

LIFE, MARRIAGE & RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

USCCB Nationwide Bulletin Insert

February-March 2013

PRAY · FAST · ACT

In this Year of Faith, the Catholic Bishops of the United States have called for a nationwide effort to advance a movement for Life, Marriage, and Religious Liberty through prayer, penance, and sacrifice.

Catholics across the nation are being encouraged to pray, fast, and act for increased protections of religious liberty and to rebuild a culture favorable to life and marriage.

This effort is necessary because life, marriage, and religious liberty are under assault.

Fifty-five million children have been lost to abortion. Two upcoming Supreme Court cases could have significant impacts on the definition of marriage. And even with the latest “accommodation,” a federal mandate still forces people of conscience to facilitate insurance coverage of sterilization, contraception, and abortifacient drugs, and forces the employees of Catholic agencies to accept coverage for themselves and their children that violates their Church’s teaching on respect for human life.

The bishops’ call to prayer and sacrifice encourages monthly Eucharistic Holy Hours in cathedrals and parishes, daily rosary, special Prayers of the Faithful at all Masses, fasting and abstinence on Fridays, and the second observance of a Fortnight for Freedom this summer.

In response to the challenges to rights of conscience, the bishops have also launched a nationwide postcard campaign, “Project Life and Liberty,” during February and March. Soon parishes throughout the country will

distribute postcards to help Catholics communicate with their elected representatives in Congress.

The goal of this campaign is to encourage Congress to make sure that taxpayers are not forced to subsidize abortion, and that Catholic (and other) individuals and institutions are not forced to violate their moral and religious convictions when they provide or purchase health care, or provide assistance to people in need.

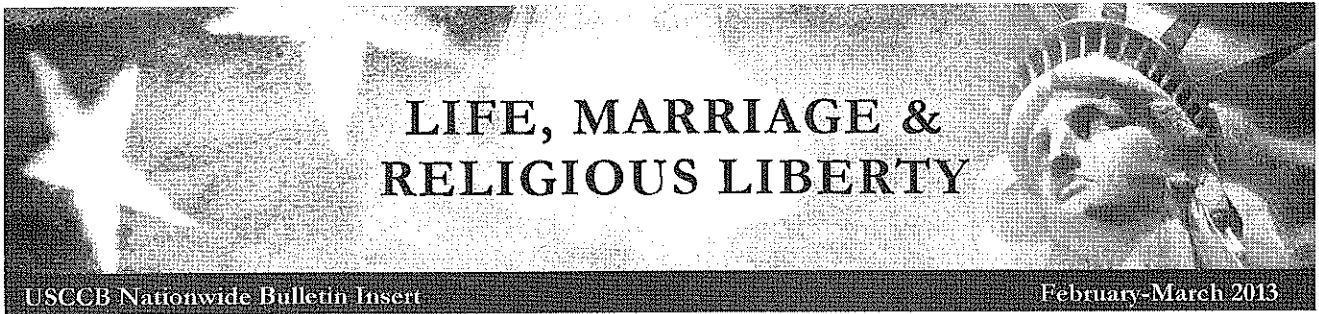
Federal law had been generous in protecting the rights of individuals and institutions to act according to their religious beliefs and moral convictions. But political forces are now injecting themselves into the lives of Catholics and Church organizations, substituting their own secular ideology for the Church’s beliefs.

Some say the Church should leave politics alone and concentrate on teaching the faith and serving the needy. But what if the State says the Church may not follow her teachings, even in her own institutions? What if the State limits the Church’s ability to serve the needy? What if it says a Catholic nurse has no right to her livelihood because she will not help perform abortions? What if the Church cannot act on her teaching that marriage is the union of one man and one woman?

While believers are seeking remedies at all levels of government, the U.S. bishops have called upon the Catholic faithful to join the movement for Life, Marriage, and Religious Liberty. Prayer is the ultimate source of our strength—for without God, we can do nothing; but with God, all things are possible.

Join the Movement!

- To join the call to prayer for Life, Marriage, and Religious Liberty, go to www.usccb.org/life-marriage-liberty. Pledge to fast on Fridays at www.usccb.org/fast.
- To learn more about challenges to religious liberty and conscience rights, go to www.usccb.org/conscience.
- To have your group or organization send postcards through “Project Life and Liberty,” go to www.usccb.org/postcards.



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