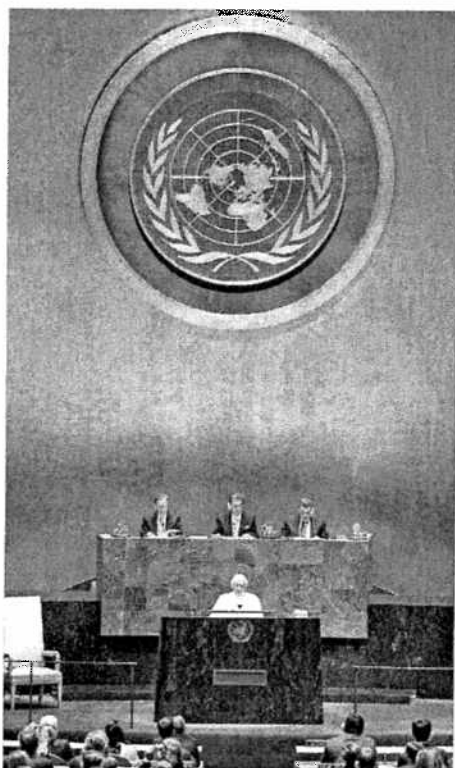


The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Marriage and Family

The recent announcement that the former president of Finland, Martti Ahtisaari, has been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize was warmly greeted by the international community and all of us who have known of his many years of quiet diplomacy, negotiating between factions and governments around the world. Without any hesitation to laud this choice, many persons and groups, myself included, had hoped that the Nobel Peace Prize Committee might recognize the 60th anniversary of the United Nations' most important achievement, the publication of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).



(CNS PHOTO/RAY STUBBLEBINE, REUTERS)

That Declaration sprang from the determination of the original member states to give to the world an international instrument which would serve to thwart the widespread violation of human rights that marked the Nazi regime and which produced such horrors before and during World War II as the Holocaust, medical experimenta-

tion on the mentally ill, deprivation of the ordinary means to live, forced separation of spouses and families and a host of other attacks on human life and dignity. The committee charged with writing the UDHR, carried out principally in Paris after the war, included Christians, Muslims, secularists, and socialists, across a band of national backgrounds from the United States to Lebanon. Eleanor Roosevelt was one of the leading protagonists of this monumental achievement, as Mary Ann Glendon has shown in her fascinating book on the subject. Blessed John XXIII was then the papal nuncio in Paris. He too lent his voice and his counsel to this work, which he correctly saw as having immense importance for the future protection of men, women and children in a world growing daily smaller and more interconnected.

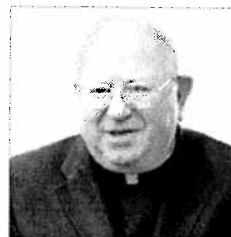
When Pope Benedict came to New York in April, his first stop was the United Nations. There he gave an important speech that spoke very honestly and concretely to the United Nations organization. While recognizing its limitations and its failings, the Holy Father offered a new proposal for the United Nations, one which was inspired by the UDHR and by the Church's heroic and unending efforts in defense of human rights and human dignity. This past summer the Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute sent me a serious paper by Dr. William E. Demars on Pope Benedict's U.N. discourse. "Faith in the U.N.: Pope Benedict's Proposal" argues that the Holy Father is seeking to place the U.N. on a firmer basis that will help make it more effective in addressing the challenges of the global world in which we live. Rightly, the Holy Father defends the universal character of human rights and rejects attempts to reduce them to culturally conditioned or ideologically based truths that depend on the state or some forum to justify them. Instead, he sees in a renewed appreciation for the universality of human rights the way for the U.N. to reassert and reaffirm a positive role for itself in the family of nations. Pope Benedict: "These rights are grounded and shaped by the transcendent nature of the person which permits men and women to pursue their journey of faith and their search for God in this world. Recognition of this dimension must be strengthened if we are to sustain humanity's hope for a better world..."

Article 16 of the UDHR states, "men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution."

This recognition of the universality of marriage "of a man and a woman" has been enshrined in the most important international instrument for human rights. Marriage is a right that belongs to a man and a woman and the recognition of that right should be binding on any and every civil government. Sadly, we are discovering now in three states of the USA that this is not the case. The drum beat to make private sexual relations

Faith & New Works

By Bishop William Murphy



between two persons of the same sex into "marriage" has powerful forces for change behind it. Yet it is, as I have written before, pure "non sense."

Marriage is a public act regulated by governments only because the committed relationship of a man and a woman in a stable marriage has meaning for the good of society and for the future of society. Therefore it is the state's interest to protect and encourage marriage that is a public commitment to each other of a man and a woman. Any other sexual relationships, heterosexual or homosexual, are of no interest to the state.

Questions of inheritance, visitation rights, insurance coverage and the like in which the state recognizes the reality of a married couple are of secondary concern. The state can at will extend such to any number of persons and groups without having to involve the state in a lie by claiming that what is not marriage is "marriage." In our promiscuous society, we would be in a sorry state if every time two persons "had sex" they would be recognized as married!

What undergirds the state's interest in stable marriage is the teleology of sexual relations between a man and a woman. These lead to the guarantee of the future of society. Without stable family life of a man and a woman, society will inevitably suffer both because of the loss of children for the future and because of the instability that confusion about marriage will bring into play. Finally, the pressure for homosexual "marriage" hides the reality. One hears always about the "love" of two persons but not about the reason that such "love" must be mislabeled as marriage. It is a love that expresses itself in unnatural acts, acts that go against the teleology of the body, acts that not only contradict our bodily structure but which the whole Judaeo-Christian ethic has always labeled as sinful, whether one reads Leviticus or one reads St. Paul.

The UDHR contains many truths that society needs to heed for its own future and for the common good of all. In praising this document on its 60th anniversary, we Catholic Christians with all other persons of good will should see in it another reason for our defense of marriage and family, not only as a point of our faith and morals but also as a safeguard for the future of our world.

BISHOP MURPHY'S CALENDAR

Wed., Oct. 15 — Cabinet Meeting, 8:30 a.m.; The Long Island Catholic Corporate Board Meeting, 11 a.m.; Pastoral Center Meeting, St. Agnes Parish Center, 3 p.m.

Thurs., Oct. 16 — Alfred E. Smith Dinner, Waldorf-Astoria, New York City

Sat., Oct. 18 — Pontifical Divine Liturgy, Golden Anniversary Celebration, Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Stamford, 2 p.m.

Sun., Oct. 19 — Joy of Music Concert, Seminary of the Immaculate Conception, 3 p.m.

Mon., Oct. 20 — Annual Mass for Deceased Seminary Alumni, Luncheon & Fall Lecture, Seminary of the Immaculate Conception, 11:30 a.m.; Operation Andrew, Douglaston, 5 p.m.

Tues., Oct. 21 — Presbyteral Council, St. Agnes Parish Center, 10 a.m.; Priest Personnel Meeting, 1:30 p.m.

Wed., Oct. 22 — Cabinet Meeting, 8:30 a.m.

Thurs., Oct. 23 — Annual Visit to Cathedral Seminary, Douglaston, 5 p.m.

Sat., Oct. 25 — Diocesan Pastoral Council Meeting, St. Matthew's, Dix Hills, 9 a.m.; St. Agnes Cathedral Parish Celebration, St. Agnes Parish Center, 8 p.m.

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