



## Religious Freedom & Conscience Rights

This outline is available for download at [www.respectlifekcsj.org](http://www.respectlifekcsj.org)



### Sign-in, get drinks/snacks, and socialize

### Welcome & Opening Prayer for Life

Youth Facilitator opens meeting with a “thank you” to all who have attended, introduction of new members, and a prayer. It is important that all participants feel welcomed and participate within their own comfort level.

### Opening Prayer

#### ***Prayer for Protection of Life and Freedom***

*Father, we praise you and thank you for your most precious gifts of human life and human freedom.*

*Touch the hearts of our lawmakers with the wisdom and courage to uphold conscience rights and religious liberty for all. Protect all people from being forced to violate their moral and religious convictions.*

*In your goodness, guard our freedom to live out our faith and to follow you in all that we do. Give us strength to be bold and joyful witnesses.*

*We ask this through Christ, our Lord.*

*Amen.*

### Icebreaker: Freedom of Expression

1. Ask everyone to walk around the room or around a designated space.
2. Explain that you will announce a category (see list below or use your own) and that participants should then quickly organize themselves into smaller groups, based on the category to which they belong.
3. Once everyone is organized into their groups, ask each group to identify itself.
4. Once all participants have had a few minutes to mingle/chat with the other members of their small group about their common category, keep things moving by asking participants to again walk around before announcing the next category.

#### Categories

- What is your favorite season?
- How many siblings do you have?
- What color are your eyes?
- What's your shoe size?
- What type of shoes are you wearing?
- What's your favorite color?

## Presentation – Religious Freedom & Conscience Rights

**NOTE: The Powerpoint presentation is available online for download.**

- ❖ The presentation file has been updated into the same PDF format as this session outline so it should be just as easy to access. If no laptop/projector is available, a printout of individual slides can also be copied/printed and used as both a presentation and as a handout for participant notes.
- ❖ The content in the slide presentation is designed to be straight-forward but also to allow flexibility.
- ❖ The comprehensive nature of the written facilitator notes below has been provided to allow for diversity among groups, for an extended and on-going education, and for later reference on the topic. **Therefore, it is possible that all the content included in the facilitator notes will *not* be covered in a single session. Please review the information below for each slide and then create a presentation that is your own based on the needs of your group.**
- ❖ If necessary, the Respect Life Office can answer any questions or provide guidance on any topics in the slide deck. Please contact the Respect Life Office at (816) 756-1850 or [francis@diocesksj.org](mailto:francis@diocesksj.org) if you cannot access the on-line files.

**Slide 1**            **Introduction**        Religious Freedom & Conscience Rights

**Slide 2**            **Topics for Discussion**

- What do we mean by “religious freedom”?
- Brief history of religious freedom in America
- Religious persecution in our current secular and anti-Christian culture
- Religious freedom and the HHS mandate
- The Church’s teaching on religious freedom
- What are you going to do to protect your constitutional right to be Catholic?

**Slide 3**            **What is Religious Freedom?**

“Freedom of religion”, or “religious liberty”, is a principle that allows an individual or community, in public or private, to manifest religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship, and observance without interference from the state.

As in the United States, the term is also used to represent the limits placed on a government preventing the establishment of a state-enforced religion or set of religious practices. The concept of “religious freedom” also typically includes the freedom to change religion or to not follow any religion.

Historically “freedom of religion” has been used to refer to the tolerance of different theological systems of belief (e.g. the freedom to be a Catholic), while “freedom of worship” has been defined as freedom of individual action (e.g. the freedom to openly practice our Catholic faith).

We as Americans have the constitutional right to practice our faith, to change religions or to not follow any religion; however, as Catholics, we do not have the moral right to redefine our faith or to choose which Catholic teachings we follow and which teachings we do not follow.

**Slide 4**            **Religious Persecution in Scripture and in the Church**

Religious persecution is the systematic mistreatment of an individual or group of individuals as a response to their religious beliefs or affiliations or lack thereof.

