

Broad Group of Religious Leaders Unite in Support of Marriage Amendment

Mark Adams

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The letter was produced by the recently formed Religious Coalition for Marriage which describes itself as an “ad hoc, interfaith committee of America’s religious leaders who share a common concern for the well-being of marriage in our nation.” The committee was formed in the hopes of encouraging religious leaders to mobilize grassroots support for the Marriage Protection Amendment which is scheduled for a vote in the Senate on June 6.

The coalition is notable for the theological diversity of its participants. In describing its mission the coalition notes that “although we do not share full unity on a host of important theological beliefs, we all agree and affirm – with a united voice – the definition, nature and purpose of marriage”. Among the 16 Catholic bishops who were signatories to the letter, seven are Cardinals. They are Cardinal Edward Egan of New York; Cardinal Francis George of Chicago; Cardinal William Keeler of Baltimore; Cardinal Roger Mahony of Los Angeles; Cardinal Theodore McCarrick of Washington; Cardinal Sean Patrick O’Malley of Boston; and Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia.

During a media conference call held on Tuesday, Cardinal Rigali acknowledged that with regard to politics the Catholic Church generally prefers for its bishops to teach broad, foundational principles and leave it to the laity to develop specific public policy. But he told Culture & Cosmos that the threat against marriage is so real and immanent that he believed it necessary to advocate the proposed



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Briefs

Constitutional amendment. “We are at rock bottom,” he said. “The Church sees this as the only practical way that marriage can be safeguarded and protected.”

In order to advance its grassroots strategy, the coalition set up a website, www.rcm.org, which provides action items, statements of various religious bodies, sample sermons, and other resources for clergy. One of the coalition’s principle goals is to start a postcard campaign in support of the amendment. The Knights of Columbus have already announced that in conjunction with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops they will be distributing 10 million such postcards. The postcards include a brief statement of support for the marriage amendment and provide a place for people to sign their name, write their address and write the address of their senator. According to a statement from the Knights of Columbus the distribution of the postcards is to be a “major project of the Knights of Columbus, and all councils and assemblies are asked to make it a high priority during the next two months.” USCCB president Bishop William Skylsted sent a letter to all US bishops asking them to encourage their local pastors to cooperate in the campaign when they are contacted by local Knights.

The coalition was formed as the fruit of a series of scholars conferences organized over the past two years at Princeton University and Washington DC. Along with a small number of other groups, the Culture of life Foundation sponsored or hosted each of the three meetings.



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