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**EQUALLY BLESSED CHALLENGES ILLINOIS CATHOLIC LEADER TO GET THE
FACTS ABOUT SAME-SEX PARENTING**

LGBT parents provide loving, stable homes, coalition leader says. "Come visit us and see."

CHICAGO—“No diocese is going to willingly put a child in a same-sex household.”

So said Bob Gilligan, executive director of the Catholic Conference of Illinois, in explaining why Catholic Charities of Rockford has decided to discontinue its government-subsidized adoption and foster care services before Illinois' new civil unions law takes effect on June 1.

Marianne Duddy-Burke, executive director of DignityUSA, responds on behalf of Equally Blessed, a coalition of faithful Catholics who support full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in the church and in civil society:

“Children in foster care deserve the permanency and stability of a loving family that can keep them safe. Lesbian and gay couples and individuals can do this just as well as heterosexual people. I applaud states that recognize this fact and refuse to support unjust discrimination in public policy and with public funds.

“As a lesbian parent of two wonderful children adopted from foster care, I know firsthand the great need that exists for stable, loving families for children who have experienced abuse, neglect, and other traumas. It is a great pain to me when my Church leaders refuse to put the needs of these kids above their own prejudices. I'd invite Mr. Gilligan, or any other Catholic Charities or Diocesan official to come and talk with my kids and see how they feel about having two moms. **Come for dinner, and listen to our daughters pray for people who don't have enough to eat or homes to live in, or sit with us as we read books chosen to reinforce their self-esteem. Listen to my partner sing the girls to sleep with songs she wrote just for them. Then tell us that lesbian and gay people can't be good foster or adoptive parents.**

“Strong majorities of Catholics across the country support allowing gay and lesbian people to foster and adopt children. They have seen the families we've built. Their kids are in school with our kids. We go to church together. They are much wiser than Church leaders on this issue. I'm sure they don't support Catholic Charities abandoning vulnerable children in the name of outdated Church teaching.”

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