The tendency of societies or groups within society to alienate or repress different subcultures is a recurrent theme in human history. Moreover, because a person’s religion often determines to a significant extent his or her morality and personal identity, religious differences can be significant cultural factors.

Religious persecution may be triggered by religious bigotry (i.e. the denigration of practitioners’ religions other than those of the oppressors) or by the State when it views a particular religious group as a threat to its interests or security.

In the Bible and throughout the tradition of Christianity there have been many cases of persecution based on religious beliefs:

- Moses leads the Israelites out of Egypt and through the wilderness to Mount Sinai, where God revealed himself and offered them a Covenant. In return, as their God, he gave them the land of Canaan.
- The Passion of Jesus is an event that included His arrest, trial, sentencing by Pontius Pilate, scourging, and finally execution on a cross.
- There were many different types of executions in the Roman Colosseum. Christian Martyrs were executed as common criminals by crucifixion or "damnatio ad bestia" (thrown to the wild beasts).
- The Crusades were a series of religious expeditionary wars with the stated goal of restoring Christian access to the holy places in and near Jerusalem. The main series of Crusades, primarily against Muslims, occurred between 1095 and 1291. After some early successes, the later crusades failed and the crusaders were defeated and forced to return home.
- The Inquisition was the "fight against heretics" by several institutions within the justice system of the Church. It started in the 12th century, with the introduction of torture in the persecution of heresy. Inquisition practices were used also on offences against canon law other than heresy.

## Slide 5      **Origins of Religious Freedom in America**

Many of the British North American colonies that eventually formed the United States of America were settled in the seventeenth century by men and women, who, in the face of European persecution, refused to compromise passionately held religious convictions and fled Europe. The New England colonies, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland were conceived and established "as plantations of religion." Some settlers who arrived in these areas came for secular motives--"to catch fish" as one New Englander put it--but the great majority left Europe to worship God in the way they believed to be correct. They enthusiastically supported the efforts of their leaders to create "a city on a hill" or a "holy experiment," whose success would prove that God's plan for his churches could be successfully realized in the American wilderness. Even colonies like Virginia, which were planned as commercial ventures, were led by entrepreneurs who considered themselves "militant Protestants" and who worked diligently to promote the prosperity of the church.

In 1634, a mix of Catholic and Protestant settlers arrived at St. Clement's Island in Southern Maryland from England aboard the Ark and the Dove. They had come at the invitation of the Catholic Lord Baltimore, who had been granted Maryland by the Protestant King Charles I of England. While Catholics and Protestants were killing each other in Europe, Lord Baltimore imagined Maryland as a society where people of different faiths could live together peacefully. This vision was soon codified in Maryland's 1649 Act Concerning Religion (also called the "Toleration Act"), which was the first law in our nation's history to protect an individual's right to freedom of conscience.

Maryland's early history teaches us that, like any freedom, religious liberty requires constant vigilance and protection, or it will disappear. Maryland's experiment in religious toleration ended within a few decades. The colony was placed under royal control, and the Church of England became the established religion. Discriminatory laws, including the loss of political rights, were enacted against those who refused to conform. Catholic chapels were closed, and Catholics were restricted to practicing their faith in their homes. The Catholic community lived under these conditions until the American Revolution.

By the end of the 18th century, our nation's founders embraced freedom of religion as an essential condition of a free and democratic society. James Madison, often called the Father of the Constitution, described conscience as "the most sacred of all property."

He wrote that "the Religion then of every man must be left to the conviction and conscience of every man; and it is the right of every man to exercise it as these may dictate." George Washington wrote that "the establishment of Civil and Religious Liberty was the Motive that induced me to the field of battle." Thomas Jefferson assured the Ursuline Sisters—who had been serving a mostly non-Catholic population by running a hospital, an orphanage, and schools in Louisiana since 1727—that the principles of the Constitution were a "sure guarantee" that their ministry would be free "to govern itself according to its own voluntary rules, without interference from the civil authority."

