

## **Submission for the Commission on the Marriage Canon**

The Reverend Malcolm L Palmer  
Parish of Meadows - Diocese of Western Newfoundland  
Box 3631 RR 2  
Corner Brook  
Newfoundland  
A2H 6B9

I would like to make it perfectly clear that I am not an advocate for same sex blessings or same sex marriages. I also want to emphasise, however, that I have no issue with people who are homosexual. My reasoning for saying that is based firmly upon the words of St. John's Gospel, chapter 3 verse 17.

“For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.”

It is not my place, therefore, to criticize, judge or condemn anyone who is homosexual. Homosexuals are human beings who have strengths and failings just like everyone else. It has to be stated that The Church's tolerance towards people who are homosexual is not without merit. However, the proposal to change church law in order to allow same sex marriages calls for discernment. There is nothing in scripture to suggest that same sex unions are remotely sanctified by God. Indeed, the very opposite is cited. Moreover, to change church law to allow such marriages overlooks what God has done for us through Jesus Christ.

The essence of Easter is Forgiveness. Forgiveness was raised up on a cross on Good Friday and was revealed in all its splendour and glory on the day of the Resurrection. Christ's offer of forgiveness is not cheap and it is not something that we receive automatically. Christ calls us to repent - Mark 1:14. Without repentance there can be no forgiveness. We are all sinners. All of us, without exception have fallen short of the Glory of God.

Sin is not a word, however, that makes us feel comfortable and there is a tendency to be compartmental and legalistic in the way we rationalize it: Murder is worse than theft. Adultery is worse than slander or lies. Child Abuse is worse than coveting and so forth. The truth is, sin is sin. Sex between a man and woman who are not married to each other is a sin and a sexual act with someone of the same sex is no worse than any other sin.

The issue that I have is leveled squarely at what is taking place within The Church. It is not just a matter of saying that Holy Matrimony is no longer considered a sacred union ordained by God solely between a man and a woman. It is more about The Church saying that we should celebrate same sex marriages because sin is no longer deemed as sin. This raises the question, 'was the sacrifice that Jesus made on Good Friday really necessary?' If sin is no longer deemed as sin the obvious implication is that Jesus has been rejected as our Lord and Savior! When The Church takes on the values that reflect the whims and fancies of the world it can hardly lay claim to be the obedient and faithful follower of Christ. Simply stated, the proposal to change church law to allow same sex marriages is grievously erroneous because it contradicts the Gospel of Christ and our need for forgiveness.

It is, nevertheless, well within the realm of probability that the church's law will eventually be changed to accommodate homosexual marriages – such is the mood of our times and apparently that of The Church. If that proves to be the case, The Church will have crossed the threshold that deems it irrelevant!