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EQUALLY BLESSED UNITES
CATHOLIC VOICES FOR MARRIAGE EQUALITY, JUSTICE

WASHINGTON, DC., September 30, 2010—Four longstanding Catholic organizations announced today that they have formed Equally Blessed, 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.

“As Catholics, we believe that all human beings are beloved children of God,” said Francis DeBernardo, executive director of New Ways Ministry, an Equally Blessed member. “We are called to do our part in bringing about justice in the church and the world, and Equally Blessed will allow us to do that together.”

The coalition also includes Call To Action, DignityUSA and Fortunate Families. Together the four groups have spent a combined 112 years working on behalf of LGBT people and their families.

“Equally Blessed proclaims what most U.S. Catholics already believe,” said Marianne Duddy-Burke, executive director of DignityUSA. “The laws of our land and the policies of our church should mandate fairness, justice and equality for all.”

Leaders of Equally Blessed said they decided to work together in the wake of several recent civil and church situations that demonstrate the need for a faithful pro-equality Catholic voice:

- The Knights of Columbus have mounted an expensive campaign to oppose gay marriage in Minnesota, where it has become a gubernatorial campaign issue.
- Catholic dioceses spent extensively to overturn legalized same-sex marriage in Maine last year.
- In the Archdiocese of Denver last spring, Archbishop Charles Chaput sanctioned the expulsion of a lesbian couple’s daughter from a Catholic school.
- In Washington DC, Archbishop Donald Wuerl has recently withheld health benefits from the spouses of newly-hired heterosexual employees so that he could legally withhold such benefits from the spouses of gay or lesbian employees.

“A growing community of faithful Catholics believes that everyone, including LGBT people, are affirmed and welcomed in our church, and these unjust actions do not speak for us,” said Nicole Sotelo, coordinator of Call To Action’s JustChurch program.

“We are called to follow the teachings of Jesus who welcomed everyone and challenged religious leaders when they fell short of that ideal.”

“In the wake of these injustices, we particularly urge straight Catholic allies to raise their voices against discrimination that targets our children, our friends, and our communities,” said Mary Ellen Lopata, co-founder of Fortunate Families, a ministry for Catholic parents with LGBT children. “The Gospel compels us to spread its message of love for all the children of God.”

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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