

## **“Connecting Children to their Moms and Dads”**

Address to March for Marriage

*March 26, 2013, Washington, D.C.*

I want begin with word to those who disagree with us on this issue and may be watching us right now: we love you, we are your neighbors, and we want to be your friends, and we want you to be happy.

Please understand that we don't hate you, and that we are not motivated by animus or bigotry; it is not our intention to offend anyone, and if we have, I apologize; please try to listen to us fairly, and calmly, and try to understand us and our position, as we will try to do the same for you.

And to you, my friends gathered here, I say, thank you for being here, thank you for your courageous support of the defining issue of our day. Why, really, are we here? One simple reason: marriage matters to kids. It's the simple principle that children deserve a mother and a father, and that society needs an institution that connects children to their parents. What could be more beautiful, or even more sacred, than a man and a woman coming together to create new life? Marriage is the only institution that does this, that connects children to their parents and parents to their children and to each other.

Sometimes that isn't possible, sometimes due to circumstances beyond people's control the ideal doesn't happen. Those parents, too, need and deserve our love and support. This isn't about parenting skills, though; we know that sometimes kids can do well in less-than-ideal circumstances. Rather, it's about rebuilding a marriage culture, which begins – certainly doesn't end! – with preserving in the law the principle that children deserve a mother and a father, and that society should do everything it can, and offer all necessary support, to help insure that children get what they deserve. Only a man can be a father and only a woman can be a mother, and children need both, and no matter how happy their childhood may be, to grow up without one or the other is always a deprivation. This is not discrimination; on the contrary, marriage benefits everyone, including those of us who are not married and those who disagree with us.

And finally, to the nine justices on the Supreme Court, I say: please, for the sake of the children, please, preserve the meaning of marriage in the law, a meaning common to every human society since the beginning of the human race. For the sake of the children, please.

Most Reverend Salvatore J. Cordileone  
Archbishop of San Francisco