

Religious Leaders Unite to Defend Marriage

Protection Act Goes on Trial

WASHINGTON, D.C., DEC. 6, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Religious leader from Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Evangelical, Jewish, Lutheran, Mormon, Orthodox, Pentecostal and Sikh communities in the United States united to publicize a letter affirming their commitment to protect marriage.

In the open letter released today, they underlined marriage as "the permanent and faithful union of one man and one woman."

The publication of this letter on "The Protection of Marriage: A Shared Commitment" is timely as today a federal court of appeals in San Francisco began hearing arguments on the Proposition 8 case.

Proposition 8, known as the California Marriage Protection Act, was approved by a majority of voters in that state in 2008. Thus it was added as a constitutional amendment that "only marriage between a man and a woman is valid and recognized in California."

However, last August, Judge Vaughn Walker ruled that the provision was unconstitutional, and thus the case passed to the federal court of appeals. The hearing began today.

Archbishop Timothy Dolan of New York, newly elected president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and a signer of the open letter, stated, "Today is the moment to stand for marriage and its unchangeable meaning."

"We hope this letter will encourage just that," he added.

The prelate affirmed that "the broad consensus reflected in this letter -- across great religious divides -- is clear: The law of marriage is not about imposing the religion of anyone, but about protecting the common good of everyone."

"People of any faith or no faith at all can recognize that when the law defines marriage as between one man and one woman, it legally binds a mother and a father to each other and their children, reinforcing the foundational cell of human society," he said.

In fact, the religious leaders emphasized this point in the letter, noting that "marriage is an institution fundamental to the well-being of all of society, not just religious communities."

They continued: "The preservation of the unique meaning of marriage is not a special or limited interest but serves the good of all.

"Therefore, we invite and encourage all people, both within and beyond our faith communities, to stand with us in promoting and protecting marriage as the union of one man and one woman."

On the Net:

Full text of letter: www.usccb.org/defenseofmarriage/shared-commitment.shtml