

# CATHOLIC CONFERENCE OF OHIO

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## Catholic Bishops of Ohio Statement in Support of State Issue 1: Marriage Protection Amendment

October 5, 2004

On November 2, 2004 Ohio citizens will be asked to vote on an amendment to Ohio's Constitution that will prohibit the legalization of same-sex unions in Ohio. The Catholic Bishops of Ohio support passage of this amendment.

As Bishops, we have addressed the issue of marriage and same-sex unions in various teaching documents at the national level<sup>1</sup>. We appreciate the prayerful and conscientious considerations many have given to this issue.

The Catholic Church believes and clearly teaches that marriage is a faithful, exclusive, and lifelong union between one man and one woman, joined as husband and wife in an intimate partnership of life and love. Marriage, whose nature and purposes are established by God, can only be the union of a man and a woman. This truth ought to be recognized as such in law. Marriage is a basic human and social institution. In a manner unlike any other relationship, marriage makes a unique and irreplaceable contribution to the common good of society, especially through the procreation and education of children. Marriage did not originate from either the church or state, but from God. Therefore, we believe, neither church nor state ought to alter the nature and structure of marriage.

Our defense of marriage must focus primarily on the fundamental importance of marriage for children, families and society, not on homosexuality or other matters. The Church's teaching about the human dignity of every person, including homosexuals, is also clear. Homosexual persons are to be treated with respect and compassion. Our respect for them means we condemn all forms of unjust discrimination, harassment or

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<sup>1</sup> *Promote, Preserve, Protect Marriage*, USCCB Administrative Committee, September 9, 2003; *Between Man and Woman: Questions and Answers About Marriage and Same-Sex Unions*, USCCB, November 12, 2003; *Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility*, USCCB Administrative Committee, November 2003.

abuse. Equally recognized is the Church's teaching about the meaning of sexual relations and their place only within the married life of one man and one woman.

We encourage all eligible voters to vote on November 2, 2004. In the Catholic tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue and participation in the political process a moral obligation. All believers are called to faithful citizenship, to become informed, active, and responsive participants in the society in which they live. There should be no separation between one's faith and life in either

public or private realms. Catholics should act on their beliefs with a well-formed conscience based on Sacred Scripture and Tradition. We should be a community of conscience within society. By our voice and our vote, we should contribute to society's welfare and test its public life by the standards of right reason and Gospel truth. This is particularly urgent in light of the need to defend marriage and to oppose the legalization of same-sex unions as marriages.

Once again, we ask that you vote in favor of State Issue 1 to amend the constitution recognizing marriage as a union only between one man and one woman.

+ The Most Rev. Daniel E. Pilarczyk  
Archbishop of Cincinnati

+ The Most Rev. John Kudrick  
Bishop of Byzantine Diocese of Parma

+ The Most Rev. Carl K. Moeddel  
Auxiliary Bishop of Cincinnati

+ The Most Rev. R. Daniel Conlon  
Bishop of Steubenville

+ The Most Rev. Anthony M. Pilla  
Bishop of Cleveland

+ The Most Rev. Leonard P. Blair  
Bishop of Toledo

+ The Most Rev. Martin J. Amos  
Auxiliary Bishop of Cleveland

+ The Most Rev. Robert W. Donnelly  
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+ The Most Rev. Roger Gries  
Auxiliary Bishop of Cleveland

+ The Most Rev. J. Michael Botean  
Bishop of Romanian Byzantine Catholic  
Diocese of Canton

+ The Most Rev. A. James Quinn  
Auxiliary Bishop of Cleveland

+ The Most Rev. Robert M. Moskal  
Bishop of St. Josaphat

+ The Most Rev. James A. Griffin  
Bishop of Columbus

+ The Most Rev. Thomas J. Tobin  
Bishop of Youngstown

