Statement by Bishop Burbidge and Bishop Knestout on Ballot Question Outcomes

November 4, 2026

The approval by Virginia voters of Ballot Question 1 is profoundly tragic. Unless a court intervenes, this decision will embed virtually limitless abortion into the constitution. It will put women's health and safety at severe risk and leave parents out of life-altering and irreversible decisions involving their minor daughters. Most fundamentally, this extreme, radical, dangerous and deadly constitutional amendment is a complete rejection of the immeasurable value of human life, created in God's image and likeness.

Virginia voters' approval of Ballot Question 2 also denies the truth that marriage – created by God – is the union of a man and a woman. Unless a court intervenes, Virginia's constitution will recognize "any lawful marriage between two adult persons" – contrary to God's design.

Though profoundly disappointed by these two results, we are also deeply grateful to so many people within our parishes and throughout our Commonwealth who worked tirelessly to try to prevent these extremely harmful and misguided outcomes. Their steadfast efforts were firmly grounded in truth and justice. We express our heartfelt appreciation to all who gave sacrificially of their time, energy and expertise to defend the sanctity of life and marriage. Though this collective effort did not prevail, the commitment and perseverance poured into it glorify God nevertheless.

To everyone who engaged in this effort, we urge you to persevere in faith and hope – anchored in the sure knowledge that God is the Author of life and marriage. No vote can alter the sacredness of human life. Nor can any vote change the reality that marriage is and can only ever be the union of one man and one woman.

Finally, we do welcome the decision by Virginia voters to approve Ballot Question 3. This result will provide a second chance for people who have completed their time of incarceration to participate in the political process.

The *Catechism* reminds us, "It is necessary that all participate … in promoting the common good. … As far as possible, citizens should take an active part in *public life*" (nos. 1913-1915). Participation must continue. Love of God and neighbor require each of us to be faithful citizens all year every year – whether the outcomes we work toward are realized in our particular time and place or not. Together, let us continue to provide compassionate care and support for children before and after birth, and for their mothers and families. Let us continue to work for policies that help pregnant women facing challenging circumstances choose life. And let us continue to pray that – with the help of Mary, Mother of God and Mother of the Church – we

may persevere and never despair in continuing the vital work of building a culture in which, one day, every life will be welcomed in love and protected in law.

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