NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (https://www.ncronline.org)

Bishops ramp up opposition to same-sex marriage legislation

NCR Staff | Oct. 30, 2012

With Election Day a week away, U.S. bishops in several states ramped up their efforts to urge Catholics to oppose same-sex marriage legislation.

Voters in four states face decisions on the issue: Maine, Maryland, Minnesota and Washington. Thirty states have already prohibited same-sex marriage in their constitutions.

During Masses over the weekend, Archbishop William E. Lori had a letter read opposing the Maryland measure: "Each one of us -- as Catholics and faithful citizens -- must show up on election day and do our part by voting against Question 6 [1]."

In Maine, former Portland Bishop Richard Malone, now bishop of Buffalo, N.Y., and Portland's apostolic administrator, urged the state's Catholics to vote against Question 1 [2], saying, "A Catholic whose conscience is properly framed by Scripture and church teaching" can't vote for a candidate or issue that opposes such teaching.

Catholics in both Minnesota and Washington have countered their bishops' strong positions. Through a letter ad in the student newspaper, 142 faculty and staff at Minnesota's College of St. Benedict and Saint John's University voiced opposition to an amendment defining marriage as between one man and one woman. A similar ad featuring more than 1,000 Catholic signatures ran in Sunday editions [3] of several newspapers in Washington state, where the bishops have been active leaders against gay marriage and Referendum 74 [4].

Outside states voting on same-sex legislation, bishops have been just as vocal.

In September, Archbishop John J. Myers of Newark, N.J., said [5] Catholics who support same-sex marriage and dispute church teaching on marriage and family "must in all honesty and humility refrain from receiving Holy Communion until they can do so with integrity."

Bishop David Ricken of Green Bay, Wis., in an Oct. 24 pastoral letter listed "homosexual 'marriage' " among intrinsic evils, and to vote for a candidate supporting such an act "means that you could be morally 'complicit' " and that "could put your own soul in jeopardy."

In North Dakota, Fargo apostolic administrator and Bismarck Bishop David Kagan wrote a letter not to "tell you how to vote" but to describe what a well-informed Catholic conscience is, and among other things he listed same-sex marriage as something that is never acceptable. A North Dakota senator criticized Kagan's letter for being partisan.

In the swing state of Florida, Bishop Robert Lynch of the St. Petersburg diocese blogged Sept. 18 [6] on 10 issues, listing which party he thinks is more committed to the Catholic view. On same-sex marriage, he concluded, "In this election, there is a clear choice, I believe, as seen in platforms and pronouncements of party leadership."

Outlining the issues Catholics should base their vote on, St. Augustine, Fla., diocese, Bishop Felipe Estevez of St. Augustine, Fla., wrote [7] that "preserving the dignity of traditional marriage is of central importance and must never be undermined because marriage is a cornerstone of any stable society. Any attempts to re-define marriage as something other than between a man and a woman, should be vigorously opposed by a Catholic as contrary to reason, the natural law, and the divinely revealed truths of the Bible."

Other bishops took a more moderate route when confronting elections. Auxiliary Bishop Robert McElroy in the San Francisco archdiocese led a forum for Catholics to discuss forming their consciences for voting faithful to the church.

According to the diocesan paper *Catholic San Francisco*, McElroy said while the church may take a stand on an issue, it is not affiliated with a party, nor does it endorse candidates, and because there is a split between Catholics, they should really inform, listen and obey their consciences, he said.

However, he did stipulate that Catholics should be on guard with themselves against rationalization and the "illusion of conscience," according to the paper.

Source URL (retrieved on *07/27/2016 - 10:43*): https://www.ncronline.org/news/politics/bishops-ramp-opposition-same-sex-marriage-legislation

Links:
[1] http://www.elections.state.md.us/elections/2012/ballot_question_language.html
[2] http://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/upcoming.html
[3] http://ncronline.org/node/37986
[4] http://ballotpedia.org/wiki/index.php/Washington_Same-Sex_Marriage_Veto_Referendum,_Referendum_74_%282012%29
[5] https://www.ncronline.org/node/36236
[6] http://bishopsblog.dosp.org/2012/09/promises-promises-2/
[7] http://www.dosafl.com/NewsBriefs.asp?ArticleID=1048