

RECTOR'S CORNER

This weekend, Bishop Sam Jacobs asked us to print his message about the HHS ruling in our Cathedral News and to read it at all masses. As I have mentioned to all of you these past few weeks, this new ruling would require ALL institutions, agencies, corporations to offer & provide contraceptives and abortifacients to all their employees without any regard for our spiritual beliefs, doctrines and conscience. All employers are given until August of 2013 to comply with this ruling that came out as part of the Obama-health care bundle. The Diocese and myself are considered by law "employers." I am legally responsible for the Cathedral Parish Corporation, Cathedral School Corporation and the Cemetery Corporation. Please see www.usccb.org/news/2012/12-012.cfm and www.usccb.org/conscience.

The rights of conscience is a fundamental right written in our Constitution and has been, for the last three centuries, a part of our southern/acadian heritage. Its protection is the responsibility of every God-fearing person in our Church, community and land. We all need to stand together on this and speak for on behalf of those who cannot. Please Contact our U.S. Representatives by e-mail, phone, or FAX letter; call the U.S. Capitol switchboard at: 202-224-3121 for information on how to contact our local US reps. Let us ask our local US reps. to support and co-sponsor the Respect for Rights Conscience Act (H.R. 1179, S. 1467). Additional contact info can be found on Members' web sites at: www.house.gov and www.senate.gov. The Press Conference that the President held last Friday did not address the issues of religious freedom and the rights of conscience that the new HHS ruling violated. The Christian Churches in the United States (Roman Catholic and mainline Christian Churches) are still waiting for the President to rescind this new law and respect the separation of Church and State. Thanks to all who are standing with us on this issue.

This week, I shall be in New Orleans to play host (together with the Fil-Am communities of New Orleans) to the first meeting of the Leadership Council of the National Assembly of Filipino Priests serving the Church in the U.S.A. The members of the Leadership Council were elected at our first national gathering in Los Angeles last November. During this meeting, I shall hand-over the baton to the next group of Filipino priests who will continue what Bishop Solis and our Steering Committee started in 2008. Being the site of the first Asian presence in America in the mid-1700's (Filipino seamen), New Orleans enjoys the privilege of hosting this first meeting and launching the program that will benefit the Filipino priests serving the Church in the U.S.A. Please pray for our Filipino priests in the country that we may continue to serve faithfully, the people of God we have called our own.

In the first reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, the Lord says, "Remember NOT the events of the past, the things of long ago consider NOT; see, I am doing something new!" (Is. 43: 18-19, 21-22, 24b-25) This seems to be the theme of this weekend's readings. God always forgets the past and looks forward to something new. Whether this "new" involves conversion of hearts, transformation of lives, change of ways of living, God is always on the lookout for the good things His people will do. However, God's people seem to be stuck in the past. We always, and more often than not, are quick to recall and remember the past especially the misfortunes that we have had, the challenges that we faced, and the sufferings we endured. Somehow good memories are easier to forget. In the gospel, Jesus will show His audience and us, how God forgets the past by restoring someone to new life. And every time God restores one to Himself, He sends them away and looks forward to what they could bring back to Him!

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK OF FEB 20 – FEB 26

Monday - Jas 3:13-18; Mk 9:14-29
 Tuesday - Jas 4:1-10; Mk 9:30-37
 Wednesday - Jl 2:12-18; 2 Cor 5:20-6:2; Mt 6:1-6,16-18
 Thursday - Dt 30:15-20; Lk 9:22-25
 Friday - Is 58:1-9a; Mt 9:14-15
 Saturday - Is 58:9b-14; Lk 5:27-32
 Sunday - Gn 9:8-15; 1 Pt 3:18-22; Mk 1:12-15

PRAYER LINE

For prayer request, call 879-1032 or 580-1575. Help is needed! If anyone is interested in becoming the prayer line member please call the Cathedral Office at 876-6904.

Please remember in your prayers those who are ill: Matt Matherne, Mable Rhodes, Connie Ghirardi, Wendy Couvillon, Margie & C.J. Amedee, Barbara Lapeyrouse, Judy Melancon, Deacon Eldon Frazier, Ernest Bourgeois, Durrelle Verrette, Janet Viteaux, George Foret, Ruth Wright, Florence Cunningham, Penny Simmons, Joan Pitre, Norma Fanguy, Megan Chancy, Beulah Doiron Parr, Connie Breaux, David Ledet, Mae Soudelier, Roland Adams Jr., Bonnie LeBourgeois. **PRAY FOR the repose of the soul of Miriam Theriot.**

SANCTUARY LIGHTS**Church**

In Loving Memory of Jesse J. Ayers donated by his wife Rita & family.

