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Virginia Catholic Bishops Issue Pastoral Letter on Proposed Virginia Marriage Amendment, Parishes to Disseminate in Bulk Quantities

In a joint letter issued to the 650,000 Catholics in their two dioceses, Arlington Bishop Paul Loverde and Richmond Bishop Francis DiLorenzo call the November ballot question on marriage an issue of “profound significance for the future of the family, the most fundamental social structure of our society.” To help Catholics throughout the Commonwealth reflect upon “the unique role the institution of marriage has in society,” the bishops’ letter is being sent this week to 133,000 households via diocesan newspapers.

Acknowledging that marriage “had a design and purpose long before any nation, religion, or law was established,” the bishops’ pastoral explains that “the proper role of both church and state is one of stewardship, to preserve our Creator’s great gift of marriage from one generation to the next.”

“Preserving and promoting marriage,” the bishops write, “is an integral component of our shared civic responsibility.”

Next month, the Virginia Catholic Conference (VCC) will also deliver bulk quantities of the letter and an accompanying “question and answer” piece to 185 Catholic parishes statewide, for distribution to their parishioners in church bulletins and vestibules. VCC Executive Director Jeff Caruso said the high level of enthusiasm for this initiative at the parish level “shows that the Catholic community considers this ballot question a watershed moment” and said the materials would provide “sound reasoning and accurate information to Catholic voters facing an important decision.”

The VCC is the public-policy agency of the Virginia Catholic bishops and their dioceses. Further information is available online at www.vacatholic.org.