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### Statement from Bishop Persico on Supreme Court Ruling

Today's Supreme Court ruling legalizing same-sex marriage marks an historic turning point in the cultural and moral debate that has been difficult and heartfelt for all of us. I am disappointed in the ruling because it runs counter to the Catholic Church's teaching on marriage. Yet, in the spirit so earnestly embraced by Pope Francis, it is my hope we can find a new and better way for people on both sides of this divisive issue to dialogue.

Many Catholics continue to consider ways to reconcile their commitment to church teaching and Scripture with their love and acceptance of family members, friends, co-workers and neighbors in same-sex relationships. Pope Francis, like his predecessors, has commented many times on the church's commitment to marriage between one woman and one man and the unique value it offers our society. Church teaching is clear.

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To many, our commitment to the importance of marriage between a man and woman, and the children who are brought into that loving relationship, seems more intolerant than inclusive. I recognize that sometimes we may have fallen short of our goal to be always pastoral in teaching about this very complicated and sensitive issue.

The Supreme Court has now ruled that the definition of marriage is to be changed to include people in same-sex relationships. We are moving into an era in which the civil definition of marriage has changed, but not the church's teaching, Scripture or natural law. I hope that the rights of Christians will be honored as well. Rather than creating more division, we must acknowledge our differences and find ways to respect each other.

I am sure there will be much discussion in the coming days as we all become familiar with the nuances of the 103-page ruling. It is my hope and prayer that we will all move toward greater understanding on this issue which so profoundly affects the very foundation of family life.