



DIOCESE OF BOISE

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January 27, 2012

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On January 20th, the United States Department of Health and Human Services issued a rule mandating that contraceptives, abortion-inducing drugs, and sterilization be included at no cost to the insured in all health care plans. This means that health insurers will be forced to include these immoral “services” in their health plans and that every employer, *including Catholic parishes, schools, hospitals, charitable organizations, and social service agencies*, will be forced to provide and pay for this coverage that is a clear violation of Catholic teaching.

This decision by the Department of Health and Human Services rejected the strong appeals made by hundreds of religious institutions and hundreds of thousands of concerned citizens who had vigorously argued against the mandate and encouraged a broader exemption that would include religious institutions and ministries. This decision poses a real threat to Catholic Church’s capacity to offer adequate health care coverage for those who work in our parishes, schools, and various institutions.

As your Bishop, I urge you to speak out for the protection of conscience rights and religious liberty that are essential to the common good of our nation. I also urge you to contact your legislators and ask them to do all that is possible to reverse this unconscionable mandate.

As Americans and as Catholics, we are blessed with religious liberty which safeguards our right to live our principles and moral convictions. Our civil laws should fully recognize and protect our right, obligation, and opportunities to participate in society without being forced to abandon or ignore the central moral convictions of our Catholic faith. Please join me in making your voice known as together we join other people of faith in rescinding this unjust Health and Human Services mandate!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael P. Driscoll". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Most Reverend Michael P. Driscoll, M.S.W., D.D.
Bishop of Idaho