

North Texas Catholic Newspaper – August 21, 2009

Bishop Kevin Vann addressed the following to the Catholics of the diocese August 20, 2009.

Dear brothers and sisters in the Lord,

As Catholics in these United States, we have an obligation to be informed, and involved in, the current debate on health care reform. We cannot absent ourselves, and our convictions, from the current historical and critical time. We must be “at the table” at this moment in time, and engage this debate and formation of health care policy with our voices for the protection of life, the protection of conscience, and the necessity of health care reform, so that it is accessible in this country which has so many blessings. At the same time, our voices cannot be shrill or strident, like much of the e-mail and blogs these days.

With my background in health care (I was a medical technologist before entering the seminary) and as the Bishops’ Conference liason to the Catholic Health Association, I know firsthand of the public statements of these groups in the defense of life and their hard and diligent work in Washington at this very moment.

Yet, it is not up to these groups alone. Every Catholic has the obligation to contact their senators and representatives about this matter and not just leave this to the Bishops’ Conference, individual bishops, or other groups alone. However, this must always be done in a clear, yet respectful tone.

I would encourage you to go to the USCCB Web site ([www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)), and read the words of Bishop William Murphy or Cardinal Rigali on these matters. For example, Bishop William Murphy of Rockville Center says that “genuine health care reform that protects the life and dignity of all is a moral imperative and a vital national obligation.” One can also access Cardinal Rigali’s recent statements, action alerts, news releases, and other information as well on this site. Our own North Texas Catholic is treating this very matter in this issue. This is a providential moment to live the Gospel of Life in a concrete and visible way. On a related note, as we wish Bishop Aymond well in his new role as Archbishop of New Orleans, and as we pray for him, we should also read his recent statement on these matters, released just yesterday.

Gratefully yours in Christ,

+ Most Reverend Kevin W. Vann  
Bishop of Fort Worth