

# NEWS RELEASE



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## **Bishops approve pastoral letter on marriage**

Items on reproductive technologies and medically assisted nutrition/hydration also approved

November 20, 2009 (OMAHA, NE) – The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) approved a pastoral letter on marriage, a document on reproductive technologies, and a proposed revision to the directives that guide Catholic health care services on November 17, the second day of their 2009 Fall General Assembly.

“Marriage: Life and Love in the Divine Plan,” the foundational document of the U.S. bishops’ pastoral initiative on marriage, calls contraceptive practices “objectively wrong” and “essentially opposed to God’s plan for marriage and proper human development.” The pastoral letter also names divorce and same-sex unions as two other “fundamental challenges to the nature and purpose of marriage” and encourages the use of natural family planning, which the bishops say promotes “an attitude of respect and wonder ... and fosters the true intimacy that only such respect can bring.” The final document can be found online at: <http://www.usccb.org/laity/LoveandLife/>

A document on reproductive technologies, “Life-Giving Love in an Age of Technology,” addresses Catholic teaching on a range of infertility treatments. The document looked at morally problematic procedures including in vitro fertilization, embryo adoption, sperm and egg donation and surrogacy and recommended therapeutic means that help a couple conceive through sexual intercourse rather than replacing the act itself.

The bishops also approved revision to the directive dealing with medically assisted nutrition and hydration of the Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services. The revised directive, takes into account elaborations on Catholic teaching by Pope John Paul II and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in Rome predated by the current directives. It states more strongly the need to provide food and water even to patients in a persistent vegetative state.

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Founded as a diocese in 1885, the Archdiocese of Omaha serves spiritual and human needs in a 23-county area of Northeast Nebraska. Through its 148 parishes and missions, the archdiocese reaches out to more than 221,000 Nebraska Catholics. With two Catholic universities, 58 elementary schools, 18 high schools and a parish-based religious education

program within its boundaries, Catholic education enriches the lives of some 44,000 young people. The Archdiocese of Omaha is one of the largest private social service providers in the region. Catholic Charities and the Office of Family Life lead a network that ministers to the broadest and most fundamental needs of our community. Generous support to the Annual Appeal is symbolic of the collective faith that allows the Archdiocese of Omaha to continue the mission of Jesus Christ. [www.archomaha.org](http://www.archomaha.org)