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Pastoral Statement of Bishop Michael J. Hoepfner
Regarding the United States Supreme Court Decision *Obergefell v. Hodges*

On June 26, 2015, the Supreme Court of the United States, by a vote of 5-4, ruled that same-sex marriage is a fundamental human right guaranteed by the United States Constitution and by so ruling, legalized same-sex marriage in every state. This decision is a disappointing and tragic mistake. It is disappointing for all who know that God is the Creator of marriage and has given marriage to us as a sacred union between one man and one woman; it is tragic for it undermines the very foundation of society and its consequences will negatively impact the life of our nation for years to come; it is a mistake for according to both natural law and divine law, marriage is a union between one man and one woman and this decision making human law denies the truth and promotes a lie.

My dear Christ's Faithful of the Diocese of Crookston, the truth about marriage is part of the divine revelation that Jesus entrusted to his apostles and is handed on to each generation by their successors. This Supreme Court decision challenges us. It challenges each of us to understand our faith and the truth about marriage. It challenges married couples to live marriage as God has called them to live it and to live it well that all might see the beauty of God's design. It challenges each of us to make the effort to be a positive influence for good in our public life, to promote the goodness, truth and beauty of marriage rightly understood so that the foundation of our society – marriage and the family - might be firm. It challenges us to never stop loving and respecting all who experience same-sex attraction, those who disagree with us, and those who would do us harm.

We walk with Jesus. In the face of this decision, as Archbishop Kurtz, President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops urged, we “move forward with faith, hope, and love; faith in the unchanging truth about marriage, rooted in the immutable nature of the human person and confirmed by divine revelation; hope that these truths will once again prevail in our society, not only by their logic, but by their great beauty and manifest service to the common good; and love for all our neighbors, even those who hate us or would punish us for our faith and moral convictions.”

And as we move forward and face the challenge, we take heart at the encouragement of Jesus: “Go out to all the world and tell the Good News.” (Mk. 16:16) “...and know that I am with you always, yes, to the end of time.” (Mt. 28:20)

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