



DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON

• P.O. Box 230, Wheeling, WV 26003 •

Tuesday, November 3, 2020

Statement of Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston on recent remarks of Pope Francis

We have received clarification from the Holy See regarding Pope Francis' comments on civil unions as reported in a recent documentary, *Francesco*. We offer these observations so that the Holy Father's words may be properly understood.

First, the Pope has not and cannot change Catholic teaching on marriage: that it is the union of a man and a woman. He has reiterated this doctrine of the Church many times during his papacy (cf. *Amoris Laetitia* #52, 251).

Second, the Holy Father referred in the interview to the situation of a homosexual son or daughter and the family's response to him or her. The Pope urges that the family not exclude this member but continue to show him or her respect and love (cf. *Amoris Laetitia* #250), which, as Pope Francis said in the interview, does not mean approving sexual acts of a homosexual nature.

Third, in speaking of civil union laws, the Holy Father was referring to a particular situation in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where he was Archbishop until elected Pope. He understood that civil governments, in bringing order to certain relationships, might conclude that civil unions between homosexuals be given legal protection for such economic matters as health care. He has said similar things on other occasions but he clearly distinguishes between such civil unions and marriage as the Church understands it.

We hope that this clarification is helpful to anyone who was in doubt about what Pope Francis actually said and meant in the documentary interview.