

ARCHBISHOP'S OFFICE
2121 COMMONWEALTH AVENUE
BRIGHTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02135-3193

September 21, 2005

My Dear Friends in Christ,


As members of the Church and our local communities it is of great importance that we respect one another and allow each voice to be heard. When we speak to the significant issues of the day we fulfill our responsibility to participate in civic life.

The Archdiocese of Boston endorses *VoteOnMarriage.org* a committee formed for the purpose of sponsoring the Massachusetts Protection of Marriage Amendment, which would define marriage in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as only the union of one man and one woman. The committee seeks a statewide referendum in 2008 that would allow the citizens to vote on the legal definition of marriage. An important first step in this process is gathering signatures of registered voters who support the opportunity to vote on this matter. The parishes of the Archdiocese can assist in this effort by way of collecting signatures after Masses or at other parish events. Please consider supporting the referendum drive by way of your signature in order that the people of Massachusetts can have the right to make a decision concerning the definition of marriage.

At this time I wish to remind the people of the Church that we are all members of a family of faith and beyond the Church we are all members of the human family. There is no room in the Church or in society for rejection, disregard or mistreatment of a person because of their sexual orientation. As Catholics we are called to respect the God-given dignity of every person.

As on other occasions I call upon all people to consider the importance that this issue holds for our society. Marriage is the foundation of family life and has rightly been accorded special recognition and privileges. Family life has been subjected to increasing pressures in recent years, often to the detriment of children. An expansion of the definition of marriage will not benefit families but rather further erode the unique and important role that marriage plays in contributing to society. Much is at stake as we consider this matter, may God grant us the wisdom to do what is right.

Asking God's blessings upon you, I remain

Devotedly yours in Christ,

Archbishop of Boston