Statement of the Bishops of Louisiana
regarding
Louisiana's Revised *Covenant Marriage Act*

The Catholic bishops of Louisiana at their meeting on September 23, 1999, commended the governor and the members of the state legislature for promoting the permanence of marriage and issued the following statement in response to the revised Covenant Marriage Act:

> The Roman Catholic Church teaches that marriage is a life-long commitment and requires spouses to accept this commitment as binding in conscience.
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> Catholic clergy are to accept either the covenant or the standard civil marriage license for the celebration of weddings.
>
> If a couple seeking marriage in the Catholic Church chooses the covenant civil marriage license, the preparation already mandated by the Church fulfills the state requirements for clergy accepting such a license. If a couple chooses the standard marriage license, this choice should in no way be interpreted as diminishing their total commitment to a permanent union as required by the teaching of Christ and His Church.
>
> The Catholic policy of marriage preparation is not changed. Catholic ministers offering premarital instruction in the name of the Church are to continue the marriage preparation program currently being used. Regardless of the choice of civil marriage license, couples are to participate in the usual Catholic marriage preparation.
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> In view of the recent revision of the Covenant Marriage Act, when a couple chooses the covenant marriage option, the Catholic priest or deacon providing premarital instruction may sign the required attestation. According to this law, only a priest or deacon may sign this attestation. It may not be signed by other Catholic ministers assisting them.
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> The marriage preparation programs required in the dioceses of Louisiana remain in force.

The statement was issued by Archbishop Francis B. Schulte, Bishop William B. Friend, Bishop Jude Speyrer, Bishop Sam Jacobs, Bishop Michael Jarrell, Bishop Alfred C. Hughes, Bishop Edward J. O'Donnell, Bishop Dominic Carmon SVD, and Bishop Gregory M. Aymond.

October 1, 1999
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