

Catholic Church works to back amendment against same-sex marriage

Bishop John Kinney is marshaling parish-level support in the Diocese of St. Cloud's effort to back a proposal to ban same-sex marriage in Minnesota's constitution.

Kinney is asking each parish or cluster in the diocese to "develop and implement an initiative for strengthening marriage in 2012," according to a news release issued Friday by the diocese.

The announcement is tied to the statewide vote this fall on the proposed amendment that would define marriage as between one man and one woman.

The release says talking points, prayer cards, suggested events and programs and other materials have been made available to parishes in the St. Cloud diocese.

The organization of parish-level initiatives mirrors a similar initiative launched last fall in the Twin Cities archdiocese by Archbishop John Nienstedt.

The director of marriage and family for the St. Cloud diocese, Chris Codden, said in Friday's news release that "the message from the Catholic perspective is clear: Everyone deserves equal dignity and

respect, regardless of sexual preference."

"Our first goal is to build up the institution of marriage between one man and one woman, which has been here since the beginning of time," Codden said. "Our second is to live respectfully with those around us who have differing opinions."

Codden couldn't be reached for comment Friday to explain what the parish-level initiatives will entail.

The diocesan release detailed a pair of upcoming events to organize the marriage amendment campaign.

A Feb. 14 event will convene priests, deacons and church and diocesan officials to learn more about the amendment, according to the release.

The diocese will have an information night for people who want to be involved in supporting the amendment at 6:30 p.m. April 17 at St. Mary Help of Christians Church in St. Augusta.

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The Minnesota Legislature voted last year to place the marriage amendment on this fall's ballot. Rep. Steve Gottwalt, R-St. Cloud, was the House sponsor of the measure.

