

## ***Made for Freedom: Parish Night Outline***

This parish night outline is provided as a suggested framework for use by clergy or pastoral leaders in facilitating group conversation of the themes from the USCCB's *Marriage Unique for a Reason* video "Made for Freedom."

### **1. Introduction**

Write this quotation on the board before participants arrive. It will serve as a conversation-starter.

*"If our obligations and duties to God are impeded,  
or even worse, contradicted by the government,  
then we can no longer claim to be a land of the free,  
and a beacon of hope for the world."  
-Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz, President of the USCCB*

Once you have roughly the number of people that you expected at the gathering, ask them to introduce themselves to the people they are sitting near, and to discuss the quote with one another. Give this about two minutes, then ask if anyone particularly wants to share their thoughts with the whole group.

### **2. Preliminary Discussion Question**

Ask participants to consider the following question: Have you noticed a change in how people think of religious freedom today in America? Give them some time to think, then ask one person to share their thoughts. (Let this person know in advance, if possible, that you will be seeking their feedback first). Allow a free discussion to follow. If there are not many comments, you may want to offer your own observations.

Some ideas, if you need them, are that leading publications, when they discuss religious freedom, tend to put the phrase in scare quotes, suggesting that beliefs about marriage, for example, do not fall into the realm of religious freedom. The media also tends to pair "religious freedom" only with politically or culturally unpopular stances, while ignoring other ways that advocates for religious freedom uphold people's rights. (For example, the USCCB supported the right of a Muslim prisoner to grow a beard in the Supreme Court case [Holt v. Bobbs](#)).

### **3. View *Made for Freedom***

### **4. Post-Viewing Discussion**

We are going to discuss three main points that this video made:

1. Marriage and religious freedom are connected.

2. Religious freedom is important to Catholics and Americans.
3. It is important for Catholics to actively defend religious freedom.

Starting with number one, you may ask why marriage is important to Catholics, given its place in Scripture and in God's plan for the human person. You may want to ask about the emphasis, in the video, on children in relation to marriage. Why is marriage between a man and a woman good for children?

Next, you may ask why religious freedom was part of America's founding, and why it remains important. You may ask if anyone is aware of the declaration about religious freedom from Vatican II (*Dignitatis Humanae* or *On the Right of the Person and of Communities to Social and Civil Freedom in Matters Religious*). Please see the study guide, chapter three, for more information.

Do you know anyone who is being persecuted for their beliefs about marriage? How can you, as individuals and as a parish, support efforts for religious freedom? Let participants know about the USCCB's advocacy arm, <https://www.votervoices.net/USCCB/home>, where you can write to representatives in Congress.

#### **5. Other questions or comments**

Ask whether any of the participants has any other questions or comments about the video. Other subjects brought up by the video are third-party reproduction and adoption by same-sex couples, charities that are faced with a challenge to their beliefs and that may close because of it, and the way that the Church's teaching on marriage and her teachings on the dignity of the person are fundamentally (from-within) related.