



## PRO LIFE NEWS (February 6, 2012)

### St. Malachy Council 12540

**For Those Who Elected Our Current President, Time to Use Your Influence:** On January 20<sup>th</sup>, President Obama's Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, "Catholic" Kathleen Sebelius, released a statement verifying the Obama Administration's decision to force employer insurance plans to cover harmful contraceptive and abortifacient services. In essence, this unjust edict demands that Catholic hospitals and institutions dispense contraceptives (some of which cause abortions) and offer sterilization under the so called "Affordable Care Act." This amounts to the government trying to force the Catholic Church to violate conscience. Failure to do so will bring punitive measures against the Church when the mandate takes effect in August 2013.

Reaction from many courageous leaders in our Church was immediate. USCCB President Cardinal-designate Timothy Dolan stated, "The Obama Administration has now drawn an unprecedented line in the sand. The Catholic bishops are committed to working with our fellow Americans to reform the law and change this unjust regulation. We will continue to study all the implications of this troubling decision. In effect, the president is saying we have a year to figure out how to violate our consciences. To force American citizens to choose between violating their consciences and forgoing their healthcare is literally unconscionable. It is as much an attack on access to health care as on religious freedom. Historically this represents a challenge and a compromise of our religious liberty. The government should not force Americans to act as if pregnancy is a disease to be prevented at all costs."

In a separate statement entitled "U.S. Bishops Vow to Fight HHS Edict, our shepherds offered that is it, "Unconscionable to force citizens to buy contraceptives against their will."

Bishop David Zubik of Pittsburgh was one of many individual bishops who issued statements to their flocks. As he sees it, "The Obama administration has just told the Catholics of the United States 'To Hell with you!' There is no other way to put it. To Hell with your religious beliefs. To Hell with your religious liberty. To Hell with your freedom of conscience."

And our own Father Hollowell recently wrote on his blog, "President Obama has done exactly what every Catholic knew he was going to eventually do (every Catholic except Sr. Carol Keehan and the editors of *U.S. Catholic*), and that is he is going to force Catholics to violate a core, fundamental, bed-rock teaching of the Faith. There is a conscience-exemption in the new legislation that requires organizations to cover contraception (even the types which cause abortions), but the exemption hardly applies to anyone because it is so narrow. Organizations that employ non-Catholics will not be exempt. Even Fr. Jenkins from Notre Dame is now worried about the direction Obama is heading. All Catholics should be really alarmed when Fr. President Jenkins starts getting nervous about an Obama policy (by the way, Fr. Jenkins, how's the "dialogue" that you so proudly began going now?)"

**A Must-Read as We Prepare to Vote in 2012:** As the above shows, our nation continues to drift further and further away from the truth that human life is sacred and inviolable. More than ever, we as Catholic Knights must exercise faithful citizenship, especially during the elections of 2012. To assist us in doing so, in 2011 our Bishops published an updated version of *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*. In this document, the Church focuses the light of truth on six major concerns that the faithful must address before exercising their right to vote in the upcoming elections. The six moral issues are **abortion, religious freedom, traditional marriage, immigration reform, fighting poverty and ending war**. The bishops specifically affirm that a candidate's position on a single issue, such as abortion, provides sufficient reason NOT to vote for a candidate. *Faithful Citizenship* strongly affirms that we, as Catholics, must bring our "principles and moral convictions into the public arena" and, as we do so, it requires us to insist that candidates for political office commit themselves to the restoration of a culture that legally supports and protects innocent human life. I highly encourage all Knights to read and pray upon this teaching prior to November.

*"The American Jesuit scholar Father John Courtney Murray once said that 'Anyone who really believes in God must set God, and the truth of God, above all other considerations.' Here's what that means. Catholic public officials who take God seriously cannot support laws that attack human dignity without lying to themselves, misleading others and abusing the faith of their fellow Catholics. God will demand an accounting. Catholic doctors who take God seriously cannot do procedures, prescribe drugs or support health policies that attack the sanctity of unborn children or the elderly; or that undermine the dignity of human sexuality and the family. God will demand an accounting. And Catholic citizens who take God seriously cannot claim to love their Church, and then ignore her counsel on vital public issues that shape our nation's life. God will demand an accounting. As individuals, we can claim to believe whatever we want. We can posture, and rationalize our choices, and make alibis with each other all day long -- but no excuse for our lack of honesty and zeal will work with the God who made us. God knows our hearts better than we do. If we don't conform our hearts and actions to the faith we claim to believe, we're only fooling ourselves."*

*Archbishop Charles Chaput, January 22, 2012*