

What Do You Stand For?

February 5, 2012

If you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything.

What do you stand for?

What do you believe in?

What would you risk everything for – life and limb?

Job believed in God's goodness and mercy no matter if he was given riches or trials. It may not be evident in today's reading, but earlier in his book – in the 1st Chapter – he says, "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

St. Paul believed in preaching the Gospel always and everywhere. He was willing to be a "slave to all" so that as many people as possible would have the opportunity and privilege to hear and believe in the message of freedom and salvation that Christ graciously delivered to those who needed it.

Jesus' disciples and apostles – including Simon and Andrew, James and John – believed in his healing ability to work miracles. Many more people believed in this too...thus, the reason that everyone sought Christ out for healing of many sicknesses and diseases.

What do we believe?

Our United States Government believes that the new mandate by the Health and Human Services balances: respecting religious beliefs – AND – increases access for women to acquire “preventative services” and in doing so, it seems as if they view and treat pregnancy as if it was a disease like Cancer or AIDS.

They believe that they have made this decision after “careful consideration” of all the parties and people involved.

They believe that this mandate “does not signal any change – at all – in the administration’s policy on conscience protection.”

That’s what they believe.

What do we believe?

We believe that a mandatory health care for all people, businesses, employers and employees – especially one that goes against our consciences as Catholics – is a direct violation against the FIRST AMENDMENT: a right to religious liberty and freedom of conscience.

Those promoting this mandate will tell you, “There’s goes the Catholic Church again...trying to impose its beliefs on everyone just as it always does.”

My friends, this is NOT about what the Catholic Church believes and teaches.

Yes, we do believe that artificial contraceptions, sterilizations, and abortion inducing drugs, which are clearly included in the Health and Human Service’s mandate – are morally and objectively evil because they manipulate and destroy human life, which should be seen as sacred and protected from all harm and evil in the world.

But, this isn’t the issue...this isn’t what’s at stake.

What's at stake for us – Catholics, Christians, Jews, non-religious, any and all men and women, faith or no faith, in the United States – is that our religious liberty and freedom of conscience is at threat of being completely disregarded and possibly eliminated by our Federal Government.

It seems as if this action by them is an act of totalitarianism where THEY want to be the only ones calling the shots...THEY want to be the only ones thinking for us... THEY want to be the only ones telling us what we can and can't do... THEY want to be the only ones in complete and utter control and power.

As Gene Hackman said in *The Quick and The Dead*, "Don't you get it...this is MY town...I'M in charge of everything!"

It seems that this is what our United States Government wants...to be in charge of everything!

And my friends, this couldn't be farther from what Christ taught us by his life.

He who came to server...not to be served.

He who welcomed everyone – just as they were – sinners and saints alike.

He who sacrificed his very life so that we – 2,000 years later – might be free and have eternal life.

How far our Government has fallen from these principles, which helped first build and establish our country as one that values the freedom of conscience and the freedom to practice religion from any and all forces that might threaten these things... how very sad.

And so, we ask ourselves once again, "What do we believe...What do we stand for, if anything?"

If we believe in religious liberty and freedom of conscience and not letting our government make laws that directly oppose and violate our conscience, I invite you to join the Bishops in America who say, “We cannot – we will not – comply with this unjust law,” and take action now!

First and foremost, pray, pray, and pray some more. Then, if possible, do penance and fast for God’s help for our country and government to rescind its mandate and restore religious liberty.

Secondly, write to Congress to reverse this decision and create a law that will protect our rights as free citizens in the future. A sample letter with suggested points as well as contact information is included in our Bulletin this weekend.

May God help us...because after all, we can’t do this without Him.