



## DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE

21 May 2012

**ROCKVILLE CENTRE, N.Y. – May 21, 2012** – In order to protect our religious liberties from unwarranted and unprecedented government intrusion, the Diocese of Rockville Centre, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, and Catholic Health Services of Long Island have filed suit in federal court today seeking to block a recent Health and Human Services mandate that unconstitutionally attempts to define the nature of the church's religious ministry and would force religious employers to violate their conscience. The Archdiocese of New York is also a plaintiff in the suit.

Named as defendants in the suit are the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. Department of Labor, and the U.S. Department of the Treasury. The lawsuit was filed in federal court in Brooklyn. Lawsuits were also filed today in federal district courts throughout the nation by other Catholic (arch)dioceses, institutions and organizations.

The Most Reverend William Murphy, Bishop of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, said about the lawsuits filed in New York and elsewhere, "We have been placed in the position of having to seek redress in the courts in our insistence that the Administration respect our God-given right to freedom of religion and freedom of conscience, and that no regulation, contrary to Church teachings, be forced on the Catholic Church and her members and institutions."

This suit has been filed because the government is requiring religious organizations to provide, pay for, and/or facilitate access to services that are contrary to their deeply held and constitutionally protected religious beliefs.

An equally grave concern is that while the government has recognized a religious exemption to these mandates, it is so narrowly worded that many – if not most – religious institutions such as Catholic hospitals, nursing homes, schools, soup kitchens, and homeless shelters do not qualify for it. Incredibly, these Catholic institutions would not qualify for the exemption because they do not discriminate against non-Catholics who might come to them seeking assistance. Nor do they discriminate against non-Catholics in their hiring practices. In order to qualify for an exemption, a religious institution must "primarily" serve and employ Catholics, and must submit to an invasive federal government inquiry into its religious beliefs and practices, conferring powers on government that are forbidden by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. Specifically, for an institution to know whether it meets the government's definition, it must submit to a governmental investigation whereby federal employees determine the religion of those employed and served by the entity, whether their beliefs are the same as the institution, and whether the institution hires and serves "primarily" those of the same beliefs.

The current federal lawsuit attempts to remedy this unjust and unconstitutional mandate on the federal judicial level.

### **STAND UP FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM**

**EVENT:** Freedom Rally  
**WHEN:** FRIDAY, June 8 AT NOON  
**WHERE:** REP. CAROLYN MCCARTHY'S OFFICE  
300 GARDEN CITY PLAZA  
GARDEN CITY, NY  
**CONTACT:** GRACE COLUCCI, [gccolucci@aol.com](mailto:gccolucci@aol.com)

**Our Lady of Mercy, Pray for us**