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Contact for additional information:

Rev. Kerry Walters, Vicar of Communications

(570) 713-8558

kwalters@anccmail.org

American National Catholic Church Responds to Pope Francis' Endorsement of Same-Sex Civil Unions

In "Francesco," a new documentary released this week, Pope Francis declared his support for same-sex civil unions. "What we have to create is a civil union law," he says in the film. "That way they are legally covered."

As cardinal archbishop of Buenos Aires, Francis (then Jorge Mario Bergoglio) likewise advocated for same-sex civil unions, although primarily in an unsuccessful effort to forestall Argentina's legalization of same-sex marriage. But this is the first time as pope that he has defended such unions. His opposition to same-sex marriage apparently remains unchanged.

The Most Reverend George R. Lucey, FCM, Presiding Bishop of the American National Catholic (ANCC) Church, notes that the ANCC, "following the Holy Spirit's prompting at Vatican Council II, has always recognized the dignity of every person by inviting all men and women to participate in the sacramental life of the Church, including the sacrament of marriage."

While applauding Pope Francis's declaration, Bishop Lucey also noted that defending civil unions for same-sex couples still falls short of offering them the sacrament of marriage. "We pray that our Roman Catholic sisters and brothers might find in our peaceful acknowledgement of the dignity of all persons a path toward sacramental recognition."

The American National Catholic Church is an inclusive Catholic community, independent of the Roman Catholic Church, dedicated to making the world a more caring place. Guided by a presiding bishop, the ANCC celebrates the same sacraments as the Roman Church and follows the spirit of reform initiated by the Second Vatican Council. Although sharing core theological and liturgical practices with Roman Catholicism, the ANCC differs on several major points, such as married clergy, female priests, divorce and re-marriage, same-sex marriage, and lay leadership. The Church has parishes across the U.S. and a host of ministries to the alienated, under-served, and forgotten. For more information, visit www.TheANCC.org.

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