



Bishop Warns Those Favoring Abortion: “God Is not Mocked”

The bishop of Peoria, Illinois, is urging Catholics in his diocese to approach Tuesday’s elections as a matter of life or death. Indeed, he suggests, their eternal lives may depend on it.

“For those who hope for salvation, no political loyalty can ever take precedence over loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ and to his Gospel of Life,” wrote Bishop Daniel R. Jenky in a [letter](#) to be read during all Masses in the diocese this weekend. The bishop compared the moral dilemma facing voters today to the informal survey of “voter” sentiment taken by Pontius Pilate when he presented Jesus in a purple robe and crown of thorns to a crowd in Jerusalem.

“Nearly two thousand years ago,” the bishop wrote, “after our Savior had been bound, beaten, scourged, mocked, and crowned with thorns, a pagan Roman Procurator displayed Jesus to a hostile crowd by sarcastically declaring: ‘Behold your King.’”

The scene is described in the Gospel of John: “But they cried out: ‘Away with him. Away with him. Crucify him.’ Pilate said to them: ‘Shall I crucify your king?’ The chief priests answered: ‘We have no king but Caesar.’” (John 19:15.)

“Today, Catholic politicians, bureaucrats, and their electoral supporters who callously enable the destruction of innocent human life in the womb also thereby reject Jesus as their Lord,” Bishop Jenky wrote. “They are objectively guilty of grave sin.” The Catholic prelate also took aim at the mandate from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services requiring that employers at private institutions, including religious institutions other than houses of worship, provide contraceptive services — including sterilization and abortion-inducing drugs — among the healthcare benefits provided to their employees, in compliance with the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ObamaCare). The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and other religious organizations have campaigned against the mandate, charging it is a violation of religious freedom of those institutions affiliated with churches that, like the Catholic Church, regard contraception and abortion as grave moral evils.

The bishop’s letter continues,

Since the foundation of the American Republic and the adoption of the Bill of Rights, I do not think there has ever been a time more threatening to our religious liberty than the present. Neither the president of the United States nor the current majority of the Federal Senate have been willing to even consider the Catholic community’s grave objections to those HHS mandates that would require all Catholic institutions, exempting only our church buildings, to fund abortion, sterilization, and artificial contraception.





Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on November 3, 2012

The letter names no candidate or party, though the mandate has come from a Democratic administration through a department headed by HHS Secretary Kathleen Sibelius, the former Democratic governor of Kansas and a Roman Catholic. The “Federal Senate” referred to by the bishop is, unlike today’s Republican House of Representatives, controlled by a Democratic majority. The Affordable Care Act was passed by party line votes in a Democratic Congress in 2010 and President Obama was behind the legislation and lobbied hard for its passage before signing it into law. Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney, a Mormon, has promised to work for the repeal of ObamaCare, though he supports provisions such as forbidding insurance companies to deny coverage or charge higher rates for those with pre-existing conditions, and the guarantee of coverage for children of the insured until age 26.

During the initial furor over the HHS mandate, President Obama proposed a compromise that would have the insurance companies, rather than the religious institutions, absorb the cost of the contraceptive coverage. That would, however, still leave many church-affiliated schools, hospitals, and other institutions as providers of a health care menu offering services those institutions hold and teach are deadly sins.

“This assault upon our religious freedom is simply without precedent in the American political and legal system,” the bishop wrote. “Contrary to the guarantees embedded in the First Amendment, the HHS mandates attempt to now narrowly define and thereby drastically limit our traditional religious works. They grossly and intentionally intrude upon the deeply held moral convictions that have always guided our Catholic schools, hospitals, and other apostolic ministries.”

The diocese of Peoria covers 26 counties across central Illinois and has a Catholic population of approximately 196,000 people, the Catholic News Service [reports](#). Calling on all Catholic voters to exercise the franchise with a conscience in conformity with the creed they confess each Sunday, the bishop is also urging them to “Be faithful to Christ and to your Catholic Faith.” The stakes, he said, go far beyond Election Day.

“God is not mocked,” he wrote, “and as the Bible clearly teaches, after this passing instant of life on earth, God’s great mercy in time will give way to God’s perfect judgment in eternity.”



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