Subject: Gay Marriage

I am a mother of a gay son whom I love beyond comprehension. I have already
lost one son and am terrified of losing another, which I believe could result
with all the homophobic hatred abounding at the moment and  blatant promotion
to deny human rights for gay people saturating the media and escalating
divisiveness in the name of religion, God and country.

The demeaning advertisements in the media demanding a certain politician
explain himself for supporting gay marriage and the Catholic Church launching
a prohibition campaign against a segment of the community to forbid loving
couples from committing to each other on the basis that they are of the same
sex, is in itself anti christian and a mighty misuse of God and power. Such
high authority as government and church inflicting prohibition against gay
people by forbidding access to the most esteemed societal right -the sanctity
of marriage, denies societal blessing and privilege. It places gay people
outside of society and expels their human rights. It becomes a public
vilification and punishment for being gay. Punishing gay people for so called
'choice'.

For my son and many others, being gay is not a choice. He cannot enter into a
committed sexual union with a woman no more than I can enter into a
relationship with a woman. For me it must be a man, for him also a man. It is
as if being right or left handed. But yet as in the past, people were vilified
for this (left handedness) and their lives judged and blighted.

The Catholic Church is waging a call to arms against gay people,  a fear
campaign against an already marginalised community, pitting parent against
child, friend against friend, employer against employee. Gay people are just
people! Who feel, bleed, contribute to society and need love, just the same as
heterosexuals. The Catholic Church and government are bestowing harsh
judgement by denying gay people the right to sanctify their union. Yet in the
same breath, the Catholic Church demands celibacy for the unmarried. So are
celibacy and prohibition the lifelong punishment of finding oneself gay?
Because the Church decrees?

Throughout my life I have had many people "come out" to me; tell me that they
are gay. It is a frightening time for the gay person, whether young or old, to
have to face. To know one is now lifelong going to be regarded as different
and suffer condemnation: the need for vigilance at all times in case of 'gay
bashing'; the stark and shocking realisation this is 'their punishment' and
that they must forever forfeit the right and pleasure of marriage, is a brutal
and terrifying realisation. To have to face societal wrath and fear; to come
to understand that society considers there is something wrong with them. The
need for many to live a secret life outside society in order to be accepted,
in order to be able to survive. To put up with jokes at their expense, to
watch their back at work, to watch their back at play; to watch their back
full stop. To be labelled 'different'... to be regarded almost as another
species who must be contained and denied the privilege of marriage at all
costs so as not to offend God and country, and all this hype played out and
reinforced in the media on a continual, everyday basis, negatively
perpetrating the difference and bringing focus to the state of being gay.

What message does that send? No wonder the suicide rate for gay people is so
high.

To the Catholic Church I would say, is this what Jesus promoted? Gay bashing and punishment? The right to hurt and marginalise its congregation? Did he not have love for all? Was he not all inclusive? In today's society, based on his teachings and all embracing love whatever creed, race or crime, would Jesus steam roll this call to arms as the church is now doing; a move guaranteed to wound gay people and deny their human right to the protection and sanctity of marriage? And in so doing whip up hatred and fear? To divide the nation? Would Jesus regard homosexuality as a crime? Aren't such harmful judgements and actions peddled by the Church in his name, against everything Jesus stood for?

I have seen more suicides and self harm both in the young and old, because they find themselves gay and cannot deal with a lifetime of homophobia and being denied by society. The fear and condemnation faced when "coming out" is terrifying. And one only has to look to the media and advertisements such as Katter's to see their fears are founded and that reality is worse.

Denying marriage and legalised committment to people who love each other is cruel. It whisks up hatred and fear of gay people, it underlines and illustrates the difference between heterosexuals and homosexuals, it creates a "them and us", it promotes a righteousness and a 'wrongness" and arms the populace with an excuse for malice insinuating that gay people are less than worthy and have somehow chosen to live a 'debauch' lifestyle.

We call ourselves an enlightened and civilised society so isn't it time to start acting like one. Allowing gay people to marry will enhance society, not degrade it. However, the current 'circus' in this debate greatly degrades society.

There is safety for all in allowing persons in committed relationships the right to sanctify their relationship and gain societal blessing through marriage whether gay or not. I believe in marriage and legally sanctified unions. It is good for society.

Please lets put an end to exclusion of gay people from being able to marry and pass the relevant law'

Pat Assheton
mother of a gay son