory. An indispensable element in this process is the moral purification achieved through the cultivation of virtues, which inevitably goes hand in hand with respect for natural conditions and physiology.

Also, man is psychosomatic, and mental functions must necessarily be in harmony with the physiology of the body. Any deviation from this rule is a disease and a disorder that must be treated. That is what science and knowledge are for. If it is not deliberately provoked, it is a sin and a perversion. That is why the Church exists. The rupture of the harmonious relationship between soul and body, as a result of selected intervention, is intended to alter human ontology and is a desecration of human nature itself. This is why the Church, through the Apostle Paul, considers it to be a sin, even though it is being denied by the current ministerial mouthpieces. As His Beatitude Archbishop Anastasios of Albania very aptly observed, **"what is by nature does not become by nature through legal provisions"**, and we would like to add: and amarality is not arbitrarily excused by irresponsible ministerial statements.

²⁹ *But the passions are always dishonourable, and even the mania against men: for in the sin the soul suffers in the mind, and the body in the sickness... To this strange sorrow have they been driven away... Wherefore I am without excuse, and without excuse, and to this nature they have insulted.*

(John Chrysostom, Homily V, Rom. 1, 18-25, *EPE 16B, 406, pp. 406-408*)

CONSEQUENCES OF THE PROPOSED LAW

The phenomenon of the legal institution of marriage between two persons of the same sex has no roots in history, in no state and in no religion, nowhere can we find it. **Homosexual cohabitation has never been described as a family.** But societies have functioned, progressed, developed, evolved, evolved, created civilisation. Instead of solving problems, this experiment will create and multiply them.

(a) If the law is passed, it will create confusion between what is natural and what is not, what is moral and what is amoral, what is family and what is a symbiotic group. **The alteration of social morals,** the addiction to the attractive strange and unnatural, the creation of new stereotypes, are leading to a new alleged morality which is completely at odds with the morality of the Gospel, of history, of our Greek tradition.

(b) Homosexuality as legally equal to heterosexuality appears as an alternative life proposal to mainly young people. This means that it also creates confusion between what one is, how one feels and what one can become. If one's identity is eligible, then one can try, experiment, with possibly incurable consequences. **Human ontology** is catastrophically transformed, acquiring the potential for existential death. And all this under the absolute responsibility of the government.

(c) The problem becomes particularly serious when, through education and the relevant legislation, **children are subjected to an education** according to which the unnatural and certainly not scientifically documented and empirically accepted as natural and, above all, as progressive, modern, liberating and naturally selectable and desirable is presented to them³⁰.

³⁰ See. Madoc Cairns, Scandinavian bishops speak out on sexuality and gender, 28 March 2023, THE TABLET, <https://www.thetablet.co.uk/news>

When a "view of human nature that abstracts from the embodied integrity of personhood, as if physical gender were accidental" is put forward, however, "we must dissent". Further to this, "we protest when such a view is imposed on children as if it were not a daring hypothesis but a proven truth".

(d) When this type of life and family is promoted as something modern, it can easily become fashionable and instead of helping a few who are in this situation, it can **dangerously proliferate the deviation from the natural path and diversion**. The wrong image creates a disease, which spreads rapidly, since these individuals tend to project their type of life as a model of supposed liberation, parading it with pride and pride, thus creating addiction and familiarity, transforming the phenomenon into a status quo, to the smiles and applause of the ruthless legislators.

(e) As again His Beatitude Archbishop Anastasios of Albania argues, "the perpetuation of humanity has been based on the existence of two sexes and their union. On the contrary, **such a law is an affront to creation...** It is not social progress but a conflict with the natural order, a descent" (21.1.2024).

(f) The possibility that once the law is passed, as proposed, it may later include the use of the possibilities offered by modern reproductive techniques, such as the use of surrogacy, as His Eminence, Metropolitan Ignatius of Demetrias, observes, inevitably leads to *"a scandalous devaluation of women as an instrument of procreation, deprived of the right to procreate.*

her maternal role and her participation in an integrated family. It takes away her rights and undermines her value.

