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Dear Friends in Christ:

As Election Day approaches on November 6, many voices clamor for our attention. A host of significant issues face voters. Today, I write to you to ask your support for one of them in particular: the legal definition of marriage between one man and one woman in our State.

When we vote for candidates for public office, we do so with the expectation that they will then fulfill campaign promises and advance issues important to us. The vote on the Marriage Amendment is different. It is the direct voice of the people on the institution of marriage, which is so central to our social fabric.

Much has been said over these months on all sides of this question. I want to reaffirm that we Bishops are united in support of marriage as it has always been known in our State laws and Constitution, and that we are encouraging our fellow Minnesotans to vote Yes on the amendment. This will not change any of our State laws or institutions, but ensure that the voice of all Minnesota voters can be heard on this pivotal issue.

It is important to note that, given election law in Minnesota, a constitutional amendment must be passed by a majority of Yes votes. Those who cast a ballot but leave this question blank are counted as "No" votes.

We do not believe that support for traditional marriage is in any way contrary to the respect and rights that belong to those who experience same-sex attraction. These two important values are not in competition. A vote for marriage does not express anything negative about those who are gay, but rather a positive esteem for marriage in the social order.

Marriage is "unique for a reason," as the Bishops have said. Rooted in the sexual difference between men and women that is naturally capable of bringing forth and nurturing children, marriage is older than both the Church and the State. Our laws and policies respect marriage and family, but they do not create or define them.

Thank you for your participation in the marriage enrichment activities I have asked for in each of our parishes or clusters over these months. In the months and years after this Election Day, we need to continue our long-standing efforts to support our married couples and families and to respect the dignity of all persons made in God's image, regardless of the circumstances of their lives.

I ask you to continue to pray for a positive outcome in support of marriage, for those who feel conflicted because of their support for loved ones who are gay, and for the many other important issues that face us. The responsibility of voting is one of our great and cherished freedoms. As you exercise that right this November, I ask you to join me in voting Yes on the Marriage Amendment.

With kind personal regards, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+John F. Kinney
Bishop of Saint Cloud