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**Local Catholics Premier Video Series on Faith, Family and Marriage**

*Series responds to Archbishop's anti-marriage efforts for same-sex couples*

*Minneapolis*—A series of five video vignettes featuring local lesbian and gay Catholics sharing stories of faith, family and marriage will premier from **5-7 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 29 at Minneapolis' Riverview Theater**, 3800 42nd Ave. South.

The series, called “Catholics for Marriage Equality” was produced in response to the ongoing efforts to amend the Minnesota State Constitution to ban civil marriage for same-sex couples.

“Our hope is that those who view our video series will prayerfully reflect upon the negative impact of the proposed “marriage amendment” and commit to voting against it in November 2012,” said director Mary Kay Orman.

Last fall, Archbishop John Nienstedt of the Archdiocese of St. Paul-Minneapolis distributed a DVD called “Preserving Marriage in Minnesota” to more than 400,000 Catholic households. In his DVD, Nienstedt said, “At best, so-called same-sex marriage is an untested social experiment, and at worst, it poses a dangerous risk with potentially far-reaching consequences.”

The “Catholics for Marriage Equality” video series brings to light another Catholic perspective on marriage between same-sex couples by inviting people to seek and discern the face of God in the lives and families of LGBT people.

A recent poll by the Public Religion Research Center found strong support for marriage equality among people of faith in the U.S. – including Catholics. Fifty-two percent of Catholics, for instance, favor allowing gay and lesbian couples to marry legally, while 72 percent think gay and lesbian relationships should be accepted by society.

“In Catholicism, the hierarchy, theologians, and the wisdom of the Catholic people are equally recognized as authentic sources of truth,” said Michael Bayly, coordinator of Catholics for Marriage Equality MN. “A teaching cannot be considered authentic unless genuine dialogue among all three has taken place. When one considers what Catholic theologians and the Catholic people are thinking and saying about the issue of homosexuality and same-sex relationships, then, at the very least, we have to acknowledge the possibility that the Vatican’s teaching on this issue may not actually be the authentic Catholic teaching.”

Bayly went on to point out, “As is the case with the vast majority of married heterosexual Catholics practicing birth control, we know that the hierarchy’s official prohibition does not make good sense to the Catholic people because it does not fit with their lived experience. We’re seeing the same emerging around the issue of homosexuality and gay rights – including gay marriage rights.”

Though many Catholics may still be considering their views on marriage for same-sex couples, Catholics for Marriage Equality MN encourages all Catholics to vote against using the state constitution to deny civil rights to a certain group of citizens.

“Gay Catholics get married for the same reasons that anyone does: to make a lifetime commitment of love and responsibility, and to celebrate that solemn promise in front of God and their families,” Bayly said. “The defeat of the ‘marriage amendment’ won’t make gay marriage legal in Minnesota and no church will be required to change their views or practices, but its passage would be the only time that the constitution has been used to restrict and deny rights and not expand them. I don’t think anyone should be supportive of such unfairness, of such a misuse of the constitution.”

The series will also be available for purchase as a DVD from Catholics for Marriage Equality MN and will soon be posted on a special YouTube channel. A trailer can be viewed at <http://c4me.org/resources/video/preview/seriespreview.html>.