

Friday September 25

Greetings Catholics for Marriage Equality [C4ME] Friends,

Welcome to the almost 100 new C4ME participants this week! And, continuing thanks to the original members for actively promoting C4ME's purpose, spreading C4ME's message that **faithful Catholics can Vote No on 1**, and circulating C4ME's petition (available also religiouscoalition.org). This weekly note is posted at web site. Please tell your friends.

A NEW C4ME ACTION to show solidarity with Catholic No on 1 supporters: **wear something red to Mass** each week until after the November 3 election. Red has many hues: pinks, purples, maroons. Scarves, ties, jewelry, hats; as well as shirts, blouses, coats, sweaters, or shawls can signal to others your support of marriage for same-sex couples. If you spot others in red hues, sit with them if they or you feel alone in your conviction. Remember, you are not alone: many, many Catholics support the right of same-sex couples to civil marriage as recognized by the state (thanks to Bob McAteer in Ellsworth for wear red suggestion).

CONTINUING C4ME ACTIONS **wear your small purple "Catholics for Marriage Equality: God is Love" button** to church every week. And, wear it throughout the week! It is an incredible conversation starter at stores, farmer's markets, theatres, sports events, medical offices, gyms. Often the conversation feels more pastoral than political as "lapsed" or "recovering" or "discouraged" or "embarrassed" Catholics confess their reasons for not being "practicing Catholics;" or, still-faithful Catholics admit to problems with the bishop's approach to same-sex marriage. So many say "thanks for being different from what the Church is appearing in public to be." It is a powerful witness to the profound humanity of the Catholic social justice tradition and a quiet reminder that God is Love and that God's love can be experienced with another whether we are in church or about our daily lives.

**petition signatures:** *Keep circulating wherever you meet a Catholic!* When you have 10 names, please return that sheet to the address at the end of the statement. It is time to begin to tally responses. The same petition is on-line at this web site. No need to sign both. Duplicate and out-of-state signatures will be culled from the final count which *we hope to release October 18 at the latest.*

DVD Action Alert: The bishop has ordered the priests to show his DVD homily Sept.26/27 or October 3/4. Check your cluster letter for your parish date. C4ME hopes you express your feelings about the DVD respectfully. Many people report they will walk out quietly as the DVD is turned on to stand at the back of or outside the church during the DVD and return for Eucharist.

Distorted Information Alert: In his letter to parishioners 09/12-13, as he most likely will in his DVD homily, 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 is not a Papal teaching.** Quoting from its introduction, "The...Considerations do not contain new doctrinal elements; they seek rather to reiterate the essential points on this question and provide arguments drawn from reason which could be used by Bishops in preparing more specific interventions." Further it states, "the arguments that follow are addressed not only to those who believe in Christ, but to all persons committed to promoting..." *A teaching of the Church is directed only to Catholics.* Further, it comes from the Pope speaking as teaching authority, not from a Cardinal giving suggestions to bishops. The only "*teaching of the Church*" about marriage is: *marriage is a sacrament.* With that teaching C4ME agrees. We disagree with the political opinion of Cardinal Ratzinger and Bishop Malone. Read Ratzinger at [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_20030731\\_homosexual-unions\\_en.htm](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20030731_homosexual-unions_en.htm)

General Reminder: [Contact your town office NOW to obtain an absentee ballot if you will be out-of-state November 3.](#) Many people are voting early absentee NOW! This is a great idea -- consider it!

Save these dates: October 15 at 7:00 p.m N.H. Episcopal Bishop Gene Robinson will speak at an interfaith event in St. Luke's Cathedral. His topic: "Why Religion Matters in the Marriage Equality Debate."

October 18 at 2:00 Rally for People of Faith Supporting Same-Sex Marriage in Monument Square, Portland. C4ME is seeking donations for a banner behind which we can march. More details to follow.

Bangor area events are being organized.

November 3: VOTE NO on 1.

Hope! Some C4ME participants were interviewed this week by Chuck Colbert, writer for National Catholic Reporter. After completing his interviews he wrote: "I must say, if Catholics like the ones you have found for me to interview are anything like the rest of the state's faithful, bring 'em on. Such articulate and deeply committed people. Altogether, this interviewing endeavor gives much hope and faith."

Information: if you are asked by family, friends (or your priest) about C4ME, below are two statements to help shape your responses.

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.

C4ME Resources for You: Everything is available in hard copy from a contact person (listed below), on line religiouscoalition.

1) Petition for Maine Catholics to sign. These will be used to inform the bishop and Maine voters that all Catholics do not hold the same political opinion as the bishop.

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, email below.*

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, Pamela 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 , you may refer the caller to the person listed above in your area. If you are willing to speak on behalf of C4ME for 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

