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### **Statement from Bishop David Zubik on Pope Francis' Comments Regarding Civil Unions**

The Holy Father's recent comments on the passage of a law for civil unions for homosexual persons reflect his pastoral approach to persons who may be on the peripheries of society. He is reported to have commented in the film *Francesco*, "Homosexuals have a right to be part of the family. They're children of God and have a right to a family".

His comments in no way signal a departure from the teaching of the Catholic Church concerning marriage or homosexuality. It speaks, rather, of a pastoral approach to these issues.

Pope Francis taught in his apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (#52), "We need to acknowledge the great variety of family situations that can offer a certain stability, but de-facto or same sex unions, for example, may not simply be equated with marriage. No union that is temporary or closed to the transmission of life can ensure the future of society."

In essence, Pope Francis has not promoted change in the moral or sacramental teaching of the Church. He has simply called for all people to be treated with the dignity and love which is their due by being created in God's image and likeness and being children of the Heavenly Father. The message of Jesus is He came to save us all. It is with the grace of God that we focus on the beauty of the person and that we are called to treat each other with fairness and dignity.