



January 25, 2012

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

I write to you today, with regard to a very, very serious matter which I cannot allow to go unnoticed. It cannot go unnoticed or left to inaction by any of us, because it negatively impacts the Church in the United States directly, and strikes at the fundamental right to religious liberty for all Americans, of any faith. The federal government, which claims to be “of, by, and for the people,” has just dealt a heavy blow to almost a quarter of those people—the Catholic population—and to the millions more who are served by the Catholic faithful.

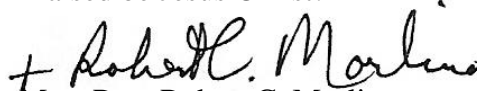
The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced last week that almost all employers, including Catholic employers, will be forced to offer their employees health coverage that includes sterilization, abortion-inducing drugs, and contraception. Despite several appeals to President Obama and his administration that the “religious exemption,” be extended to all Catholic institutions, they ruled otherwise, and Catholics in the United States are left betrayed. As Cardinal-Designate Dolan of New York said, in effect, the president has said to us, “you have a year to figure out how to violate your consciences.”

This cannot stand. We must stand for our First-Amendment rights to religious liberty, and we must stand for our rights of conscience.

And therefore, I would ask of you two things. First, please pray with me and offer sacrifices. As a community of faith we must commit ourselves to prayer and fasting that wisdom and justice may prevail, and religious liberty may be restored. Second, I would also recommend visiting www.usccb.org/conscience, to learn more about this severe assault on religious liberty, and how to contact Congress in support of legislation that would reverse the Administration’s decision.

Every bishop in the United States has, or will be, issuing similar messages to their communities, because this unconscionable decision affects us all. If we stand together as Christ’s Church, in prayer and fasting, we can effect change in such matters of injustice.

Praised be Jesus Christ!


Most Rev. Robert C. Morlino
Bishop of Madison

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