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Dignity/Dallas leaders respond to bishops' initiative against same-sex unions

DALLAS, TEXAS (Nov. 3, 2008) – Leaders of Dignity/Dallas, a support group for gay Catholics and their families, stated their objection to an initiative by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to reach younger voters by expressing their concerns about same-sex unions via YouTube, the popular video-sharing Web site.

“By taking their debate to YouTube just days before several states are to vote on legislation to define marriage as being valid only between a man and a woman, the bishops are clearly hoping to shape the outcome of the election,” says Jon Garinn, Dignity/Dallas co-pastor. “Once again, they’ve used us and our families as a way to support discrimination.”

An English-language video features Archbishop Joseph Kurtz of Louisville, chairman of the USCCB’s Ad Hoc Committee for the Defense of Marriage. Archbishop José Gomez of San Antonio, chair of the bishops' Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church, speaks on a Spanish-language video.

“Reaffirming the traditional understanding of marriage is neither discrimination nor the denial of rights,” the bishops say. “Like all people, homosexual persons have the right to be treated with respect and to live in peace with the support of their loved ones.”

Proposed marriage protection amendments in Florida, California and Arizona would define a valid marriage in the state constitution as between a man and a woman. The latest polls in all three states indicate that the amendments will pass.

Earlier this month, Connecticut’s Supreme Court made that state the third one to legalize marriage for same-sex couples, joining Massachusetts and California. In all three cases the courts overturned laws that banned same-sex marriages.

“The bishops warn that if successful, ‘this effort of redefining marriage to include same-sex unions will bring confusion to what marriage actually means,’” says Dignity/Dallas co-pastor Cliff Garinn. “Beyond that, they say that children will be forced to learn that marriage is merely one kind of loving relationship among many.

“This shows that the bishops have very little understanding of the truth of how we live our lives,” he adds.

Dignity/Dallas is part of DignityUSA, a national organization that works for respect and justice for all gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons in the Catholic Church through education, advocacy and support.

About Dignity/Dallas

For more than 35 years, Dignity/Dallas has provided a spiritual home for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Catholics, and their families and friends in North Texas. For more information, visit www.dignitydallas.org.

About Dignity/USA

DignityUSA is the nation's foremost organization of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Catholics, their families, friends and supporters. Founded in 1969, it is an independent nonprofit organization with members and chapters across the country. DignityUSA works for the full inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people in the life of the Church and society. For more information, visit www.dignitydallas.org.