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Constitutional Amendment Promotes, Preserves, and Protects Marriage

1. The Church teaches that marriage is more than a civil law contract. It is a faithful, exclusive, and lifelong covenant relationship between one man and one woman, joined as husband and wife in an intimate partnership of life and love for the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of their children.
2. To promote, preserve, and protect marriage today requires, among other things, that the Church advocate for legislative and public policy initiatives that define and support marriage as a unique, essential relationship and institution.
3. The 2004 Kentucky General Assembly has placed the following constitutional amendment on the ballot on November 2, 2004 for the voters of the Commonwealth to ratify or reject: *“Only a marriage between one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as a marriage in Kentucky. A legal status identical or substantially similar to that of marriage for unmarried individuals shall not be valid or recognized.”*
4. Current Kentucky law states: “As used and recognized in the law of the Commonwealth, "marriage" refers only to the civil status, condition, or relation of one (1) man and one (1) woman united in law for life, for the discharge to each other and the community of the duties legally incumbent upon those whose association is founded on the distinction of sex.”
5. Passage of this amendment to the Kentucky Constitution would reduce the chance that a court would declare the current Kentucky law unconstitutional under Kentucky’s Constitution.
6. The Church’s defense of marriage focuses primarily on the importance of marriage, not on homosexuality or other matters. The Church’s teaching about the dignity of homosexual persons is clear. Homosexuals should have an active role in the Christian community. They must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity. Our respect for them means we condemn all forms of unjust discrimination, harassment or abuse. Equally clear is the Church’s teaching about the meaning of sexual relations and their place only within married life.
7. God established the family as the basic cell of human society. Therefore, we must strive to make the needs and concerns of families a central national priority. Marriage must be protected as a lifelong commitment between a man and a woman and our laws should reflect this principle. Marriage, as God intended, provides the basic foundation for family

life and the common good. It must be supported in the face of the many pressures working to undermine it. Policies related to the definition of marriage, taxes, the workplace, divorce, and welfare must be designed to help families stay together and to reward responsibility and sacrifice for children. Because financial and economic factors have such an impact on the well-being and stability of families, it is important that just wages be paid to those who work to support their families and that generous efforts be made to aid poor families.

8. For more information about the marriage amendment issue, read the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) September 9, 2003 Statement of the Administrative Committee, *Promote, Preserve, Protect Marriage*, <http://www.usccb.org/comm/archives/2003/03-179.htm>, or visit the USCCB's *Between Man and Woman: Questions and Answers About Marriage and Same-Sex Unions*, <http://www.usccb.org/flwy/manandwoman.htm>. Also available is *Always Our Children: A Pastoral Message to Parents of Homosexual Children and Suggestions for Pastoral Ministers*, a Statement of the Bishops' Committee on Marriage and Family, <http://www.usccb.org/laity/always.htm>.
9. The Catholic Conference of Kentucky supports ratification of this constitutional amendment so we continue to promote, preserve, and protect marriage.

Adopted on August 24, 2004 by the Catholic Conference of Kentucky
+Archbishop Thomas C. Kelly, O.P. – Archdiocese of Louisville
+Bishop John J. McRaith – Diocese of Owensboro
+Bishop Roger J. Foys – Diocese of Covington
+Bishop Ronald W. Gainer – Diocese of Lexington