

Under Attack: Your Religious Liberty

A Special Letter from the Most Reverend Larry Silva, Bishop of Honolulu

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.

+ Larry Silva

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Special Collection for the Augustine Educational Foundation

From Sue Ferandin, *Executive Director*

February 11th & 12th

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THE AUGUSTINE EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION



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AND

PLEASE SHOW YOUR SUPPORT!

Our Catholic schools provide a quality education to students from all ethnic, religious and financial backgrounds.

The Augustine Educational Foundation provides scholarships to financially needy students in our schools. Please take a moment and help make a difference in a student's life – 100% of your gift goes directly to support tuition scholarships on your island/vicariate for the 2012-2013 school year.

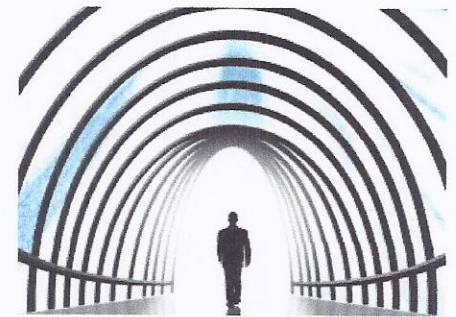
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AKUA Run/Walk for Vocations

From Fr. Peter Dumag, *Director of Vocations*

The AKUA Run/Walk for Vocation Campaign is a creative way to raise awareness about vocations, solicit prayers and make sacrifices in support of our future priests, deacons, and in consecrated life of our Catholic Church.

Join us again on President's Day, February 20, 2012 for the Great Aloha Run (GAR) to start the series. AKUA participants for the 2012 GAR are invited to attend and celebrate the Mass at St. Theresa Co-Cathedral at 6pm, February 19.



On race day, everyone should gather at 6:15am, Cathedral of Our Lady of Peace Statue, for prayer and group photos. For more information, please contact the Vocations Office at (808) 585-3343, or send an email to manao@rcchawaii.org or pabaya@rcchawaii.org, Assistant Director of Vocations.