

Complementarity and Gender Clarity

Wholeness in marriage requires two distinct parts, or complements. Maleness and femaleness define marriage; the two together create its essence.

That is more than a practical means to procreation. Before babies, the duality of male and female creates the basis for authentic awareness of who one is as 'the other'.

Adam and Eve are alike in that both bear the Creator's image. She was taken from his side and then returns to him, bearing her humanity in distinction from his own. Her very difference from him has power to mirror back who he is as male. In his reflection, she too becomes aware of her difference.

There can be no maleness without femaleness, and vice-versa. Gender would be stripped of its meaning without the reality of gender difference. We simply would have no awareness of our own essence as male or female without the dance of difference we experience in relation to the opposite gender.

That awareness operates on two levels. The first is realizing what we are not. Image-bearing is humbling. And it reveals a mystery: the elusive and yet profound aspects of the other that we cannot fully understand because we do not possess those aspects in full.

We can only marvel at the difference. And recognize our need for the other. His/her awesome and at times perplexing otherness draws us into wholeness.

Similarly, as we reflect upon the difference, we become aware of the unique and essential gift that our own gender difference imparts to the whole. The presence of the other helps us to know what this gift is. On emotional, spiritual and physical levels, we become aware of our own essence as male or female.

May we recognize its essence and its import to rounding out the whole of God's image. With increasing clarity and confidence, may we realize the good gift of our own gender to the other. And continue before both God and our fellow humanity to humbly recognize our need for the opposite gender.

Vincent Van Gogh wrote to his brother Theo: "One learns so much from the constant comparing of the masculine figure from the feminine, which are always and in everything so totally different. It may be supremely difficult, but what would art and life be without them?"

Let us honor gender difference and the valuable role it plays in clarifying self-awareness and self-giving. Marriage requires gender difference. It is its very essence. Honor marriage for the good of all. Vote YES on Proposition 8.

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“God humble us and grant us confidence to be good gifts for the opposite gender.”