(g) **Marriage is not a right. It is an institution.** It is protected by the Constitution because it preserves, reproduces and promotes the nation. On the contrary, the propaganda about gay marriage rights and equality and **the possible passage of the Bill undermines the Nation** and in this sense is anti-national. The demographic consequences of such a law would appear to be appalling, especially at a time like the present, when the demographic problem is the greatest danger and characteristic of the country.

is described as a nightmare, even by official parliamentary lips, of the former minister Takis Theodorikakos³¹.

Finally, the legalisation of same-sex marriage in fact destroys homosexual individuals, confuses normality, divides society, and offends nature. Moreover, the institution of the family is being devalued, moral values are degenerating, humanity is being debased, the demographic threat is growing, faith in God is being shaken, the younger generation is self-doubting, and civilisation as we know it is being destroyed. Is it possible for the Church not to react?

LEGAL DIMENSION

I would not like to deal with the legal dimension of the issue in this speech. Τὸ Ἐγκύκλιο Σημείωμα τῆς Ἱερᾶς Συνόδου, τὰ σχόλια καὶ οἱ εὐστοχες ἀναλυτικὲς παρεμβάσεις τῶν ἀδελφῶν Μητρο- πολιτῶν Λαρίσης, Πειραιῶς, Μάνης, καὶ Μεσσηνίας, ὅπως καὶ οἱ ἐπιστημονικὲς δημοσιεύσεις εἰδικῶν περὶ τὸ οἰκογενειακὸ καὶ ἀστικὸ δίκαιο νομικῶν, καθ. Ρόης Παντελίδου³², καθ. Georgiou Georgiadis³³, quickly present a legal approach accepted by the Church and clearly demonstrate the possibility of legal avenues for regulating issues without necessarily legally establishing same-sex marriage.

The problem is not the impossibility of finding legal regulations, but the lack of political will.

³¹ Takis Theodorikos: We have no future as a country without addressing the demographic issue, Speech to the Plenary Session of the Parliament, 15.12.2023.

³² Pantelidou, Roy, Marriage as a union of two persons of different sexes, *TO VIMA*, Sa 15.1.2024

³³ Georgiadis Georgios, On "equality in family law", So what is the limit to the wishes of citizens? If we adopt the legislative model proposed, not there is no there is no limit, *Legal Library*, 16.1.2024, <https://daily.nb.org/arthrografia/peri-isotitas-sto-oikogeneiako-dikaio>

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS - SUMMARY COMMENTS

A. According to the above, there is a basic principle that has four parts of non-negotiable force. The sexes:

1. There are **only two**, there is nothing else different or in between, as the term LGBTI implies.
2. They are different from each other, which means that there is a **clear distinction** between the two sexes, which must be maintained in every way. Ambiguity creates confusion and confusion creates an identity crisis.
3. They are not only different, but they are **mainly complementary**. Their difference does not exist merely to distinguish them, but, being complementary, it exists mainly **to serve their unity**. The physical union has a dual purpose - the reproduction of life and the psycho-physical completion of the good connection. For this reason, it is not an act but a sacred relationship, which obviously must be psycho-physically complete and by nature.
4. The beginning of life and therefore human existence is based on **heterosexuality**. Anything that weakens the distinction between the sexes is an affront to the sanctity of life and of the human person.

B. An argument that is often heard is that if there is love between two people, this love must be expressed and therefore even two persons of the same sex are entitled to enter into a marriage relationship, since the purpose of marriage is perfection through love. But is sexual attraction by definition genuine love, but independent of the sexes?

Love has many forms. One is love between brothers and sisters, another between friends and acquaintances, another between parents and children and vice versa, another is love for all, even for enemies, which is mentioned in the Gospel. The physical relationship in the above cases may include physical manifestations of simple contact (embraces and subtle kissing), but

is free from sexual advances and movements of mutual physical contact. It does not lead to marriage. In the New Testament, love, while extolled as the greatest of the virtues and used as a verb or noun 315 times, is in no case associated with the erotic feeling, which is called "*desire*"³⁴.

