

Bishop Stresses Urgency of Defending Marriage

Prelate Calls for More Military Chaplains

BALTIMORE, Maryland, NOV. 19, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Archbishop Joseph Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky is underlining the urgency of defending and strengthening marriage in the face of federal-level attacks in the United States.

This was the appeal made Tuesday during the fall general assembly of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops by the chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee for the Defense of Marriage.

Archbishop Kurtz, who was elected vice president of the conference that same day, stated in a report on the committee's progress that "in our nation we find ourselves at a moment of great opportunity and consequence."

"The urgency of our priority to promote, protect, and strengthen marriage has not abated," he said. "Over the last year, we have seen attempts to legally redefine or erode the meaning of marriage at the state level continue to shift to the federal level."

"And among the federal-level attacks," the prelate continued, "the most worrisome is in the judicial realm, where California's Proposition 8 is being challenged as a violation of the U.S. constitution."

He noted, "If that challenge ultimately succeeds at the Supreme Court, the decision will have a moral, legal, and cultural impact akin to the Roe v. Wade decision of 1973."

The bishop stated, "And so now, the vital question that stands before all of us in this country is: What will we do for marriage?"

Evangelization

He affirmed that "coupled with this urgency is an ever-present task: to reach the heart of our culture and especially the hearts and minds of our young people with the Gospel, and particularly with the truth, beauty, and good of marriage."

"There are some who speak of inevitability, as if marriage is bound to be redefined and as if our younger generations cannot be persuaded otherwise," Archbishop Kurtz acknowledged. "But inevitability is a myth."

He added, "History, the present, and the future are not determined outside the scope of divine grace and human freedom, and such a view mistakenly looks to our young people and emerging adults with resignation rather than hope."

"Brothers, our proclamation makes a difference," the bishop exhorted.

"Even recent polling indicates this difference," he affirmed, "as those who go to church every Sunday are more likely to support the true meaning of marriage. And this support has remained steady, despite the challenges of our culture."

"Already, the work of the new evangelization is bearing fruit," the prelate stated.

He continued, "With the help of the Holy Spirit, our task is to further this momentum, to proclaim marriage boldly and encourage others to do the same."

Archbishop Kurtz reported that the committee is continuing to develop catechetical resources for support marriage, such as a second video in the "Marriage: Unique for a Reason" series. He also noted that the conference is hiring a full-time staff member to serve as policy advisor for marriage and family, what he called a "significant development."

Budget

Also on Tuesday, Archbishop Kurtz, who also served as treasurer of the bishops' conference, reported on the economic situation.

The prelates voted to approve a \$180 million balanced budget for 2011, a 24% increase from 2010. Archbishop Kurtz noted that the conference had seen significant gains on investments over the past year.

However, the bishops did not approve a proposal to increase the diocesan contributions to the work of the conference.

Rather, the bishops, who have reportedly been struggling to balance diocesan budgets faced to pending sexual abuse lawsuits and other debts, voted to keep the diocesan assessment for 2012 at the same level as 2011.

Armed services

In another address on Monday to the fall general assembly, Archbishop Timothy Broglio of the U.S. Military Services asked his brother bishops to send more priests to serve as military chaplains.

He noted that his archdiocese, which includes all branches of the military with their families, as well as those at veterans affairs hospitals, only counts on 275 priests.

The prelate reported that most members of the military serve between the ages of 18 and 28, and then return to their dioceses. He added, "I would like to be able to return them to you as Catholics."

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