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Fortnight of Freedom


June 21, 2013

Dear Catholics of the Diocese of Peoria,

There has always been anti-Catholicism in the United States of America. Some organizations and lodges, some denominations, the Know Nothings, the Klu Klux Klan, and especially some powerful elements of the American academic and cultural elites have long despised our Faith and our religious convictions. Guided by the First Amendment, however, the Federal Government has, up until now, upheld freedom of religion as a fundamental right for all Americans, including Catholics. The first Amendment not only forbids the establishment of a "state religion," but also provides that citizens may freely practice their own religion without governmental interference or control. The HHS mandate of Obama Care, which is scheduled to go into effect this August, clearly violates this guarantee of religious liberty. By means of governmental coercion, they would try to force Catholics in our own institutions to fund practices such as abortion which our Church holds to be intrinsically evil and gravely sinful. Contrary both to the Constitution and to long established political precedent, this new mandate for our schools, hospitals, and charitable organizations would in effect reduce American Catholicism to a legally disfavored religious entity. This deliberate and bigoted step is clearly agenda driven by the extreme radical secularism of the current administration.

This year, just as last year, the Bishops of the United States have asked that local dioceses observe the weeks before the Fourth of July as a *Fortnight of Freedom*. We ask that Catholics reflect upon our rights as citizens, our commitment to our public ministries, and most especially our loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ and his Gospel of Life. In the coming months, dioceses and other institutions of our Church will no doubt have recourse to the Federal courts, but much more essentially Catholic believers must turn to Almighty God with renewed faith and conviction. May God our Father *deliver us from evil*, and may God bless America.

Sincerely yours in Christ,


✠ Most Reverend Daniel R. Jenky, C.S.C.
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