The peculiarity of erotic attraction is that it is inevitably accompanied by sexual desire, which is of course characterized by impulsiveness and sensuality, and thus the possibility of love being adulterated by libertinism and selfishness is visible. Therefore **sexual satisfaction cannot be an end in itself.**

This is counterbalanced when the purpose of the union is to give life to all its forms and when everything is done before God. True love "*...is the communion of souls in the Lord, as the communion of saints...*"³⁵ is always in the name of God, certainly in keeping with His works, the culmination of which is man, as He created him. Love presupposes **a respect for human ontology**, that "*God created man in the image of God, and women created him*"³⁶. It is in this context that the Church understands marriage and elevates it to a mystery. Marriage must be able to reproduce life.

If it were true that sexual attraction is the preeminent expression of love and therefore justifies every relationship, then **easy change of partners and indirectly adultery, and certainly polygamy, could be justified.** Love is not always genuine love.

C. The Government claims that it is its responsibility to solve problems faced by children born into homosexual relationships. **But these children are few in number**, born outside our country and the whole

³⁴ "*He that seeth a woman in remembrance of her hath already remembered her...*", Matt. v. 28.

³⁵ Ossia Gavrielia (Papagianni), letter to the Hebrew writer Yehuda Hanegbi, *The Asceticism of Love*, p. 414.

³⁶ Gen. a 27.

The problem is, on the one hand, an imported problem, but on the other hand, it is causing tectonic upheavals in our society, as it is in direct contradiction with our culture, social morals and principles.

D. The problem appears to be quite difficult, not because of the objectively existing need, which needs to be regulated somehow, but **because of the immediate charge that accompanies it.** The government wants to impose it in every way possible. For this reason, it is systematically promoting an ideology which also implies moral reasons, such as the defence of individual rights, which are widely accepted. Anyone who does not accept the method and opposes the imposition of the measures is branded as a reactionary. This results in the Government being portrayed as morally sensitive and the Church as blind to the supposedly pressing problems of these poor children.

E. Ultimately, we are dealing with a society, mainly young people, who, reacting strongly to traditional stereotypes, **have replaced them with other stereotypes** and prejudices under the banner of political correctness. We must understand that they do not understand us.

This, although it makes our communication more difficult, does not prevent us, but requires us to speak in the right way, with logical reasoning, with evidence, with understanding, with courtesy, with inspiration, with the fullness of Christian ethics and conviction, but also with militancy. Our word as a Church must be forthcoming, whether we are accepted or not. The prophets were not listened to, but rather persecuted. But they were all confirmed.

F. Our proposal is not to abandon children to the mercy of God, but to find solutions that do not offend the institution of the family and marriage. The problem is not that there are no solutions and no possibility of legal regulation in this direction, nor is it the lack of arguments from the ecclesiastical side. The problem is highlighted and amplified by the

lack of political will and the plethora of misleading justifications on the part of the government.

For example, the government insists on the so-called adoption of these children. But there are so few children of homosexuals and far fewer who are likely to be orphaned. The view expressed by the Holy Synod that children are not 'companion pets' or 'accessories' is not a funny pun. According to official figures from the Ministry of ^{Labour}³⁷, in 2021 there were 73 children available for adoption and 825 applications for adoption were pending. As a result, there are **no children for whom there are no families to adopt**. Unfortunately, the children's argument instrumentalises them and prevents us from discerning the truth.

In addition, as His Eminence Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Messinia says, *"Heterosexual couples who wish to adopt a child undergo a psychological examination. Doesn't that mean something? Don't they see that scientifically it is not possible to adopt between **same-sex couples**? I leave the social impact to the side..."*.

Z. The problem of children growing up in such a situation is probably greater for children who are born than for children who are orphaned. This is because it is not that they have no father or mother, but that they have a father instead of a mother and a mother instead of a father. The connection is obvious. **The single-parent family causes deprivation but not confusion. Homosexuality causes both.**

Moreover, the issue is not so much about procreation, as it currently involves very few children. Those who may lose their natural or legal mother and have to be fostered are very few.

