

# BEYOND ROE V. WADE THE OBSOLETE HUMAN

by Father John A. Perricone

The Martyrdom of Four Saints by Correggio

I have a sad announcement to make. I shall not be with you much longer. Very likely, along with many other priests I shall be in jail.

After the United States Supreme Court decision, *Obergefell et al v. Hodges*, making same-sex “marriage” a constitutional right in all fifty states of the United States of America, all of us are in peril, especially priests. For when a ‘test’ same-sex couple comes to a rectory, mine or any other, and asks to be married, I must refuse. This will instantly place me in violation of their civil rights under the United States Constitution: tantamount to an Asian couple coming to me for marriage and I refuse them because of their race. That denial would unleash the Left’s formidable legal machinery. All their high-powered, fatly financed phalanx of attorneys would descend upon me. Having paltry funds, I would hire a well-intentioned Catholic attorney, whom the same-sex couple’s sophisticated battery of lawyers would crush without breaking a sweat. Imprisonment would be next. And this goes for all other faithful priests as well. Those who think this preposterous are the very same ones who said the same thing about same-sex “marriage” ten years ago.

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The *Obergefell* decision on June 26, 2015 is a far greater calamity than *Roe v Wade* in 1973. As much as *Roe* sparked a tidal wave of children’s blood upon the nation, society was able to still go on, albeit, limping. With *Obergefell*, a dagger has been plunged into the heart of human society – marriage and the natural family. No society can survive such a blow. After *Roe* good mothers and fathers could continue to have children and families. There *could* be families. After *Obergefell* mothers and fathers will gradually disappear, because marriage will. Kill people, and society can still pull itself together. Kill a vital institution, and society withers.

Overreacting? Hardly. Definitions mirror reality. Change definitions and reality changes. Not all at once, but eventually. Inevitably. Thus Edmund Burke, that intrepid guardian of good sense and political order, claims: “It is absolutely necessary not to change, unless change is absolutely necessary.” Societies are fragile things, dependent upon their members adhering strictly to Permanent Truths. Once those truths are seen as debatable, and ultimately expendable, the society implodes. There exists evidence aplenty. Since the French Revolution societies have been slashed by a thousand cuts, from Nazism to Marxism/Leninist Communism. Nations made bold in jiggling

with all kinds of definitions: the person, dignity, rights, and freedom. The results were hellish: from gulags to gas chambers. James Kalb diagnoses this cultural body blow with philosophical gimlet eye:

*This project's goal is best understood as eschatological, or perhaps counter-eschatological: a social world that recognizes no transcendent authority above it, no history behind it except the history of its own coming into being, and no nature of things beneath it that cannot be transformed technologically into what we choose. It is secular saecula saeculorum, a world unlimited by the Divine, by the past, or by nature's laws – including the biological principle distinguishing male from female.*

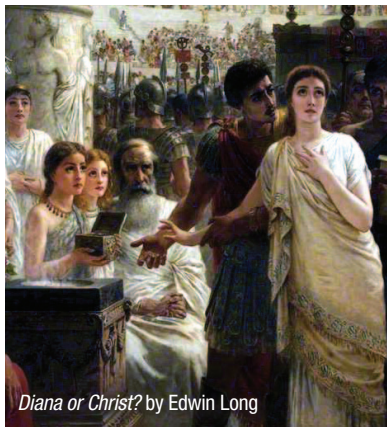
The partisans of same-sex “marriage” fully understand the power of their accomplishment. Listen to Jonathan Chait, writing in a popular go-to magazine of the zeitgeist, *New York*, “... a great deal has happened in a very short time... Social autonomy has sprung forward on almost every front... The country as it existed as recently as a decade ago is receding permanently into the mists of time.” Finally. The mask has fallen, and the Left proudly trumpet their true intentions. Their highly effective tissue of lies, half-truths, and legerdemain has triumphed. Where are the accomodationists now? They dialogued, compromised, diversified, were properly inclusive and bent over backwards to meet the Left half way. And as the accomodationists showed their toothy smiles, the Left used all of that adolescent naiveté as the rope to hang them.

Often the Left proffers the bromide that *Obergefell* is nothing to worry about. Straights will marry, and so will gays. Everyone is a winner. You’ve heard their chants: *Love wins. Equality for all.* Not so fast. Consider the importance of definitions and reality. The Left does. If asked to define a telephone one would say something like “an electronic device that makes possible conversation between two people over long distances.” Let us say that a group lobbied to change that definition. They insisted that a telephone should be redefined as “two people speaking to one another.” In that case anyone of common sense would realize that we are no longer speaking about a telephone. But the architects of the new definition would plead that speaking to one another is, after all, the essence of the

telephone. That person of common sense would then protest. Yes, speaking to one another is important. But that is not the *nature* of a *telephone*. You can’t have a telephone if you insist its meaning is merely conversation between two people. Under the weight of the new definition, telephones would disappear.

