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EQUALLY BLESSED CELEBRATES CATHOLICS MAJORITY  
IN LANDMARK MARRIAGE POLL  
*Coalition asks bishops to realize they can learn from LGBT Christians*

March 18, 2011—Earlier this week, two Catholic bishops dismissed a booklet on marriage equality by a member of the Equally Blessed coalition, saying that its author was not authorized to “speak on behalf of the Catholic Church.”

Today, faithful U.S. Catholics spoke for themselves, supporting the legalization of same-gender marriage by a 60-38 margin in a new poll commissioned by ABC News and *The Washington Post*.

The survey, conducted last week by Langer Research Associates, found that for the first time, a majority of Americans (53 percent) now support marriage equality, and that this change in public opinion has happened with remarkable rapidity. Fewer than one third of respondents favored same-gender marriage when the same survey was conducted in 2004.

“The poll makes clear what we have long known,” said Francis DeBernardo, executive director of New Ways Ministry, a member of the Equally Blessed coalition. “Catholics driven by a desire for justice are at the forefront of efforts to make our country’s marriage laws more equitable, and to extend the legal benefits of civil marriage to same-gender couples and their children.”

DeBernardo is the author of the booklet *Marriage Equality: A Positive Catholic Approach*, which raised the ire of Cardinal Donald Wuerl of Washington D. C., and Bishop Salvatore J. Cordileone of Oakland, earlier this week. New Ways Ministry, they wrote, was not authorized to “identify itself as a Catholic organization.”

“The bishops’ approach to this issue is alienating the faithful,” said Mary Ellen Lopata, co-founder of Fortunate Families, another member of the Equally Blessed coalition. “We continue to hope that they will realize they have something to learn from the lived experience of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Christians, their families and their friends, and come to understand that one can be true to one’s God-given identity, even as one is true to the teachings of Christ.”

Forty percent of Catholics in the survey said they “strongly supported” the legalization of same-gender marriage, while 27 percent said they strongly opposed it.

“I am especially proud of my Church today,” said Nicole Sotelo, communications director for Call To Action, another member of the Equally Blessed coalition. “Catholics who take the social justice teachings of the church seriously know that the issue of same-gender civil marriage is simply one of honoring the dignity of all of God’s children, and treating them fairly as we treat all people.

The survey, which included data on various bellwether demographic groups, revealed that support for marriage equality among white Catholics stood at 64 percent, an increase of a whopping 23 percentage points in five years.

*Equally Blessed is a coalition of faithful Catholics who support full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people both in the church and in civil society. Equally Blessed includes four organizations that have spent a combined 112 years working on behalf of LGBT people and their families: Call to Action, DignityUSA, Fortunate Families, and New Ways Ministry.*

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