

Catholic Diocese of Columbus

Office of the Bishop
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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

In January, I wrote to you about the federal government's actions through its Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) which threatened the enjoyment of our cherished right to religious liberty. I asked you at that time to pray and fast for the restoration of that right. I also asked you to learn more about the issue and the possibilities for action by visiting the website of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). From that time until now our diocesan Office for Social Concerns has worked in concert with many groups within the diocese to educate them on the nature of this threat and to generate calls, emails, letters, and visits to our United States Senators from Ohio and our Congressional Representatives urging a reversal of this ill conceived policy. As I write you today, we have yet to receive any effective relief from the HHS mandate.

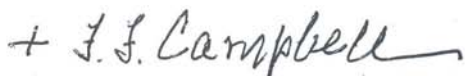
At the national level, we are being encouraged to continue this advocacy and support it with ever more fervent prayer. To that end, the Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty of the USCCB has issued a statement on religious liberty entitled, "Our First Most Cherished Liberty," which reviews multiple ways that religious liberty has been threatened and calls for intense prayer and concerted action during a "Fortnight for Freedom" running from June 21 (the vigil of the feasts of St. Thomas More and St. John Fisher) and July 4 (Independence Day).

I am asking every parishioner to read the full statement available at www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/religious-liberty/. I will also be encouraging all parishes to run a bulletin insert entitled, *The Most Cherished of American Freedoms*, on the weekend of May 26-27. I will be ordering prayer cards for all parishes for the Fortnight for Freedom and ask parishioners to pray daily the Prayer for Religious Freedom on the prayer cards. We will host a diocesan-wide celebration of Morning Prayer on June 30 at 9:30 a.m. in St. Joseph Cathedral. The Office for Divine Worship will have available a special Evening Prayer liturgy which I am asking all parishes to celebrate at least once during the fortnight. The Office for Social Concerns will be sponsoring a forum on religious liberty at 7 p.m. on June 27, at Immaculate Conception parish in Columbus. Dr. Bill Murphy, professor of moral theology at the Josephinum, and Sr. Pauline Ross, O.Carm., administrator of the Mother Angeline McCrory Manor, will join me as presenters. Lastly, the Office for Social Concerns has created postcard templates (available at www.socialconcerns.colodioc.org) for individuals or parishes use to augment the grassroots advocacy already taking place through telephone calls and emails to our federal legislators.

Our freedom requires our constant vigilance and continued participation in the Constitutional mechanisms that protect it. Ultimately, it is God who rightly deserves our allegiance. We must not yield to any coercive policy that would attempt to prevent us from living out our faith.

Thanking you for all of your prayers and support, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Frederick F. Campbell, D.D., Ph.D.
Bishop of Columbus