



*Archdiocese of Saint Paul
and Minneapolis*

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

MOST REVEREND JOHN C. NIENSTEDT

October 4, 2011

Dear Priests of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis,

A major issue will be placed before the State of Minnesota in the November 2012 election, a constitutional amendment to define marriage as the union of one man and one woman. The sanctity of marriage and the vital role of the family is at stake. It is a firmly-held teaching of our Church that a marriage is a union of a husband and a wife, and that they together are the ones suited to be father and mother. To define it otherwise is a detriment to the common good of society.

It is imperative that we marshal our resources to educate the faithful about the Church's teachings on these matters, and to vigorously organize and support a grass roots effort to get out the vote to support the passage of this amendment.

There are two urgent action items for October. First, priests are strongly encouraged to attend the Clergy Study Day on Wednesday, October 19. A good portion of the afternoon agenda will be dedicated to this topic, and the slate of speakers will provide the moral foundations to the Church's teaching as well as strategies for how to approach our parishioners.

Every pastor is asked to appoint a captain or co-chairs to lead a special parish ad hoc committee to spearhead this effort at the local level. This person needs to be talented, energetic, and dedicated, because the task is large, not as big as a capital campaign, but demanding nonetheless. The pastor should submit the captain's name to the Minnesota Catholic Conference (MCC) which will organize this effort for all of the parishes and dioceses of the State of Minnesota. Our contact person is Cathy Deeds, and she can be reached at cdeeds@mccc.org or (651) 227-2675.

Many resources are available to you. The MCC sent a tool kit to each priest in August which provides informative literature on the Marriage Amendment, including a statement on marriage and a brief catechesis on marriage by the Catholic bishops of Minnesota. Other resources are available on the MCC web site: www.mccc.org/issues/marriage. Our bishops promulgated a pastoral letter on marriage in 2009 entitled, Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan. It and other resources are available on the USCCB web site.

Minnesota for Marriage will coordinate this effort at the state level, and many prominent organizations are key members: the MCC, the Minnesota Family Council, the National Organization for Marriage, the Greater Minnesota Association of Evangelicals, and others. Much information is available at www.minnesotafor marriage.com.

As priests of the Archdiocese, your support and leadership on this issue is crucial. More information will be forthcoming soon. Please be assured of our prayers for you and the fruitfulness of your priestly ministry.

+ *John C. Nienstedt*

The Most Reverend John C. Nienstedt
Archbishop of St. Paul and Minneapolis

Fr. Michael A. Van Sloun

Fr. Michael A. Van Sloun
Priest Liaison, MCC