



DIocese OF FALL RIVER  
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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

September 12, 2005

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

In the course of our lives, there are particular moments when we are asked by Our Lord Jesus Christ to act with courage and resolve for the sake of the truth. One of these pivotal moments is now upon us, as we face the challenge of restoring and defending the truth about marriage, here in our State of Massachusetts.

As you well know by now, the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts has changed the law in our State to define marriage in such a way that same-sex unions are now recognized as valid marriages. This Court decision rejects the fact that there is a truth about marriage that must be acknowledged and respected.

It must be understood that the truth about marriage as the union of one man and one woman is an *objective reality* to be recognized and protected. The institution of marriage predates both government and religion, and therefore, neither the State nor the Church has the authority or power to redefine marriage. It is a union that is part of the order of creation, and it is part of the fabric of our civilization. It is critical for the good of our society and for civilization that our laws reflect this reality.

A new, fresh effort is underway this fall to restore the truth about marriage, in the form of a signature drive that would allow the citizens of the Commonwealth to vote on a proposed amendment to the State Constitution, which would define marriage as only the union of one man and one woman. In the last few years, 18 other states have adopted similar constitutional amendments protecting marriage. I ask you to join me, and the other Catholic Bishops of Massachusetts, in supporting this crucial effort to protect marriage, by signing one of the petitions. I have requested the cooperation of the pastors throughout the diocese in facilitating and encouraging participation in the signature drive.

As faithful citizens, we have a moral obligation to defend the truth, no matter how counter-cultural or unappreciated our convictions may be. The time is upon us, to take a stand and to act, lovingly but firmly, to restore and defend the truth about marriage.

With prayerful gratitude for your assistance in this noble effort, I am

Sincerely yours in the Lord

Bishop of Fall River