ARCHDIOCESE FOR THE MILITARY SERVICES, USA
OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

26 January 2012

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

It is imperative that I call to your attention 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. It is a blow to a freedom that you have fought to defend and for which you have seen your buddies fall in battle.

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 immoral "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 to choose between violating our consciences or dropping health coverage for our employees (and suffering the penalties for doing so). The Administration's sole concession was to give our institutions one year to comply.

We cannot—we will not—comply with this unjust law. 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. Our parents and grandparents did not come to these shores to help build America's cities and towns, its infrastructure and institutions, its enterprise and culture, only to have their posterity stripped of their God given rights. 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. Your children and grandchildren deserve nothing less.

Therefore, I ask two things of you. 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.

Grateful even now for your support, I remain

Sincerely in Christ,

+ Timothy P. Broglio

(Most Reverend) Timothy P. Broglio
Archbishop for the Military Services

PO BOX 4469 • WASHINGTON, D.C. 20017-0469 • TEL: 202.719.3600 • FAX: 202.269.9445