The issue is mainly about marriage. It will also increase the number of sexual relationships, it will increase the number of people who present themselves with gender identity confusion and it will increase the number of these unfortunate children born under such unnatural circumstances.

³⁷ <https://ypergasias.gov.gr/proti-dimosiefsi-dedomenon-gia-tis-yiothesies-kai-tis-anadoches-stin-ellada-1o-trimino-2021/>

Bigger than the problem of orphanhood, that the child will lose his biological parent, is that he grows up unnaturally with two parents of the same sex. We must prevent the birth of such children at all costs. **And instead of what the law seeks to do, it achieves the opposite.**

H. Finally, there is the following paradox. What we have known so far from the LGBTI community is an aversion to family, marriage, children, institutions, the Church. And now they are asking for the protection of the State for what their ideology and practice has been fighting against. They are not asking for them because they have changed their minds, but to deform them at will. And the government acquiesces and announces... the miracle! Paul the Apostle's cry of astonishment at the behaviour of the Gauls is echoed by us at the inexplicable persistence and attitude of the Government: **'O foolish Gauls, you have not been convinced of the truth'**³⁸!

I. The Prime Minister has publicly justified that the passing of the bill is left to the conscience of the MPs and therefore does not raise the issue of party discipline. A question of conscience, however, means that it is both axiomatic and ideological. In practice, what we see in practice is the defiance of the moral conscience is political conscience, i.e. the need to maintain the unity of the party. If that's possible!

For the Church, the issue is not the protection of its own formal tradition (so it is supposed to say and do), but of the deep conscience of the faith. For this reason there is no pressure on the Bishops from above, no need for ecclesiastical discipline, no leaks, no danger to unanimity, and certainly no organised 'tutorials'. **If only the members of the government had some of the freedom of conscience of the members of our hierarchy!** How different the result would be! How different the society!

³⁸ Gal. c. 1.

The whole issue is a matter of common sense and personal and social ethics. Hence our pastoral responsibility and the responsibility of the word. The Church certainly does not legislate. Nor would it want to. It has its laws and they are timeless, eternal and God-given. It does not legislate, and for that it bears no responsibility. **But it only bears a heavy responsibility if it remains silent.** And it must not do so. He must shout loudly.

I. As I alluded to earlier, the Church's attitude is presented as unhuman and unresponsive to the supposedly pressing problems of these unfortunate groups and as completely inconsistent with the Gospel teaching of love.

I take an excerpt from the conclusion of the wonderful, comprehensive, systematic and comprehensive intervention of His Eminence Metropolitan Demetrios of Goumenissis, which expresses in an experiential way how the Church lives the challenge of love for the sinful and hatred against sin, which I quote:

"The Church REJECTS the penitent for every passion, for every fall. It does NOT stigmatize. It does NOT target. It does NOT condemn. HOWEVER, it does NOT reconcile with pathology. It adopts man in the perspective of repentance, of ontological naturalness and above all of salvation. It does NOT adopt the passions of man. The compromise would be like a doctor calling cancer a normal state of health... God saved the prostitute, the thief, the publican, the prodigal son, as human beings, not as passionate people... So it is NOT possible for the Church - as the body of Christ - to act otherwise. It is NOT a place of pandemic passions".

COMMENT ON THE GOVERNMENT'S MANIPULATIONS

A. It is true that the pressure exerted by the pandemic of tribal ideology is enormous at the global level. With all this propagandistic dissemination of relevant information, it is impossible to distinguish truth from falsehood, or even to think about what is true and what is not.

It is not possible for anyone to judge freely, nor is it easy for governments to evaluate and decide unbiasedly. **The pressure of the surrounding atmosphere is so suffocating** that governments do not need instructions from the European Union in order to proceed with certain legislation and adjustments. The pressure of conditions is enough.

Therefore, it is not easy under the present circumstances for the Government to identify its choices with the principles of the Church. However, it is imperative to respect the individuality of our people, our history, our traditions, our culture and the Church. It does not. This is the problem. The governments the country needs are not for the easy things, they are for the difficult things, but they are for the real and wise things.

