

Spain's bishops urge united front against same-sex unions



Spain's Catholic bishops urged political parties to unite against same-sex marriage, after it was confirmed as legal by the Constitutional Court.

“Spanish legislation on marriage is gravely unjust — it does not protect the parties’ right to be recognized in law as husband and wife, nor the right of children and young people to be brought up as future husbands and wives, and to enjoy a father and mother in a stable family,” the bishops’ conference said after its Nov. 19-23 plenary in Madrid.

“We call again on politicians to take responsibility. Right reason demands everyone act according to conscience and beyond party discipline in this key area and that no one votes to endorse a law which so badly damages society’s basic structures.”

The statement follows the Nov. 6 court judgment rejecting legal challenges to the 2005 law.

The bishops said the country was “witnessing the destruction of marriage by legal means,” adding that all politicians should uphold the common good by changing the law.

More than 22,000 same-sex marriages have been recorded under the law, which was constitutionally challenged after the 2011 election victory of the People’s Party under Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy.

The bishops’ conference spokesman, Madrid Auxiliary Bishop Juan Martinez Camino, said Nov. 22 that the Constitutional Court had “submitted a correct interpretation of the law.”

However, he added that the Catholic Church believed the law needed “urgent reform” and was calling on the government to “form a coalition” with Catholics from all parties to abolish same-sex marriage. The church upholds the traditional definition of marriage as between a man and a woman.

Besides Spain, same-sex marriage is allowed in Argentina, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Iceland, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, South Africa and Sweden.

A Socialist-backed law to permit same-sex marriage and adoption, scheduled for parliamentary debate in January, faces bitter opposition from the Catholic Church and other faith groups in neighboring France. More than 17,000 town mayors and officials have declared themselves against the law, which was protested by 200,000 people at a Nov. 17 demonstration in Paris.

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