



DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON · DIOCESE OF RICHMOND
Representing the Virginia Catholic Bishops in Public Policy Matters

Feb. 14, 2014

**Statement by Bishops Francis X. DiLorenzo and Paul S. Loverde
on Decision in *Bostic v. Rainey* Marriage Case**

Last night's decision by U.S. District Judge Arenda Wright Allen in *Bostic v. Rainey*, a case that deals with the Commonwealth's Constitutional definition of marriage as a union between a man and a woman, strikes a severe blow to the citizens of our Commonwealth. It undermines our right, as recognized by the U.S. Supreme Court in its recent decision on the federal Defense of Marriage Act, to define marriage and, moreover, ignores the express will of the people of Virginia who overwhelmingly supported the 2006 Amendment to the Commonwealth's Constitution. In striking down Virginia's Constitutional Amendment affirming the institution of marriage as a union between a man and a woman, Judge Wright Allen has not only totally ignored our state's rights under the Tenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, she has also redefined marriage to the peril and detriment of our society.

Judge Wright Allen's decision also, more fundamentally, contradicts the wisdom and understanding of the ages. It strips marriage of its intrinsic meaning and converts it into nothing more than an arrangement that recognizes a voluntary relationship between any two consenting adults. While all people should have the freedom to form attachments and relationships as they wish, the union of a man and a woman, in marriage, makes a unique contribution to the creation, protection and well-being of children. It is more than a "consenting relationship." It is a union that – alone and uniquely – unites the two complementary halves of humanity, a man and a woman, to cooperate with the Author of Life to create new life. It is a union that alone provides children the opportunity to be nurtured and to learn from both a mother and a father, each of whom brings unique gifts to the family, the fundamental building block of society.

The institution of marriage is rooted in natural law itself, a design written on our hearts by our Creator. No religion, government or individual has the right or legitimate authority to alter the fundamental meaning and structure of marriage that has existed from the beginning of

humankind. And certainly, no court decision, either in Virginia or elsewhere, can change that meaning.

Despite last night's fundamentally flawed decision, we Bishops will continue to teach the truth about marriage. We also take comfort in knowing that the debate over this critical issue, in both the courts and elsewhere, will continue unabated. As to this particular decision, we pledge to work with those who are defending our Commonwealth's Constitution and its definition of marriage and assist in any way we can to advance a vigorous appeal.