



**The Most Reverend Dr.
Mark Steben Shirilau**

January 16, 2004

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Dear Michael:

I am a great fan of your Character Counts messages on KNX radio. It is always insightful when my commuting times happen to correspond with when you are on.

Today you spoke about Martin Luther King and our country's shameful heritage of racial discrimination. Among the past disgraces that you mentioned was that until recently interracial marriage was illegal.

This brought to mind how little progress we have made as a nation with regards to discrimination. We merely shift the focus. Today's shame is the lack of recognition of same-sex marriage. While we have made progress in decriminalizing same-sex activity, there is still a strong movement to discount and discriminate against the thousands of successful long-term gay and lesbian relationships that share every positive attribute of their heterosexual counterparts. It is of course personally offensive to me that many of my colleagues in the Church are leading the war cry against the slow progress some of our state courts are taking.

The so-called "defense of marriage" movement does absolutely nothing to defend marriage, but merely codifies discrimination. Some extremists are even talking about cementing this disgrace into our Constitution, even though there is no logic to the concept that failing to recognize Bob & Steve's marriage somehow protects the marriage of Jim & Alice.

You have a wide audience and are an excellent instructor regarding character. There are many parallels between racial discrimination and sexual discrimination. I hope that you will address this issue sometime in your program. Our country is in transition on this subject, and the sooner we realize that support of same-sex marriage actually increases our overall character, the closer we will be toward that elusive but all-important goal of becoming a nation where character truly does count.

Grace and Peace,

Most Rev. Mark S. Shirilau, PhD
Archbishop and Primate
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