## Slide 6

### Our Founding Fathers

Our Declaration of Independence, signed July 4, 1776, states:

*"When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.*

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness..."*

The Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, written in 1779 by Thomas Jefferson, proclaimed:

*"[N]o man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer, on account of his religious opinions or belief; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities."*

Those sentiments also found expression in the First Amendment of the national constitution, part of the United States' Bill of Rights:

*"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..."*

The views of our first few presidents on the topic:

- *"Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports..."* -- George Washington (1<sup>st</sup> U.S. President from 1789-1797)
- *"Without religion, this world would be something not fit to be mentioned in polite company -- I mean hell."* -- John Adams (2<sup>nd</sup> U.S. President from 1797-1801)
- *"[I am a] real Christian, that is to say, a disciple of the doctrines of Jesus."* -- Thomas Jefferson (3<sup>rd</sup> U.S. President from 1801-1809)
- *"That diabolical, hell-conceived principle of persecution rages among some; and to their eternal infamy, the clergy can furnish their quota of imps for such business. This vexes me the worst of anything whatever. There are at this time in the adjacent country not less than five or six well-meaning men in close jail for publishing their religious sentiments, which in the main are very orthodox. I have neither patience to hear, talk, or think of anything relative to this matter; for I have squabbled and scolded, abused and ridiculed, so long about it to little purpose that I am without common patience. So I must beg you to pity me, and pray for liberty of conscience to all."* -- James Madison (4<sup>th</sup> U.S. President from 1809-1817)

Although for Jefferson, it was the moral message of Jesus, not claims of his birth, death and resurrection, that lay at the center of the Christian faith he was convinced that the state had no business coercing religious conformity. Jefferson made defense of liberty the hallmark of his career. In 1776, he wrote the Declaration of Independence, and the following year, he introduced a Bill Concerning Religious Freedom to the Virginia Legislature. In 1787, he urged his friend and colleague James Madison to amend the Constitution to include a written guarantee of religious liberty.

Madison witnessed the growing tensions between the established church, his Anglican Church, and the members of dissenting faiths arriving in the colony. He was outraged to discover that a number of Baptist ministers had been thrown into jail for preaching without licenses and committed himself to fighting for liberty of conscience, which he equated with religious liberty.

## Slide 7

### Religious Persecution in the United States

Discuss with the group how the various images represent religious persecution in America.

- Arrest of nun praying at an abortion mill
- Damage to a house of worship

- The response of some to the Amish way of life
- A pastor arrested for reading the bible in a public place
- The Ku Klux Klan lynching of southern Blacks
- The plight of immigrants at Ellis Island

## Slide 8

### A century of religious persecution around the world...

At a societal level, this dehumanization of a particular religious group may readily turn into violence or other forms of persecution. Indeed, in many countries, religious persecution has resulted in so much violence that it is considered a human rights problem.

Whether restrictions on religion are imposed by government or by society, religious minorities are often "perceived, rightly or wrongly, as a cultural, economic or political threat to the majority." In many countries, Christians are a religious minority that has been under attack. In some countries, Christians may be viewed as a threat because in advocating for the common good and for respect of the dignity of all people, their values challenge the traditional social order and expose economic inequalities. In some countries, political parties use religion as a rallying cry to gain supporters and mask oppression of religious minorities under the guise of preserving a national identity and culture. In other countries, tensions among ethnic groups over land, resources, and access to education and employment opportunities that erupt into violence can be framed as a religious dispute if the groups are of different religions. Some states view religious adherence as a challenge to their authority and seek to control believers.

Images on the slide:

1915 - 1923 The Armenian Holocaust was the systematic killing of the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire (Turkey) during and just after World War I.

1939 - 1945 The Nazi Holocaust was the genocide of approximately six million European Jews during World War II, a program of systematic state-sponsored murder by Nazi Germany, led by Adolf Hitler, throughout Nazi-occupied territory.

1994 The Rwandan Genocide was the mass murder of an estimated 800,000 people in the small East African nation of Rwanda. Over the course of approximately 3 months, over 500,000 people were killed.

1992 - 1995 The Bosnian Genocide refers to either the genocide committed by Bosnian Serb forces in Srebrenica in 1995 or the ethnic cleansing campaign that took place throughout areas controlled by the Bosnian Serb Army during the 1992–1995 Bosnian War.

