



3 February 2012

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As you may be aware, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops received some very disturbing news concerning future health care and Catholic Social Teaching. This could have serious consequences for both individuals and communities.

On January 20, the Department of Health and Human Services confirmed that it would impose a contraception coverage mandate which would force Catholic schools, hospitals and charities to provide prescription birth control, abortion-producing drugs and sterilization coverage for their employees at no cost.

When first proposed in August of 2011, an exemption for religious employers was so narrow that few qualified. That exemption has not changed.

The alarming result of this recent mandate is a violation of freedom of religion as Catholic employers will be forced to provide prescription birth control, abortion-producing drugs and sterilization coverage. Those employers would face two options: to pay for the services which violate their conscience or discontinue health care coverage for their employees.

This is unacceptable.

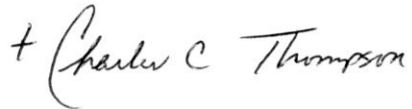
As Catholics we believe in a consistent ethic of life, which starts at the moment of conception and ends at natural death – and includes every moment in between.

This mandate from the Department of Health and Human Services violates this Catholic belief which calls us to respect the dignity of all human life and hold sacred the gifts God has given to us.

At this point we are still waiting further direction from the USCCB as the best means of addressing this concern. I will be working in conjunction with the Indiana bishops and the Indiana Catholic Conference to proceed as the USCCB advises.

With assurance of prayers and best wishes, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charles C. Thompson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Most Reverend Bishop Charles C. Thompson, D.D., JCL
Bishop of Evansville