

June 28, 2015

To the Venerable Hierarchs, Reverend Clergy, Monastics, and Faithful of the Orthodox Church in America:

Dear Beloved,

The recent ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court on the legality of “same-sex marriages” has received much press coverage and has already caused some consternation about its implications and ramifications. But we Orthodox Christians must rest assured that the teaching of our Holy Church on the Mystery of Marriage remains the same as it has been for millennia.

Over the past few years, the Holy Synod of Bishops of our Orthodox Church in America has issued a number of statements outlining, detailing and clarifying the teaching of our Holy Faith on this matter in light of challenges from our American society. These teachings remain in effect, in spite of the Supreme Court’s decision. Links to these statements are provided below.

As we reflect on the Supreme Court’s ruling, we should thank Almighty God that we live in a country that allows us the First Amendment rights to worship freely, practice what we believe as Orthodox Christians, and live as examples of Christ our Savior and His love for others.

The ruling does not change the teaching of the Church, but it does remind us of the need to be Christ-like in our dealings with everyone. The state has the responsibility to enact laws that protect the rights of each individual. The Church, while it does not bless “same-sex marriages” or view them as sacramental, does see the image of Christ in every individual, and his or her worth in the eyes of the Lord Who died upon the Cross for our salvation.

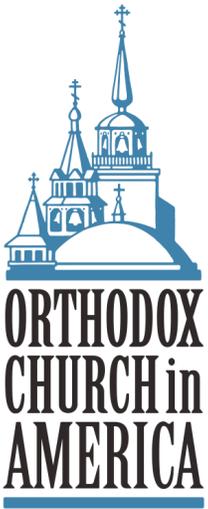
As the Orthodox Church in America, it is our responsibility to care for those who are in need, help those who are victims of prejudice, racism or persecution of any kind, and to provide for those who are sick, destitute, homeless or imprisoned.

The Church’s mission continues, and we have a great responsibility to be “all things to all people,” so that we all may be “one in Christ”, and hear on the last day, “Well done, good and faithful servant, you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord” (Matthew 25:21).

With love in the Lord,



Archbishop of Washington
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Statements of the Orthodox Church in America on the Mystery of Marriage

[Encyclical Letter of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America on Marriage](#)

[Synodal Affirmation of the Mystery of Marriage](#)

[Synodal Affirmations on Marriage, Family, Sexuality, and the Sanctity of Life](#)

[OCA Reaffirms SCOBA Statement in Wake of Massachusetts Same-Sex Marriage Ruling](#)

[Sexuality, Marriage and Family](#)

[The Homosexual Christian by Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko](#)