

# The Catholic Bishops of New Jersey

We the Catholic Bishops of New Jersey have designated  
**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2009**  
as a Day of Prayer for the vocation and Sacrament of Marriage.

This day of prayer is timely because marriage faces serious challenges from a society more focused on individual satisfaction than on the Gospel.

One of the most serious challenges is the current effort to pass Bills in the New Jersey legislature that would change the very definition of marriage as a union of one man and one woman in order to allow same sex "marriage." We must not stand silent in the face of this serious challenge.

Marriage as a union of one man and one woman has its roots not only in human tradition and history, but also in natural law, which transcends all man-made law. Marriage is a natural institution.

The Catholic Church celebrates the covenant of marriage as a sacrament. As teachers, the Catholic Bishops of New Jersey point to both the Old Testament and the New Testament where the definition of marriage as a union between one man and one woman is clear:

*That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife,  
and the two of them become one body.* (Genesis 2:24)

And in the New Testament, Jesus teaches that marriage is a union between one man and one woman:

*Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female'  
and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his  
wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh...*  
(Matthew 19:5-6)

We, therefore, call upon all Catholics to pray that the legislature preserves the definition of marriage as a union of one man and one woman. In addition to praying, we urge all Catholics to pledge their personal support for their family members, including those who choose to remain single. We call upon all to help those entering marriage to prepare for the challenges, sacrifices and joys to come. We ask all to reach out with the special compassion of Christ to those married couples and families experiencing difficulties, anxiety, and illness.

On November 29, 2009 pray for marriage but also take actions of kindness and support for all family members – for as children of God we are all members of a most blessed family.

*May God bless you.*



**Most Rev. John J. Myers**  
*Archbishop, Archdiocese of Newark*

**Most Rev. John M. Smith**  
*Bishop, Diocese of Trenton*

**Most Rev. Arthur J. Serratelli**  
*Bishop, Diocese of Paterson*

**Most Rev. Joseph A. Galante**  
*Bishop, Diocese of Camden*

**Most Rev. Paul G. Bootkoski**  
*Bishop, Diocese of Metuchen*

**Most Rev. William Skurla**  
*Bishop, Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic*

**Most Rev. Edgar M. da Cunha, SDV**  
*Auxiliary Bishop Essex County*

**Most Rev. John W. Flesey**  
*Auxiliary Bishop Bergen County*

**Most Rev. Thomas A. Donato**  
*Auxiliary Bishop Hudson County*

**Most Rev. Manuel A. Cruz**  
*Auxiliary Bishop Union County*

**Most Rev. David Arias**  
*Retired, Auxiliary Bishop of Newark*

**Most Rev. Charles J. McDonnell**  
*Retired, Auxiliary Bishop of Newark*

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