



## Catholics for Freedom of Religion

### America's 1<sup>st</sup> Freedom: Religious Liberty

In 1965 the Second Vatican Council gave to the world a declaration of religious freedom called *Dignitatis Humanae*, which states: "This Vatican Council declares that the human person has a right to religious freedom." The American bishops were major contributors to the birth of this document because they were intimately acquainted with religious freedom, being citizens of the only nation on earth that has the principle of religious liberty at its very foundation.

Now this liberty has come under attack. The principle of freedom of religion is violated by a regulation coming out of the new healthcare law. This regulation, the HHS Mandate, denies freedom of conscience to millions of Americans whom it would force to provide contraception, sterilization and abortion inducing drugs as part of the insurance coverage for employees of all entities exempting only the churches themselves. As Cardinal Dolan has said, "*We have become certain of two things: Religious Freedom is under attack, and we will not cease in our struggle to protect it.*"

**The Fortnight for Freedom**, June 21 to July 4, 2013, has been set aside by the USCCB as an important time to learn and pray and work together to restore the God given religious liberty guaranteed to Americans of every faith in our Constitution and Bill of Rights.

Please mark your calendar for these events of the **Fortnight For Freedom**. The opening mass will be celebrated by Bishop Murphy on June 21, 7:30pm at the Cathedral of St. Agnes. On June 29, *Catholics for Freedom of Religion* will co-sponsor a rally "Religious Freedom: Our 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment Right" from 10am - 1pm at St John the Baptist High School. The closing mass of the fortnight will be celebrated by Bishop Robert Brennan on July 4, at 12:10pm at St Agnes Cathedral.

*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." First Amendment, U.S. Constitution*