



Syro-Malabar Eparchy of St Thomas the Apostle

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Circular on proposed changes to the Australian Marriage Act

Dear Reverend Fathers, Brothers and Sisters,

The Australian community, who generously received us Syro-Malabar faithful, risks abandoning its Christian values to become more secular. In this situation, we need exceptional courage, enthusiasm and perseverance to lead a Christian life based on its faith and morals.

On this occasion, I am obliged to draw your attention to a crucial decision, which will be made in Australia by the government.

The Australian Prime Minister recently announced that proposed changes to the current Marriage Act may be put to a vote in the parliament by the end of November 2017. You may be aware through media, of concerns that such a dangerous change to the current Marriage Act will have grave ramifications for holy and serene married life, family - the basic unit of a community, and value based moral life.

If same sex marriage is legalised as equal to the traditional definition of marriage, as between a man and a woman, it will undermine the cornerstone of the traditional family. It will deny the right of children raised within same sex marriages to experience the love and affection of their biological father and mother. The union of a man and woman is the natural reproductive and protective environment for raising children and both are necessary for a child's integral and harmonious development. I urge you all to pray fervently so that this dangerous situation may not occur. I encourage you to organise special intercessory prayers in your prayer groups, adoration prayers in front of the Blessed Sacrament etc. in your respective Parish/Mission communities.

I encourage you to express your opinion carefully and take the opportunity to vote in the Australian Marriage Law Survey posted out to your homes, before the proposed parliamentary bill. Hence, to those who are not yet enrolled to vote, please register your name as soon as possible, and vote "NO" to preserve traditional marriage and sacred family values. From 12 September, ballot papers would be mailed to your homes and should be received by 25 September. The result of the referendum will be published by 15 November.

Let these challenges encourage you to focus and grow more in your family prayer, sacramental life, and your family's spiritual and communal integrity.

Let us find our consolation and take refuge in Lord's words "Do not be afraid, little flock". Let our Lord Jesus' grace strengthen you. May God the Father's love lead our way. May the Holy Spirit always lead us forward in the truth.

Wishing you all our Lady Mother of God's benevolent love,

Your loving father,

Bishop Bosco Puthur

17 September 2017