

DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

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MOST REVEREND W. FRANCIS MALOOLY, DD
BISHOP OF WILMINGTON

January 30, 2012

Dear Father:

Enclosed you will find a letter from me to the Faithful of the Diocese of Wilmington which I ask you to either read aloud at next weekend's Liturgies or to have it reprinted and distributed in your parishes.

The letter has to do with the most recent regulations from the United States Department of Health and Human Services which mandates that virtually all private health insurance plans will be required to include coverage for sterilization and contraceptives, including abortion inducing drugs, in their policies. As stated in my letter this is a direct attack on religious freedom and the government is in effect requiring us to forego healthcare insurance in order to follow our beliefs and conscience.

Also with this letter are several items from the United States Catholic Conference providing background on the new federal mandate as well as some information provided by the Conference on the matter of rights of conscience. You will find other material on the USCCB website.

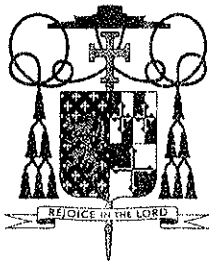
Please take the opportunity to make these materials available to your parishioners and encourage them to communicate with their U. S. Representatives.

Sincerely in Our Lord,

Most Reverend W. Francis Malooly
Bishop of Wilmington

/pbs

Enclosures



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MOST REVEREND W. FRANCIS MALOOLY, DD
BISHOP OF WILMINGTON

January 27, 2012

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

I write to you concerning an alarming and serious matter that negatively impacts the Church in the United States directly, and that strikes at the fundamental right to religious liberty for all citizens of any faith. On January 20, the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced that almost all employers, *including Catholic employers*, will be *forced* to offer their employees health coverage that includes sterilization, abortion inducing drugs, and contraception. Almost all health insurers will be forced to include those "services" and the health policies they write, and almost all individuals will be *forced* to buy that coverage as part of their policies. HHS falsely characterizes these as "preventive services" as if pregnancy were a disease.

In so ruling, the administration has cast aside the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States denying to Catholics our nation's first and foremost fundamental freedom, that of religious liberty. As a result, unless the ruling is overturned, we Catholics will be compelled to either violate our consciences or to drop health care coverage for our employees (and suffer the penalties for doing so). The administration's sole concession, after pleas by the United States Catholic Conference, was to give our institutions one year to comply. In the words of Cardinal-designate Timothy Dolan: "To force Americans to choose between violating their consciences and foregoing their healthcare is literally unconscionable ... it is as much an attack on access to healthcare as on religious freedom."

We cannot – we will not – comply with this unjust law. People of faith cannot be made second class citizens. We are already joined by our brothers and sisters of all faiths and many others of good will in this important effort to regain our religious freedom. Never before in US history has the federal government forced citizens to directly purchase what violates their beliefs. Once again the Church, God's People, will need to stand up and demand that their sacred rights and duties be protected.

I am asking you to do two things. First, as a community of faith we must commit ourselves to prayer and fasting that true wisdom and justice prevail and religious liberty be restored. Without God we can do nothing but with the Lord nothing is impossible.

Second, I ask you to contact our Congressional Representatives by email or fax, asking them to cosponsor the Respect for Rights of Conscience Act (H.R. 1179, S. 1467). This measure insures that the rights of conscience of all participants in our nation's healthcare system will be respected. For further information, please consult the website for the United States Catholic Conference (www.usccb.org/conscience) and our diocesan website (www.cdow.org) for more information regarding this tragic situation.

Sincerely yours in Our Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bishop Malooly". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Most Reverend W. Francis Malooly
Bishop of Wilmington

/pbs