1928 – 2012 In the Middle East the Jews and the Muslims have been at war for centuries over land rights in and around the city of Jerusalem, which is the Holy Land for all three monotheistic religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In the last 100 years, the fighting has escalated resulting in over 80 conflicts with at least 100 casualties each.

2010 – 2011 Christians in China have persevered under what many have claimed is the harshest and most widespread persecution of the Church in all history. More Christians have been and continue to be detained in China than in any other country. In 2010-2011 the Chinese government began tightening regulations on Christian worship, with the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) announcing that it will "guide Protestants worshiping at unregistered churches into worshiping at government-sanctioned ones."

2009 – 2012 Christians in India continue to suffer persecution at the hands of Hindu radicals. Unfortunately, the police also side with the perpetrators instead of protecting the victims.

## Slide 9

### ...not only continues today...

The Holy Father chose religious freedom as the theme for his World Day of Peace Message for 2011 and for his annual address in January to the Diplomatic Corps. Concern for the challenges facing the Church and Christians in the Middle East was discussed at the Synod of Bishops on the Middle East in October 2010.

Although Christians have lived in the region for centuries, they have been very vulnerable to attack during periods of political instability such as in recent years in Iraq and Iran.

A December 2009 Pew study on "Global Restrictions on Religion" found that 64 nations, with 70 percent of the world's population, have high or very high restrictions on religion.

- Some countries, like Saudi Arabia, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Iran, and Iraq, scored high or very high on both governmental and social restrictions.
- Others, like Sri Lanka, Nigeria, and Bangladesh, score high on social hostilities, but were more moderate regarding government restrictions.
- And others, like China and Vietnam, scored high on government restrictions, but had more moderate levels of social hostilities.

While many nations have freedom of religion provisions in their constitutions, the Pew study found that only 27 percent fully respected religious rights. Government restrictions include: controlling religious groups through registration; fines; harassment; prohibiting conversions; restricting foreign missionaries; and favoring one religious group over others. The Pew study considers social hostilities to be “concrete, hostile actions that effectively hinder the religious activities of the targeted individuals or groups.” These may include: harassment over attire, practices or occupations which run counter to those of the majority religion; vandalism of religious property or homes of religious minorities; and beatings and murders.

**Slide 10**      **...but continues to escalate...**

Discuss the impact, both internationally and here in the U.S., of the recent ISIS cleansing of Christians and other religious minorities in northern Iraq.

If people seem to have the attitude that it does not affect them since it is half a world away, take the opportunity to remind everyone that we wonder why no one did anything about the Nazi extermination of Jews at a time when all we had was radio accounts, yet these are Christians and we are seeing the entire thing unfold live on 24-hour television news. *Have we gone from a state of lack of awareness and disbelief to a state of desensitization and indifference? Is it the physical death of others or our own spiritual death that should concern us the most?*

**Slide 11**      **...while we see the seeds of hatred once again sown here at home.**

...President Barack Obama, who has been lauded as an expert on the U.S. Constitution, is one of the most anti-religious liberty presidents in the history of America and that has nothing to do with his own faith. We will discuss the current HHS debate in the next slide but the following is just one example of the low level of importance placed on this issue.

Congress passed an International Religious Freedom Act in 1998 that mandated the creation of a U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF). It also established an Office of Religious Freedom within the Department of State headed by an Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom. Both USCIRF and the State Department are required to produce annual reports on religious freedom. Both designate “countries of particular concern” to denote those states with more egregious violations of religious freedom. Although an individual was nominated in June 2010 to serve as Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, she was not confirmed in the last Congress so that position has been vacant since January 2009 when President Barack Obama first took office.

**Slide 12**      **The HHS Mandate debate...**

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), informally referred to as Obamacare, is a United States federal statute signed into law by President Barack Obama on March 23, 2010. PPACA requires individuals not covered by employer- or government-sponsored insurance plans to maintain minimal essential health insurance coverage or pay a penalty unless exempted for religious beliefs or financial hardship, a provision commonly referred to as the “individual mandate”.