B. The question that remains unanswered is, finally, **what is the reason for this decision?** What is the need? How many people are directly concerned? How many of these cases ultimately require legislative treatment? Why so much haste?

The government could possibly go ahead and tolerate the situation, clinging to solutions that somehow appeal to them or waiting. On the contrary, they proclaim their policy with enthusiasm. They are in a hurry. They have a strategic plan and they boast.

F. **So the problem is not that they vote for the bill, but that they support it** and present it as progress. It is that, while they realize that the conscience of their deputies, which they claim is against it, they proceed by any means to force it. It is that the two or three non-institutional advisers to the Prime Minister are imposing their choices on the majority of the popularly elected members of the Government. It is that the government is telling us what is and is not amaranth, in effect abolishing the Church, while in words it proclaims to respect it. What the Church, as the competent authority, can say is that greater than the amorality of those who have the problem is the amorality of those who create it.

legislating it and multiplying it. **The Apostle Paul knows a little more about what is treason than the Government Spokesman!**

D. At this point I would like to refer to what His Eminence Metropolitan Hieronymos of Larissa recently stated that *"whoever defies the legacies of the Church does a disservice to society"*. This is because the Church, apart from the experience of divine grace, **also has the long-term experience of life**, again, if I may say so, much greater than the experience of any government, which, although temporary, boasts that its perspective is necessarily broader. It's simple. They are wrong. It is incomparably narrower, myopic. Because, while they legislate, they ignore man. They seem to have no respect for him.

E. On the contrary, the Church's timeless mission was, is and will be to highlight and protect the value of man, which is based on morality and natural conditions. **The Church is a university of anthropology.** A flip through the Gospel, a glance at the Philology, a few pages from the synaxes, is enough to understand this. The state has a responsibility above all to protect the dignity of man. **When value is destroyed, dignity is destroyed.** And then government policy fails and society pays the price.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

A. Ultimately, the issue is psychosocial and the whole problem starts with the alienation of sexuality from biological identity and the identification of love with sexual attraction. The prevailing tendency is to subordinate even physiology to "political correctness", what a person is to what he or she would like to be or what we want to become. The principle of **complementarity** has been replaced by the doctrine of **inclusiveness** and the value of **freedom** by the law of **justice**.

B. Instead of the modern social concept of trying to justify everything and even support the phenomenon of this psychosomatic disharmony, the legal system should provide a way out for every abnormal person, and to develop the corresponding technologies, it should charitably recognise it as a problem and **use all the means at its disposal, both spiritual and psychological, to treat it**, so that those who wish to do so can be helped. When the soul is not in harmony with the body, psychiatry, instead of ruling out deviation from the natural path as a mental disorder, should use the weapons at its disposal. And instead of criminalising 'conversion therapies', it should be possible to develop **therapies to return** to what every human being is in nature, but unfortunately some find it difficult to experience.

C. Ever since psychiatry removed homosexuality from the list of mental disorders, it has given up on research into the subject and left these poor individuals helpless, with the lone companion hope of convenient legislation and the assertion of rights through parades of self-deprecation and shame.

The biggest mistake we as a Church would be to accept that the homosexual act, apart from being a mental disorder, is not a sin. These persons, apart from the hope of psychiatric treatment, would have definitively lost the salutary desire to repent and seek the consolation of divine mercy for their own aberrations. Homosexuality is a disease born of pervasive social amorality and can certainly be cured by the Church. Along with all our own great sins, it can also embrace it in a curative way.

D. Finally, equating same-sex marriage with the sacred institution of marriage, as human nature knows it and the Church recognizes it, will institutionalize the natural aberration, contributing to its transmission and proliferation with disastrous consequences for human life and society.

And its cause should not be looked for in neurophysiological causes.

The crisis is spiritual. And unfortunately very deep.

Our responsibility as the Church to highlight the problem and to react is great. Our reaction must be dynamic. We just have to be careful. Our discourse must combine the **prophetic power of** eternal and saving truth with a subtle understanding of reality and the weaknesses of human nature.