

FROM THE ARCHBISHOP



*Archdiocese of Saint Paul
and Minneapolis*

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

MOST REVEREND JOHN C. NIENSTEDT

January 26, 2012

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

I write to you concerning an alarming and serious matter that negatively impacts the Church in the United States directly, and that strikes at the fundamental right to religious liberty for all citizens of any faith. The federal government, which claims to be "of, by, and for the people," has just dealt a heavy blow to almost a quarter of those people—the Catholic population—and to the millions more who are served by the Catholic faithful.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced last week that almost all employers, *including Catholic employers*, will be *forced* to offer their employees' health coverage that includes sterilization, abortion-inducing drugs, and contraception. Almost all health insurers will be *forced* to include those "services" in the health policies they write. And almost all individuals will be *forced* to buy that coverage as a part of their policies.

In so ruling, the Administration has cast aside the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, denying to Catholics our Nation's first and most fundamental freedom, that of religious liberty. And as a result, unless the rule is overturned, we Catholics will be compelled either to violate our consciences, or to drop health coverage for our employees (and suffer the penalties for doing so). The Administration's sole concession was to give our institutions one year to comply.

People of faith cannot be made second class citizens. We are already joined by our brothers and sisters of all faiths and many others of good will in this important effort to regain our religious freedom. In generations past, the Church has always been able to count on the faithful to stand up and protect her sacred rights and duties. I hope and trust she can count on this generation of Catholics to do the same. Our children and grandchildren deserve nothing less.

And therefore, I would ask of you two things. First, as a community of faith we must commit ourselves to prayer and fasting that wisdom and justice may prevail, and religious liberty may be restored. Without God, we can do nothing; with God, nothing is impossible. Second, I would also recommend visiting www.usccb.org/conscience, to learn more about this severe assault on religious liberty, and how to contact Congress in support of legislation that would reverse the Administration's decision.

With every good wish, I remain

Cordially yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "John C. Nienstedt".

The Most Reverend John C. Nienstedt
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

/dkt

NEWS FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE

**Minnesota voters will have the chance
to decide the future of marriage
on November 6, 2012**

The **Minnesota Marriage Protection Amendment**, which asks voters *"Shall the Minnesota constitution be amended to provide that only a union of one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as a marriage in Minnesota?"* places the traditional definition of marriage – one man and one woman – into our state constitution.

It is essential for all voters to vote YES on November 6th as Minnesota law requires ballot questions that are left blank to be counted as NO votes.

**Take the pledge to vote YES on the Marriage
Protection Amendment today.
The failure to vote is the same as voting NO.**



**MINNESOTA
FOR MARRIAGE**
ONE MAN - ONE WOMAN
www.MNFORMARRIAGE.COM



MINNESOTA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

The time is now to stand up for marriage!

Prepared and paid for by Minnesota for Marriage, 2355 Fairview Ave N, Box 301, Roseville, MN 55113, in support of the Minnesota Marriage Protection Amendment.

Marriage Amendment Campaign: Archdiocesan Financial Support

Minnesota's Catholic bishops support the adoption of the Marriage Constitutional Amendment which will be on the November 6, 2012 ballot. In 2011, the Archdiocese contributed \$650,000 to the Minnesota Catholic Conference. The source of these funds was investment income; it did not include parish assessments or donations to the Catholic Services Appeal. Last year, Archdiocesan funding priorities have remained constant, or have even increased including \$2.8 million for elementary and secondary education, and \$1.4 million for Catholic Charities to serve those most in need in our community. The need for an amendment to the constitution protecting marriage was shown again when the January 23 Minnesota Appeals Court ruled that a lawsuit, filed in Hennepin County on behalf of those who want to redefine marriage, must be sent back to the district court for further proceedings, effectively putting the institution of marriage on trial. Minnesota Catholic Conference website at <http://mncf.org/issues/marriage>.