



THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

ONE PETER YORKE WAY, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94109-6602 · (415) 614-5632 · FAX (415) 614-5633

MEDIA RELEASE

Contact: George Wesolek (415) 606-7112

“We cannot – we will not – accept this unjust redrafting of the principle of religious liberty”

Archbishop George Niederauer Statement to Catholics
Of the Archdiocese of San Francisco

(February 7, 2012) SAN FRANCISCO - In a letter to the Faithful of the Archdiocese of San Francisco which will be distributed at all Masses in the parishes of the Archdiocese on the weekend of February 9th and 10th, Archbishop Niederauer writes to Catholic parishioners: “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 letter refers to a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services regulation which “promulgated a new and radical interpretation of religious freedom last week when it announced new regulations regarding health insurance coverage of reproductive services which will be mandatory for employers in the United States.”

The letter states further: “For the first time in federal law, the government has determined that religious institutions such as Catholic hospitals, Catholic Charities and Catholic Relief Services are not truly religious employers because they do not have as their primary purpose “the inculcation of religious values” and do not primarily limit their services to those of their own faith.”

The Archbishop points out that Catholics, as are other religions, are called to reach out to the poor, “shelter the homeless and heal the sick.”

“We cannot – we will not – accept this unjust redrafting of the principle of religious liberty which our Founders so rightly saw as an inalienable gift of God. People of faith cannot be made second class citizens. And faith based service to those in need in our society cannot be classified as non-religious by our national government.”

-more-

The Archbishop asks that parishioners email or write the White House for a reversal of this policy.

The Archdiocese of San Francisco encompasses the California counties of San Francisco, San Mateo and Marin. It is comprised of more than 550,000 Catholics residing in 91 parishes, with 61 elementary schools and 14 high schools.

For the entire letter go [here](#).

###