

A Statement of the
**ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN BISHOPS
OF CALIFORNIA**

in Support of Proposition 8:
A Constitutional Amendment to Restore the Definition of Marriage

The decision of the California Supreme Court on May 15, 2008, unilaterally redefines the sacred institution of marriage in a manner unprecedented in human history — and alien to our Christian tradition. We, the Orthodox Christian bishops of California, were saddened by this decision which constitutes a direct attack upon the longstanding role and freedom of religion in American life. A majority of the justices declared not only that same-sex couplings must be allowed to exist at those couples' discretion as "marriages," but that the state of California is forbidden to refer to these couplings as anything but "marriages."

Orthodox Christianity holds in high regard the God-ordained institution of marriage and the family. The Orthodox Church must and shall remain true to its faith and tradition, and affirm that marriage is the union of one man and one woman, given by God to one another for mutual support, encouragement, love and the ability to bear children.

As members of the Church and as citizens of this great land, we cannot withdraw from the society in which we live. Our parishes and our faithful are called upon to be "*salt and light*," to paraphrase Christ, and as such, they engage with their neighbors in acts of charity and love. We will continue our charitable works, and our engagement with society — including to faithfully teach the truth about Christian principles of living.

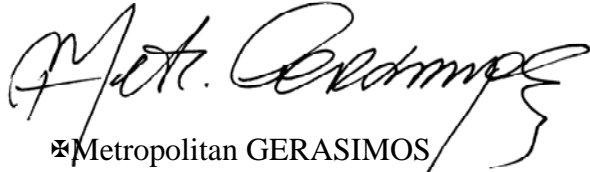
The Orthodox Church in the United States thrives and grows, in many respects, because of the enduring principles upon which this great country was founded. Our definitions of basic institutions such as marriage, shaped by the unfathomable forces of love and nature coupled with the experience of all recorded human history, rightly derive from what the Founders of our country knew as the "*natural law*" of "*nature and nature's God*".

It is in this light that the Orthodox Christian bishops of California reject the decision of the California Supreme Court in *In re Marriage Cases*. The institution of marriage emanates from something transcending our passing political institutions, and cannot be unilaterally altered in this way. We therefore must act when that promulgation directly contradicts our faith — and threatens the very foundation of Orthodoxy's flourishing in America.

Therefore, we, the Orthodox bishops of California, call upon the faithful, as responsible and concerned citizens of California, to overturn this ruling by the California Supreme Court by voting in favor of Proposition 8 this coming November. This proposition is a regrettably necessary measure to restore the true definition of marriage in the eyes of our

state. A state that believes same-sex couplings constitute “marriage” implicitly — and sooner or later, explicitly — denies the role of the Church and all faiths that adhere to traditional values in public life. Please exercise your citizenship and vote in November. The passage of Proposition 8 is an imperative.

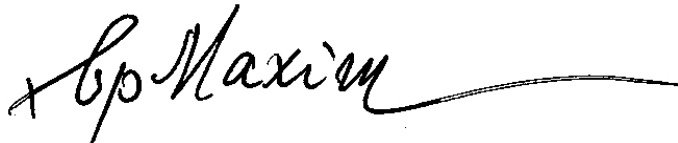
With Archpastoral Blessings,



✠Metropolitan GERASIMOS
Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco



✠Bishop JOSEPH
Diocese of Los Angeles and
the West
Antiochian Archdiocese of
North America



✠Bishop MAXIM
Serbian Orthodox Diocese of Western America



✠Bishop BENJAMIN
Orthodox Church in America
Diocese of the West

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