



September 2026

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

All of us in the Commonwealth of Virginia will soon face very serious legal threats to the sacredness of human life and the sanctity of marriage. During the upcoming election season, from September the 18th to November the 3rd, two dangerous ballot initiatives will be brought before all voters.

One amendment, which will appear as Ballot Question 1, proposes an extreme and vague change to the Virginia Constitution that would create a legal right to unregulated abortions, performed by unlicensed abortion practitioners at any time during pregnancy. This threatens the health and safety of mothers and would allow for abortions targeting healthy babies all the way up to birth. The amendment extends this so-called right even to minors. It would remove the role of parents concerning life-altering and irreversible decisions for their minor daughters. Unfortunately, abortion is already legal in Virginia. But what is on the ballot this fall would expand abortion beyond what most citizens recognize as reasonable limits. The proposed amendment is extreme. It is unnecessary. And it is wrong.

Another amendment, which will appear as Ballot Question 2, would remove from our state constitution the truth, as Jesus taught, that marriage is between one man and one woman. It would also enshrine gender ideology by falsely separating the reality of one's sex and gender, obscuring the truth that we are created in the image and likeness of God.

Yet, with God's grace, there is always hope! "We the people" can unite to defeat these dangerous amendments to our Commonwealth's constitution.

The Church is not *partisan*. The Church *never* advocates for or against specific candidates or parties. At the same time, the Church, in fidelity to the Gospel and her mission, *always* speaks clearly, faithfully, and truthfully concerning matters of faith and morals in public life. An issue of fundamental moral justice confronts each one of us. The Church boldly proclaims its "Yes!" to the protection of the unborn and the sanctity of all human life. For us to speak this *Yes*, we must together proclaim "*no!*" to these radically unjust ballot initiatives, in fidelity to God and for the good of all in our society. I ask you, then, to do three things.

First, I ask you to be a faithful disciple and *pledge to vote* by visiting CatholicsVoteNo.com, where you can learn more and share the truth about these extreme ballot initiatives.

Second, I ask that you ensure you are registered to vote and make a plan to get to the polls, starting as early as this coming Friday, September the 18 , when early voting begins. I urge you to vote *early* to ensure nothing prevents you from casting your ballot in this critical election.

Third, I ask that you speak with family, friends, and colleagues, in truth and love, with a focus on activating and turning out those most likely to vote to protect life and the truth about marriage.

Our baptismal promises call us to fulfill our sacred duty to participate in public life with a prayerfully and factually informed conscience. CatholicsVoteNo.com equips you with the information and resources you will need as you cast your ballot.

Together, with God's grace, we can protect life, liberty, and the future of our Virginia home. Through the intercession of Mary our Mother, may our Lord Jesus bless, inspire, and guide you always.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael F. Burbidge". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning of the first name.

Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge  
Bishop of Arlington