



Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage

3211 FOURTH STREET NE • WASHINGTON DC 20017-1194 • 202-541-3040 • FAX 202-541-3176

MEMORANDUM

To: All Bishops

From: Bishop Richard Malone, Chairman
Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth
Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone, Chairman
Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage

Date: May 28, 2015

Re: Preparation for Supreme Court Ruling on Marriage

This June, the Supreme Court is expected to issue a decision on the consolidated marriage cases presently before it. The Court is considering two questions: (1) whether the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution requires states to issue marriage licenses to two persons of the same sex and (2) whether it requires a state to recognize a “marriage” between two people of the same sex when their “marriage” was lawfully licensed and performed out-of-state.

Given the multiple possible rulings by the Court – and in addition to an anticipated statement to be released from the Conference – specific and brief talking points will be provided on the day of the decision to all bishops and communications directors, via the Bishops Only website and USCCB Media Relations, to assist any diocesan communications. Thereafter, further legal analysis will be forthcoming.

At this time, in order to provide further context in advance of the Supreme Court’s decision and to encourage continued education and prayer, enclosed are the following items:

- Backgrounder on the cases
- Open Letter: “The Defense of Marriage and the Right of Religious Freedom: Reaffirming a Shared Witness”
- Lead Messages on Marriage Redefinition
- Nationwide Bulletin Insert: Marriage and the Supreme Court
- Homily-help bullet points in anticipation of the Supreme Court decision on marriage

Spanish versions of some of these items will follow. Please share these materials with your pastors and clergy, communications director, marriage and family life director, State Catholic Conference director, diocesan attorney(s) and others as you deem appropriate.

Please also consider encouraging renewed participation in the Call to Prayer for Life, Marriage, and Religious Liberty (www.usccb.org/pray), especially as we near the observance of the Fortnight for Freedom on June 21-July 4.

Lastly, in the event the media pose any questions regarding the marriage cases in advance of the Supreme Court’s ruling, a possible response might simply note that, while no one is certain what the Court will do, we know what the Court *should* do, namely, uphold the right of states to define marriage as the union of one man and one woman and to recognize only such marriages – all because these laws reflect the truth about marriage that has been known by humanity for millennia.

Thank you for all that you do on behalf of building a culture of marriage and the family. Please do not hesitate to contact us or USCCB staff if you have any questions.

Enclosures