



March 11, 2015

**From Bishop Francis X. DiLorenzo, Bishop of the Diocese of Richmond,  
and Bishop Paul S. Loverde, Bishop of the Diocese of Arlington and State Chaplain of the  
Virginia State Council of the Knights of Columbus,**

## **Joint Statement on the Norfolk St. Patrick's Day Parade**

We are aware that the Knights of Columbus Council #3548 has extended an invitation to Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe to serve as Grand Marshal of the 2015 Norfolk Saint Patrick's Day Parade which the Governor has accepted. Council #3548, a regional, not parish council, has sponsored and organized this parade since its inception in 1967. The invitation was issued without the advice or consent of the local parish priest, the local bishop, or the Knights state council.

Together with our brother bishops, we have been clear, consistent and firm in upholding the truths reflected in the fundamental doctrine and moral principles of our faith. It is an erroneous and serious mistake in judgment for any Catholic organization to grant awards, honors and platforms to any public person who clearly acts in defiance to Catholic teaching (*cf. "Catholics in Political Life", USCCB, June 2004*). While one must always respect the Office of the Governor and the person holding that office, and dialogue should be fostered, one cannot deny that the Governor has made public statements in opposition to the moral teaching of the Catholic Church on issues pertaining to the dignity of human life and marriage.

We fully support the Catholic principle of subsidiarity, which promotes decision-making taking place at the local level whenever possible. However, the decision of the local council to invite

the Governor to be the Grand Marshal does not reflect the stance of the Knights of Columbus international order, the Bishops of the Dioceses of Richmond or Arlington, or the Catholic Church. In addition, we support the local parish, Catholic schools and entities that have decided that, in this case, adhering to their faith means withdrawing from the parade.

The Knights of Columbus are called to live out and uphold the truths of our Catholic faith. As we go forward, we are confident that every council of Knights of Columbus within the Commonwealth of Virginia will carefully weigh future invitations and selections in light of the fullness of Church teaching.

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CONTACT: Diana Sims Snider, Diocese of Richmond, 804-622-5156 or Elise Italiano, Diocese of Arlington, 703-841-2517