



PASTORAL LETTER
Love and the Question of Same-Sex Marriage

Most Rev Peter A Comensoli

Bishop of Broken Bay

20 September 2017

Dear friends in Christ Jesus,

As promised, and now that the postal survey forms have been sent out, I write to you again during the current national debate concerning the legal recognition of same-sex marriage.

I am mindful that this period of intense public scrutiny has been exceptionally challenging, with many of our family and friends personally caught up in the debate. Clearly, there is a strong aspiration among large sections of our nation that the current for change might capture the minds and hearts of a majority. As a fellow Christian committed to seeing our world through the prism of faith, and as your Bishop committed to shining the light of Christ into our lives, I offer this second brief reflection for your prayerful consideration.

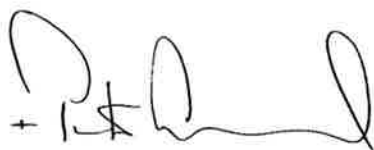
We all seek love. Our humanity draws us towards the many expressions of love that fulfil us as individuals, as couples, as family, friends, neighbours, and as communities. Our desire for love in its many variations is a great gift, and something that underpins the common good. After all, love is a living memory whose presence in our lives carries us forward. No community or institution will endure if it cannot find a way of carrying forward, through memory, what it has learnt from experience.

Love demands to be acknowledged and honoured – from those exercising it, and from those considering it – because it reflects something of the love of God. Our human efforts in love are also always in need of humble perfecting in God's image. But love is not just one kind of thing; it is not sameness. To bring diverse signs of love under the convenience of a single concept and word risks confusion and loss.

Genuine love is indeed good, but love is not all the same thing; difference and variety matter, and this difference needs to be acknowledged so that all may flourish. One of the key tasks we have – for our common good, and for the good of our shared future – is to find ways of carrying forward the multi-dimensional nature of love without losing the distinctiveness of married love, with its unique combination of mutuality, complementarity, exclusivity, stability and procreativity.

As I conclude this letter, friends, I would like to place all of us under the care of Our Blessed Mother, who knew personally the gift of married love. I encourage you to remember how the gift of marriage has been carried forward to us, and to learn again the heritage of love handed on to us. I believe that we will all benefit from placing our personal views into the arms of Mary, who holds us all in her loving embrace.

Yours sincerely in Christ Jesus,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter A. Comensoli'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small cross symbol at the beginning.

Most Rev Peter A Comensoli
Bishop of Broken Bay