

Soulforce Alert

AUGUST 18, 2004

Join Soulforce for a National Call for Prayer and Vigils
at local Catholic Chanceries, November 9, 2004

On November 9, 2004, all across the nation, people of faith will be standing vigil outside local Catholic Chanceries to denounce the leadership role the Catholic hierarchy has taken to deny gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals their equal civil rights under the law.

Several licensed local group affiliates of Soulforce, Inc have already indicated a desire to participate, and are writing to their local bishops in hope of establishing dialogue with the bishop, prior to standing vigil in front of the chanceries. These local groups include: Albuquerque; Detroit; New York City; San Francisco; Atlanta; Washington, D.C; Oklahoma; Wisconsin; Philadelphia; and Pittsburgh.

If you do not live in one of the areas supported by a local group* and feel called to participate, we encourage you to write a letter to your bishop (www.usccb.org/dioceses.htm) and send a copy to Kara@soulforce.org. Please indicate if we can put your letter on our website. A sample letter is available online at www.soulforce.org/denomination/rc/usccb2004/prayerandvigils/sampleletter.shtml.

You are also encouraged to stand in silent prayerful vigil in front of the local chancery. We do ask that if you do decide to participate, that you follow certain guidelines and conduct peaceful, nonviolent prayer vigils adhering to the principles of nonviolence as taught by Gandhi and King. Additional guidelines are on the Soulforce website (www.soulforce.org/denomination/rc/usccb2004/prayerandvigils).

The week following the National Call for Prayer and Vigils, Soulforce, Inc. will conduct its fifth direct action at the National Conference of Catholic Bishop's meeting in Washington, D.C. (www.soulforce.org/denomination/rc/usccb2004/)

Over the last few months, some examples of the anti-gay Catholic leadership's rhetoric and practices include:

- 1) Leading an extremely nasty fight in Massachusetts during the civil marriage debate, with local parish priests threatening Massachusetts legislators who did not support the Catholic position against civil marriage.
- 2) Issuing several individual statements that any politician who does not vote in alignment with the rigid dogma of the Catholic Church would be denied Eucharist at Mass.
- 3) Supporting the anti-gay, anti-family "Federal Marriage Amendment". Bishop Gregory, president of the USCCB wrote every bishop admonishing them to contact their congress people to support this amendment to the U.S. Constitution, designed to limit marriage to mixed-gender couples.

It is ludicrous that the church is trying to legislate civil marriage, as no one would take seriously any attempt to outlaw divorce or legislate against remarried people in an attempt to take away their civil rights – although it is against the doctrine the Catholic Church.

We hope that you will feel moved to show our Catholic brothers and sisters that God loves them the way they are, and that the Catholic Church is a victim of misinformation and fear.

If you decide you want to take part in the National Call to Pray and Vigils, let us know by emailing Kara@soulforce.org.

If you are planning on participating in the 5th protest at the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, you can find out additional information and register at www.soulforce.org/denomination/rc/usccb2004/.

Kara Speltz, Soulforce Catholic Denominational Team Leader

Karen Weldin, Director of Operations

* If you are interested in starting a Soulforce local group in your area, contact Karen Weldin at karen@soulforce.org.

