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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Illinois faith leaders write lawmakers to urge preservation of marriage

Natural order, religious freedom at stake

CHICAGO – Pastoral leaders representing more than 1,700 faith communities in Illinois – parishes, congregations, churches and Friday prayer centers – have signed a letter sent to Illinois lawmakers, urging them to safeguard both marriage and religious freedom by rejecting any legislative efforts to redefine marriage.

The faith leaders note that marriage “is the natural order embracing the complementary physical, emotional and spiritual design of men and women.”

They also warn that simply not being forced to preside over same-sex marriages does nothing to protect religious freedom as guaranteed in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The proposed legislation falls far short of protecting the rights of churches and individuals to freely exercise their religious beliefs and abide their consciences, they note.

“If marriage is redefined in civil law, individuals and religious organizations – regardless of deeply held beliefs – will be compelled to treat same-sex unions as the equivalent of marriage in their lives, ministries and operations,” they write.

Two state lawmakers in December announced they would seek passage of legislation during this month’s lame-duck session that changes the definition of marriage currently set in state law from “between a man and a woman” to “between 2 persons.”

The signees of the letter represent a diversity of faiths, including the Anglican Church in North America, the Roman Catholic Church, the Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, as well as individual Baptist and Evangelical churches.

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