The Act also claims to reform certain aspects of the private health insurance industry and public health insurance programs, increase insurance coverage of pre-existing conditions, expand access to insurance to 30 million Americans, and increase projected national medical spending while lowering projected Medicare spending.

**Slide 13**      **...with Congress, with Christian and Jewish leaders, and with the Supreme Court, but...**

In September 2011, Bishop William Lori, the previous Bishop of Bridgeport, CT and the new Archbishop of Baltimore, was selected to chair the bishops' new Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty. In his February 16 testimony to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Bishop Lori outlined the bishops' opposition to the Health and Human Services (HHS) mandate through an extended parable of a country where a new law requires all businesses to serve pork, including kosher delicatessens.

“When the Orthodox Jewish community expresses its outrage”, Bishop Lori said, “it’s met with arguments of pork is good for you, so many Jews eat pork already, and those who don’t should just get with the times,” and “Those Orthodox are just trying to impose their beliefs on everyone else.”

Bishop Lori’s parable had a happy ending, that “...people recognized it is absurd for someone to come into a kosher deli and demand a ham sandwich, it is beyond absurd for that private demand to be backed with the coercive power of the state, and it is downright surreal to apply this coercive power when the customer can get the same sandwich cheaply, or even free, just a few doors down.”

The full text of Bishop Lori’s testimony may be found online: [www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/religious-liberty/upload/lori-testimony-for-oversight-on-religious-freedom-2012-02-16.pdf](http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/religious-liberty/upload/lori-testimony-for-oversight-on-religious-freedom-2012-02-16.pdf)

A majority of the states, and numerous organizations and individual persons, have filed actions in federal court challenging the constitutionality of some or all of the elements of PPACA. The Supreme Court heard six hours of oral argument on March 26–28, 2012, and is expected to issue its decision by the end of June.

Some surveys claimed up to 72% of registered voters believed the individual mandate is unconstitutional and 50% want the Supreme Court to overturn the entire PPACA statute, not just the “individual mandate” requiring everyone to have health insurance.

#### Slide 14

#### ...the *real* battle is with the Catholic Church!

The U.S. bishops are strongly united in their ongoing and determined efforts to protect religious freedom.

The Administrative Committee, chaired by Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York, president of the USCCB, is the highest authority of the bishops’ conference outside the semi-annual sessions of the full body of bishops. The Committee’s membership consists of the elected chairmen of all the USCCB permanent committees and an elected bishop representative from each of the geographic regions of the USCCB.

In a statement from the Administrative Committee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) following their March 14, 2012 meeting, it was confirmed that 100% of our U.S. bishops, concerned not only with the protection of the Church’s own institutions, but with the care of the souls of the individual faithful and with the common good, are opposed to the HHS mandate’s disregard for our constitutional right to religious freedom. Specifically, the concerns were:

1. The mandate requires us to act against our Catholic teachings
2. The unwarranted and extremely narrow government definition of religion and of religious organizations used in the so-called “exemption”.
3. The violation of personal civil rights

The bishops have noted that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) mandate that forces all private health plans to provide coverage of sterilization and contraceptives – including abortion-inducing drugs – called for an immediate response.

The bishops said this dispute is not about access to contraceptives but about the government’s forcing the Church to provide them. Their concerns are not just for the Catholic Church but also for “those who recognize that their cherished beliefs may be next on the block.”

The Church has worked for universal healthcare in the United States since 1919 and has said the current issue “is not a Republican or Democratic, a conservative or liberal issue; it is an American issue.”

The bishops called for the Catholic faithful, and all people of good will throughout the nation to join them in prayer and penance “for our leaders and for the complete protection of our First Freedom – religious liberty.”

“Prayer is the ultimate source of our strength,” the bishops said, “for without God we can do nothing. But with God all things are possible.”

## The Church's Teaching on Religious Freedom

The teachings of the Catholic Church on the topic of religious liberty are numerous. One of the best and most relevant summaries is found in the papal encyclical, *Dignitatis Humanae*.

