



August 14, 2003

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Our country is caught up in an intense debate about the meaning and future of marriage. As members of the Church, the Body of Christ, we are well placed to make an important contribution to this discussion.

The teaching of the Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, gives us deep insight into God's plan for the human family. The Catholic tradition clearly teaches that marriage is about the loving relationship between husband and wife, a relationship which brings forth children who are carefully nurtured and educated within the family for the benefit of the whole of society.

In the course of history the Church has often had to insist on the unique and important role of marriage and the family. These are the foundation stones on which a strong society rests. When marriage and family are strong, society is strong. Today again, we, as the Church are invited to help convince our politicians and our fellow citizens that our country is best served if the traditional view of marriage is preserved and strengthened.

Our energies need to be channelled in two directions. First, we must all renew our commitment to marriage and the family. All of us must become more aware of the importance of the vocation of marriage and honour those who give themselves so generously to the task of raising children for us. I would like our parishes and our institutions to develop new resources and new strategies to honour and support marriage and the family. We need to find new ways to help couples grow together in their relationship and support them in their work as parents.

Secondly, we need to be clear about what we expect from our government and our politicians. Our country must respect and maintain the traditional definition of marriage. I urge you contact your Member of Parliament by mail, telephone, FAX, or email. Our leaders have a right to know what you think and believe. Contact numbers will be made available to you in your parish.

I encourage each of you to become involved. Jesus invites his disciples to be salt for the earth and light for the world (Mt. 5, 13-14). In this important time of Canada's history we have a privileged opportunity to be light and salt for the benefit of all.

Praying that our efforts will lead to a stronger Canada and asking God to bless each of you, I am,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+V. James Weisgerber
Archbishop of Winnipeg