

Friday September 18, 2009

Thank you for your participation with petition signing, 2d collection notes to the Bishop and prayers for justice in our state. Bishop Malone spoke of our group calling it *by name* during his address at the Augusta Civic Center last Sunday night. He assured the crowd that we are "very small" (no longer true!) and warned that members of "Catholics for Marriage Equality are dissidents." Right! We are dissenting from his political opinion while upholding his theological teaching that marriage is a Sacrament.

C4ME purpose: (1) to give hope to those who are hurt and angry because of our bishop's determination to overturn the legislature's passage of marriage equality and, (2) to disseminate information that is truthful and respectful stating why marriage equality is a matter of civil rights and social justice that Catholics are free to support, indeed may feel compelled to support as a matter of informed political opinion and social conscience.

The crux of our message is: Our Church's *theological teaching* is that Marriage is a Sacrament. With that theological teaching, we are 100% in agreement. Whether to vote No on 1 is a matter of *political opinion*. Catholics for Marriage Equality respectfully disagrees with Bishop Malone's *political opinion* and urges Catholics to vote **No on 1** for marriage equality for all Maine's citizens.

Distorted Information Alert: In his letter to parishioners 09/12-13, the Bishop quotes Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger's "Consideration Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons" to assert "it is a duty of Catholics to oppose same-sex marriage." The "Consideration" was written by Cardinal Ratzinger as Prefect for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. It has not been issued by him as Pope. It is not a *theological teaching* of the Church! Catholics are not required to submit to its opinion. C4ME will send out more information about this misleading use of Cardinal Ratzinger's document next week. In the meantime, you many want to read it yourself.

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20030731_homosexual-unions_en.html)

Action Alert for next two weekends: A DVD homily by the bishop will be substituted for the priest's homily in each parish either this weekend or next. Check your cluster letter for date. C4ME suggests the following responses to this further painful intrusion into our worship space: (1) spread the word and organize those who disagree with the bishop to sit together for mutual support and witness; (2) during the DVD, stand silently in your place; or (3) kneel in prayer, or (4) walk to the back of the church and stand quietly or turn your backs to the screen, or (5) go outside the Church and have your petition ready for others to sign. (6) do whatever your heart and mind recommend to you, but please be respectful of the other members of your parish community.

C4ME Resources for You: Everything is available in hard copy from a contact person (listed below) or as PDF file from www.religiouscoalition.org

1) Petition for Maine Catholics to sign *through Sunday October 18*. These will be used to inform the bishop and Maine voters that all Catholics do not hold the same political opinion as the bishop. *note: the petition can be signed on-line in the Catholic section of www.religiouscoalition.org*

2) Responses to each of the bishop's six parish bulletin inserts about same-sex marriage.

3) Response to the *Harvest* article by Fr. Michael Henchal

4) FACE book page for C4ME! If you are a Face Book member, please check us out and become a fan.

5) Stories of your experiences with this issue in your local parish: how the 2d collection was handled, prayers of the faithful, comments by your priest or others -- whatever you would like to share with other C4ME participants. These will be sent periodically with the subject line: C4ME Stories. Those interested can open it; those not can delete. *Please send your stories to Kathy Tosney, irishtoz@hotmail.com*

6) Buttons and bumper stickers that read: Catholics for Marriage Equality: God is Love

Your area contact persons for C4ME

Eliot, Jack Dougherty, 207-439-2303

Ellsworth, Bob McAteer, alibobm@adelphia.net

Lewiston, Pamella Starbird Beliveau, prbeliveau@hotmail.com

Portland, Kathy Tosney, irishtoz@hotmail.com

Brunswick/Topsham, Anne Underwood, underwooda@suscom-maine.net

If you are contacted by the press or asked to speak about Catholics for Marriage Equality you may refer the caller to the person listed above in your area. If you are willing to speak on behalf of No on 1, please let me or the person in your area know. Please remember to say: **Voting No on 1 means marriage equality for our gay and lesbian relatives and friends. This is our political opinion and option as faithful, informed Catholics.**

Blessings and Peace as we continue our work for justice,

Anne