

Letter from Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory
To Be Read at all Masses in Parishes in the Archdiocese of Atlanta
During the Weekend of January 28 – 29, 2012

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I am writing to you on a matter of grave moral concern -- freedom of religion and freedom of conscience. 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.


I stand in unity with Catholic bishops throughout the United States and other religious leaders vowing to fight this mandate.

Along with my brother bishops and other religious leaders, I insist that this is a direct attack on our religious freedom and our First Amendment rights. I will work with the bishops, other religious leaders and our fellow Americans to remove this unjust regulation.

If the administration will not rescind this violation of our First Amendment rights, we must call on our elected leaders to do so. I ask you to pray that wisdom and justice may prevail, and work together to restore our religious liberty.

Please join me in continuing to follow the development of this important issue and contacting our elected representatives to seek a just resolution.

Through our *Georgia Bulletin*, archdiocesan and Georgia Catholic Conference websites and other media, I will keep you up to date on the progress of this important issue.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
 Wilton D. Gregory
Archbishop of Atlanta