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A couple details on the marriage pastoral

Dennis Coday | Nov. 17, 2009 NCR Today

I blogged earlier today on the bishops passing their pastoral letter on marriage. Now Catholic News Services provides a bit more detail:

Bishops OK marriage pastoral with many changes, some opposition

By Nancy Frazier O'Brien Catholic News Service

BALTIMORE -- Despite the concern voiced by some bishops about the document's pastoral tone and content, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops approved a pastoral letter on marriage Nov. 17.

Nearly 100 changes in two rounds of amendments preceded the 180-45 vote in favor of "Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan" during the bishops' fall general assembly in Baltimore.

Two-thirds of the USCCB membership, or 175 votes, was required for passage. There were three abstentions.

An effort by retired Archbishop Francis T. Hurley of Anchorage, Alaska, to remand the document to the Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth for rewriting failed 56-169, with three abstentions.

Archbishop Hurley said he had "nothing to offer in terms of changing a line here and there" but wanted to see the pastoral letter expanded in some areas, switched around in sections and rewritten to incorporate parts of "Caritas in Veritate" ("Charity in Truth"), Pope Benedict XVI's recent encyclical.

But Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Ky., chairman of the subcommittee that drafted the letter on marriage, strongly opposed the move, calling the document "worthy of giving us direction for the next three years."

A key change made in the letter during the amendment process was the rewriting of language describing cohabitation as "intrinsically evil."

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