

*Archdiocese of Saint Paul  
and Minneapolis*

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

MOST REVEREND JOHN C. NIENSTEDT

November 22, 2011

Reverend Michael Tegeder  
The Church of Saint Frances Cabrini  
1500 Franklin Ave SE  
Minneapolis, MN 55414-3649

Dear Father Tegeder,

I have thought a great deal about our conversation at the *Archdiocesan Communication Day* in October. It is obvious that the issue of the Marriage Amendment is something that you care about deeply. I can understand this, as it is also something that I consider to be one of the most important issues of our day. The sanctity of marriage and its recognition as an enduring bond of love between one man and one woman is enshrined in divine Revelation, in the Sacred Scriptures, and is an institution central to the life of human society. This is the authentic teaching of the Church.

As an ordained Catholic priest, you have made a solemn commitment to upholding the doctrine of the Church, as found in sacred scripture, the documents of Councils, and the teachings of the Roman Pontiffs. As a minister entrusted with the pastoral care of two communities of the faithful, you also have an obligation to remain in communion with the Church, and therefore with her bishops. In the past, you have made public statements indicating your dissent from the teachings of the Church, most recently by supporting the attempted ordination of a woman to whom you provided spiritual direction. Now, it would appear that you intend to be equally vocal about your disagreement with the Church's teaching on marriage.


As an individual, you of course must act as your conscience dictates. However, as an ordained priest with an assignment in this Archdiocese, you have assumed public responsibilities, and those public responsibilities require you to maintain communion with the universal church and to uphold her teachings. Therefore, you must reconcile your individual conscience with your public responsibilities, or you must resign from your public responsibilities. If you choose not to offer your resignation, but continue to act openly or speak publicly about your opposition to Church teaching, I will suspend your faculties to exercise ministry and remove you from your ministerial assignments.

Father Tegeder, I urge you carefully and prayerfully to reflect on the obligations you assumed on the day of your ordination, now more than thirty years ago. It is my hope that this reflection will lead you to an appreciation of the beauty and the wisdom of the Church's teaching

on this and all matters. If it does not, I ask you to consider strongly whether you are able to remain a cleric in the Roman Catholic Church.

With every good wish, I remain,

Fraternally yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John C. Nienstedt".

The Most Reverend John C. Nienstedt  
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis