



### SUPPORTING A CULTURE OF MARRIAGE

**WHEREAS**, marriage is a natural institution based on ancient human values that has been recognized over time as a unique and deeply rooted social, legal and religious institution; and

**WHEREAS**, marriage reflects the natural biological complementarity between a man and a woman, which is woven into the social and religious fabric of every major culture and society; and

**WHEREAS**, marriage is a natural institution that predates the state, the state is therefore obligated to recognize, respect, and protect it; and

**WHEREAS**, the Catholic Church, based on Scripture and the Judeo-Christian tradition, teaches that marriage is a faithful, exclusive and lifelong union between one man and one woman joined in an intimate partnership of life and love; and

**WHEREAS**, marriage provides for the mutual fulfillment of spouses as well as the procreation and education of children; and

**WHEREAS**, this mutual bond provides the most favorable environment in which to protect the rights and best interests of children; and

**WHEREAS**, in his first encyclical *Lumen Fidei*, Pope Francis described the union of man and woman in marriage as a “a sign and presence of God’s own love, and of the acknowledgment and acceptance of the goodness of sexual differentiation, whereby spouses can become one flesh and are enabled to give birth to a new life, a manifestation of the Creator’s goodness, wisdom and loving plan;” and

**WHEREAS**, Pope Francis, when speaking on the subject of marriage and the family, has said, “Children have a right to grow up in a family with a father and a mother capable of creating a suitable environment for the child’s development and emotional maturity;” and

**WHEREAS**, the authentic nature of marriage is threatened by the Supreme Court’s June 26, 2015, ruling in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, which struck down all state laws defining marriage as between one man and one woman; and

**WHEREAS**, Archbishop Joseph Kurtz, President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, issued a statement on this ruling, which is reproduced here in its entirety:

Regardless of what a narrow majority of the Supreme Court may declare at this moment in history, the nature of the human person and marriage remains unchanged and unchangeable. Just as *Roe v. Wade* did not settle the question of abortion over forty years ago, *Obergefell v. Hodges* does not settle the question of marriage today. Neither decision is rooted in the truth, and as a result, both will eventually fail. Today the Court is wrong again. It is profoundly immoral and unjust for the government to declare that two people of the same sex can constitute a marriage.

The unique meaning of marriage as the union of one man and one woman is inscribed in our bodies as male and female. The protection of this meaning is a critical dimension of the “integral ecology” that Pope Francis has called us to promote. Mandating marriage redefinition across the country is a tragic error that harms the common good and most vulnerable among us, especially children. The law has a duty to support every child’s basic right to be raised, where possible, by his or her married mother and father in a stable home.

Jesus Christ, with great love, taught unambiguously that from the beginning marriage is the lifelong union of one man and one woman. As Catholic bishops, we follow our Lord and will continue to teach and to act according to this truth.

I encourage Catholics to move forward with faith, hope, and love: faith in the unchanging truth about marriage, rooted in the immutable nature of the human person and confirmed by divine revelation; hope that these truths will once again prevail in our society, not only by their logic, but by their great beauty and manifest service to the common good; and love for all our neighbors, even those who hate us or would punish us for our faith and moral convictions.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we hereby adopt the statement by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in full; and

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we will remain steadfast in our efforts to promote the Church’s understanding of marriage as the faithful, exclusive and lifelong union of one man and one woman joined in an intimate partnership of life and love; and

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we pray that the Holy Spirit enlighten elected officials to adopt laws, and judges to make judicial decisions that affirm the family and the authentic nature of marriage; and

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we join with the bishops of Canada, United States, and throughout the world in their efforts to achieve legal protection at the national, provincial and local levels for the definition of marriage as the union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.