



September 17, 2012

Duluth, MN 55814-1000

Dear Brian,

Peace be with you! As Election Day approaches on November 6th, many voices clamor for our attention. A host of significant issues face voters. Today, in union with the Catholic Bishops of the State of Minnesota, I write to ask you to stand with us in voting "Yes" to pass the Minnesota Marriage Protection Amendment. As Catholics we are formed by our faith in Jesus Christ and His Church. Catholic moral teaching helps us to form our consciences and exercise faithful citizenship in voting. I ask your "Yes" vote to protect marriage between one man and one woman.

The amendment asks voters to affirm the God-given, historic definition of marriage and put it into our State's constitution where it can be safe from politicians, activists, and state court judges who seek to change it. Marriage is "unique for a reason," as the U.S. Bishops continue to teach. Marriage is rooted in the sexual difference between men and women that is naturally capable of bringing forth and nurturing children. Children need a mother and a father. As Blessed John Paul II said, the future of society passes through the family, and the family is the foundation and building block of society. Marriage is older than both the Church and the State. Our laws and policies need to respect and protect marriage and family, but they do not create or define them.

We are not alone in our efforts to encourage passage of the amendment. The support of Minnesotans of various faiths and backgrounds have come together to form Minnesota for Marriage. The parishes in the Diocese of Duluth have joined with Minnesota for Marriage in a beautiful educational effort to inform, encourage and strengthen Catholics to build up and defend marriage between one man and one woman.

I offer my sincere gratitude to the priests, parish captains, parishioners, speakers and those who have worked so hard to pass the amendment. In the final weeks before the election, Minnesota for Marriage needs your help to get the message out. Enclosed is a pre-addressed envelope, if you wish to make a donation. You can also donate online, at [minnesotaformarriage.com/donate](http://minnesotaformarriage.com/donate).

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It is important to note that, given election law in Minnesota, a constitutional amendment must be passed by a majority of "Yes" votes. (Remember that if you leave the ballot box blank, it counts as a "No" vote.)

Most of all please pray. Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance and courage. The responsibility of voting is one of our greatest and most cherished freedoms. As you exercise that right this November, I ask you to join me in voting "Yes" on the Marriage Amendment.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul D. Sirba". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Paul D. Sirba  
Bishop of Duluth