Chapel

In Loving Memory of Louis P. Saia Jr. donated by his wife Ann Saia & Children.

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, "Your sins are forgiven," or to say, "Rise, pick up your mat and walk?"

Mark 2:1-12

In simple linguistic terms it is easier to say *שְׁלַח חַטְאֵי הוּן מִחוּל* [Your sins are forgiven] than to say *קוּמ וּלְצַעַד עִלְיָיָהּ, לְהַרְיֵם אֵת* [Rise, pick up your mat and walk]. But Jesus was not concerned with linguistics; he was striking at the heart of the spiritual integrity of every person. Are we able to forgive those we feel have sinned against us? Are we able to say *I forgive you* to those we believe have hurt us? Attachment to people and things can be good, but they become harmful when we cannot let go. We become co-dependent or obsessive. One very harmful attachment is resentment or bitterness about the person we just love to hate. Such an attachment is harmful to the other person, to ourselves and to our relationship with God. *I love you* are not the three hardest words to say; *I forgive you* are much harder. Only priest can give the assurance of God's forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. But we can say *I forgive you* to people we believe have harmed us and assure them of our personal belief that God forgives them.

Sunday – February 12th

Envelopes (249) \$ 9,539.50
 Loose 1,883.25
 \$11,422.75

BAPTISM

The Cathedral of St. Francis Parish welcomes our newest members, VINCENT MICHAEL ARCEMENT, ADDISON CLAIRE WHITE, RILYNN CAPRI LEBOEUF and LIAM EVERETTE LEBOEUF who were baptized in Christ.

Flowers on the Altar this weekend were donated in loving memory of Mary Guidry, Frances Waldrip and Joyce Dagate by Dr. John Dagate.

Mass will be celebrated on Mardi Gras, February 21st at 8:30 a.m. There will be NO evening Mass. The Cathedral office will be CLOSED on Lundi and Mardi Gras, February 20th & 21st.

ASH WEDNESDAY MASS SCHEDULE

6:30 a.m., 12:05 & 5:30 p.m.

New Student Registration for the 2012-2013 School Year

Monday, February 27 – Registered parishioners in St. Francis Parish ONLY

Tuesday, February 28 – Families registered in other Catholic Church parishes

Wednesday, February 29 – Non-Catholic families

TIME: 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM PLACE: School Library
 (Birth & baptismal certificates, immunization records and Social Security cards are needed at registration time.
 Please provide COPIES for school records.)



Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux

2779 Highway 311 – Post Office Box 505 – Schriever, Louisiana 70395
(985) 850-3124 – Fax (985) 850-3224

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

February 17, 2012

Dear Parishioners,

All of you are very aware of the sad direction the present Presidential administration is heading in the area of health insurance coverage. Human Health Services with the full blessing of our President has recently ruled that all institutions, including Catholic schools, hospitals and universities, must provide health insurance that offers sterilizations, abortion inducing drugs, and contraceptives.

This is a direct attack on the religious liberty of Catholic institutions as well as others and a violation of the freedom of conscience which are gifts from God.

This is unprecedented in the history of our country. It goes against all previous laws and federal court rulings on this matter. This HHS mandate forces religious employers into bitter choices: to violate their religious convictions and consciences, to stop providing health coverage for their employees, or to end the charitable, medical and educational services that for centuries have provided a crucial safety net to the poor and vulnerable of our society.

This can be the beginning of a slippery slope process. If this mandate is allowed to be enacted and not overturned by the Congress or the Courts, then what will be next?

Historically, we have seen similar governmental intrusion into the lives of its citizens, believing it knows what is best for the citizens rather than their constituents. What happened to the slogan: "For the people, by the people, of the people"?

What can we do? First of all, we must pray for our governmental leaders, especially Congress and the Courts, to recognize the inherent dangers in this mandate and block it from taking effect. Second, we can personally voice our thoughts on this mandate by writing to our senators and congressmen.

As your bishop, I will join with my brother bishops in taking every legal and necessary step to have this mandate reversed. For us, it is a matter of protecting basic religious freedom which is guaranteed by our Constitution and laws of the land. It is also a matter of defending the right of each person to follow his or her conscience which is also a protected right.

Let us pray through the intercession of our Lady of Prompt Succor that what is right, good, true and just will prevail in this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Most Reverend Sam G. Jacobs, D.D.
Bishop of Houma-Thibodaux

*To send a prepared email addressing this issue to your representatives and senator, go to
<http://www.voterveice.net/groups/LCC/advocacy/>*