Similarly with marriage. Its definition is the permanent union of a man and a woman who place their considerable love to the duty of the natural procreation of

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*Diana or Christ?* by Edwin Long

children. Claiming that marriage is *only* about love vitiates marriage. Yes, marriage is indeed about love, but so much more. It is love placed in the sacrificial oblation of bringing children naturally into the world. You and I and the human race are given to loving many people; indeed, any one we wish to love. *We do not marry them.* Why? Because, in most cases, we are not suited to place our love in the begetting of children. Love is *necessary*, not *sufficient* for marriage. If marriage is only about love, marriage meets its demise. Its purpose disappears. Of course, other unintended consequences come tumbling forth, like Pandora’s Box. Some of those consequences are too unsettling to mention to this wholesome audience. One of the more benign is polygamy. Dancer and writer Brandon Ambrosino tackled this subject with alarming candor in the *New Republic* in January 2014:

It’s time for the LGBT (translation: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) community to start moving beyond genetic predisposition as a tool for gaining mainstream acceptance of gay rights... For decades now, it been the powerful argument in the LGBT arsenal: that we were ‘born this way’... Still, as compelling as these arguments are, they may have outgrown their usefulness. With most Americans now in favor of gay marriage, it’s time for the argument to shift to one where genetics don’t matter. The genetic argument has boxed us into a corner.

Bold, don’t you think? But wait. Here’s “gay activist” Jay Michaelson last year in the *Daily Beast*:

Moderates and liberals have argued that same-sex marriage is No Big Deal – is the Same Love, after all, and gays just want the same lives as everyone else. But further

right and further left, things get a lot more interesting. What if gay marriage will really change the institution of marriage, shifting conceptions around monogamy and intimacy?... And what about those post-racial and post-gender Millennials? What happens when a queer-identified, mostly heterosexual woman with plenty of LGBT friends gets married. Do we really think that ... she will be interested in a heteronormative, sex-negative, patriarchal system of partnership?... Radicals point out that gay liberation in the 1970's was, as the name implies, a liberation movement. It was about being free, questioning authority, rebellion. '2-4-6-8, smash the church and smash the state,' people shouted.

Add to this the June 22, 2015 issue of *Weekly Standard*. There Jonathan Last wrote with chilling warnings. As you read, notice the strange new vernacular. Strange words to usher in a Strange New World. Redefinition and novelty are the advance guard in societal upheaval. Reread your Orwell, Huxley, and Olinsky. Now, Mr. Last:

Changing marriage beyond recognition has been a stated goal of the organization Beyond Marriage, which is a collection of several hundred gay-rights lawyers, law professors, and activists. They argue that same-sex marriage is merely the first step on the path to redefining the family itself.

Ultimately they want legal protection for a host of other relationships, including, as they delicately put it, "Queer couples who decide to create and raise a child with another queer person or couple, in two households" and "committed, loving households in which there is more than one conjugal partner." This group is not a collection of cranks: It includes professors from Georgetown, Harvard, Emory, Columbia, and Yale."

So much for unfounded fears. Within five years the most hard-bitten among us will shudder at what the votaries of *Obergefell* have planned. It will make Caligula's household look like Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm.

Lastly, we must turn briefly to the matter of rights. The Left has used this word as a cudgel since the time of John Locke and Thomas Hobbes. Its new modern usage casts

a hypnotic effect over cultures, leaving them in supine surrender. In the classical tradition, rights bear a muscularity which generates all the virtues that ennoble man. Equal



The Farewell of Boethius to his Family  
by Victor Schnetz

*We must turn briefly to the matter of rights. The Left has used this word as a cudgel since the time of John Locke and Thomas Hobbes. Its new modern usage casts a hypnotic effect over cultures, leaving them in supine surrender.*

rights simply mean that all men are to be treated according to the dignity attendant upon our shared humanity. Indeed all men and women have the right to marriage, but they *only* enjoy the rights fitting to their nature. A right is not the license to do what one *wants*, but the inviolable capacity to do what one *ought*. While man has the freedom to do *anything*, he does not have the *right* to do anything. In fact, man has only the right to be *good*. Using freedom to be wicked is misusing freedom. Equal rights, properly understood, is the right that every man and woman enjoys to pursue the goods of human nature. A man can be anything he wants to be, as long as it is consistent with the truth of his humanity. Otherwise his nature is twisted out of shape; in other words, he becomes a monster. Aristotle called our human nature a "bondage." We are restrained by it; loosing ourselves from it is a literal metaphysical suicide. We cease being what we are. No surprise that contemporary philosophical and political conversation has banished the word 'nature' from their vocabulary. Too constrictive.

Back to my departure. I will willingly go to jail. For the honor and glory of God. For the institution of marriage. For love of the Catholic people. This is the reason why I am called 'Father,' to protect and defend the Truths that win man salvation and happiness. Even with my life.

But Catholics cannot think that now they must retreat to their safe enclaves. They must not think that ignoring the looming darkness will save the Light. For the people who are cheering *Obergefell* never sleep. Their eyes are trained upon all of us.

They are not finished. ✠



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