



Office of the Bishop

Diocese of Rockford

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MEMORANDUM

TO: All Priests
FROM: Bishop Doran
DATE: February 14, 2012
RE: Religious Freedom

Dear Monsignor/Father:

This is a follow-up to the information you have already received about the incursion of the Federal Government into our religious freedom as Catholics and indeed the religious freedom of all citizens. I am sending you two items. The first item is a letter from Cardinals DiNardo and Wuerl, Cardinal-designate Dolan and Bishops Lori and Blaire in response to the failed attempt to reach an accommodation in this matter. The second item is a press release from the Department of Communications of the USCCB. Please feel free to make whatever use of these you wish to in communicating this information to the faithful. The prelates' letter is quite detailed, the press release somewhat more general.

Part of the difficulty that all of us face is that this is a complicated issue which has not to do so much with contraception as with religious freedom. I urge you to do whatever you can to underline that fact. This is a violation of the First Amendment to the Constitution. We know that many Catholics court grave sin by the practice of contraception, but we are free to choose our mortal sins. The government has no business picking them out for us.

This situation is made worse for you by the fact that the bishops have, it seems to me, been ambivalent in their treatment of prominent Catholics who espouse birth control, abortion and genetic manipulation without a murmur of protest. Now all of a sudden this is a great wrong. Our people are correct in sensing that something is wrong with that picture. We have to do whatever we can to insure that our religious freedom and that of our future generations is respected. It is certain that if the federal ogre gets away with this, more will follow.