



June 22, 2007 - Archdiocese Announces Campaign to Promote the Vocation of Marriage

(Brighton, MA) - Today, on the Feast of St. Thomas More, a married man who cherished the vocation of marriage, the Archdiocese of Boston launched an important prayer and educational campaign for the strengthening of the vocation of marriage.

Long before the Massachusetts legislature voted last week to deny the people of the Commonwealth their right to vote on the marriage amendment, the four dioceses of Massachusetts were working to develop the initiative launched today. The actions of the Massachusetts legislature last week only energizes the Catholic Church in its efforts to promote the vocation of marriage to better serve families and society in future generations.

In letters sent this week to pastors, Cardinal Seán writes, "As many of you are aware, the vocation of marriage is in crisis. Over the past twenty years, there has been more than a 60% decline in the number of marriages recorded in the Archdiocese of Boston; down from 12,274 in 1986 to 4,519 in 2006. At the national and local level, the Church has been responding to the many challenges faced by married couples. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops is in the midst of a multi-year National Pastoral Initiative on Marriage."

The Cardinal noted that more than 18 months ago in the Archdiocese of Boston, he established a Committee on Marriage, which is providing recommendations to respond to the needs of engaged and married couples.

Kari Colella, Coordinator for Marriage Ministries for the Archdiocese said, "The Bishops, in collaboration with the Massachusetts Catholic Conference and their Family Life and Pro-Life Sub-Committee, have worked to develop an initiative that seeks to guide parishes, clergy, and lay members in praying for and promoting the vocation of marriage. We have been blessed and privileged to be a part of this important responsibility, which we pray opens hearts and minds to the vocation of marriage as central in our Catholic experience."

This summer the educational phase of the campaign in support of marriage will be developed, and in the fall the program will be available at the vicariate and parish levels.

The Archdiocese will begin working with parishes to lay the foundation for this important initiative, by encouraging clergy, religious and all Catholics to engage in the following five steps:

1. Distributing the marriage prayer cards in each parish.
2. Praying the prayer each day and encouraging parishioners to do so.
3. Including the prayer in weekday and Sunday liturgies.
4. Incorporating the support of marriage in preaching when suitable.
5. Utilizing bulletin announcements now and throughout the summer months.

Following is the prayer each parish is being asked to pray across the Archdiocese:



Heavenly Father,
through the intercession of the Holy Family,

Help us treasure the gift of marriage that reflects the love of Christ for the Church, where the self-giving love of husband and wife unites them more perfectly and cooperates in your plan for new life created in your image.

Help us support men and women in their vocation of marriage, especially in difficult times when they join their sufferings to the Cross.

Help us uphold the institution of marriage in our society as the place where love is nurtured and family life begins.

Help us acknowledge that our future depends on this love and on your providential care for us. Amen.

Please pray daily for the vocation of marriage.

Nihil Obstat: Reverend Mark O'Connell, I.C.D.
Imprimatur: Sean Cardinal O'Malley, OFM, Cap
Archbishop of Boston

May 16, 2007



Vocation of Marriage Prayer

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