*Dignitatis Humanae*, written by Pope Paul VI and dated Dec. 7, 1965, offers foundational teachings "on the right of the person and of communities to social and civil freedom in matters religious." Several key elements of the document are particularly relevant to the discussions regarding religious freedom today.

In *Dignitatis Humanae*, Pope Paul VI explained that the foundation of the principle of religious freedom is rooted in the dignity of the human person, who is endowed with reason and free will, and therefore able to take responsibility for his or her actions. Religious freedom is identifiable both through reason and divine revelation; it exists to allow human persons to fulfill their obligation to seek God and must be a civil or constitutional right. The document explains that freedom to practice religion is not relativism – there is one way to salvation, through Jesus Christ.

Pope Paul VI recommended the following core principles for governments to consider when formalizing religious freedom into law:

- Do not require what conscience forbids, or forbid what conscience requires
- Religious freedom should be exercised individually and communally, in private and public
- Parents have the right and responsibility to direct the religious upbringing of their children
- Internal affairs of religious organizations are recognized as such, including in the:
  - Selection and training of ministers
  - Ability to own buildings, money and other property
  - Right to teach and witness
- No discrimination based on religion – even if there is an established state religion
- Government should acknowledge religion and show it favor, but should not command or inhibit religious acts
- Right to express religion in the public square

Likewise, religions must acknowledge their limits within a free society:

- Avoid coercion in evangelization
- Exercise with civility and responsibility
- Do not abuse legitimate religious freedom
- Acknowledge "due limits" for a "just public order"

### ***Pope Francis to Notre Dame: Defend Religious Freedom***

*In the wake of Notre Dame's announcement that it would comply with the HHS mandate, the pontiff calls for "unambiguous testimony" to "Catholic identity."*

*by Joan Frawley Desmond Thursday, January 30, 2014 6:57 PM*

We read a lot about how Pope Francis wants to back off from hot-button topics like abortion and religious freedom. But you wouldn't guess that from the pope's remarks during a Jan.30 meeting with the University of Notre Dame's president and members of the board of trustees.

The meeting took place about a month after the university drew unwelcome headlines when it announced it would comply with the HHS contraception mandate, after a court denied its petition to secure an 11th hour reprieve. Guess the news reached the Vatican, because the pope used the occasion to offer pointed remarks about the need for Catholic universities to defend religious freedom and to embrace, rather than retreat, from their religious mission.

The pope called for Catholic institutions like Notre Dame to embrace an ethos of "missionary discipleship."

*Essential in this regard is the uncompromising witness of Catholic universities to the Church's moral teaching, and the defense of her freedom, precisely in and through her institutions, to uphold that teaching as authoritatively proclaimed by the magisterium of her pastors.*

Francis also urged Notre Dame to resist efforts to undermine the university's witness to the faith.



*It is my hope that the University of Notre Dame will continue to offer unambiguous testimony to this aspect of its foundational Catholic identity, especially in the face of efforts, from whatever quarter, to dilute that indispensable witness. And this is important: its identity, as it was intended from the beginning. To defend it, to preserve it and to advance it!*

And from what "quarter" would the threat to Notre Dame arise? After the papal meeting, Gerard Bradley, a professor of law at Notre Dame, offered this explanation:

*One such "quarter" is surely the Obama administration, which has required the university to trigger free distribution of contraceptives and abortifacients to all Notre Dame women (employees, spouses, dependents) of reproductive age. Notre Dame continues to seek judicial relief from this requirement, but has chosen to comply with it in the meantime.*

Bradley also questioned how, precisely, Notre Dame will comply with the HHS mandate, and, at the same time, still adhere to the pontiff's counsel.

*The mandated "preventive services" (as the University's own HR department describes them) are being delivered to those who ask for them by a Saint Louis-based pharmaceutical giant called "Express Scripts." This mega-firm's relationship to Notre Dame and/or to its third-party provider (Meritain) is not yet apparent. Nor is the funding source behind these mandated free "services" apparent from the federal regulations, which assert that the objecting religious employer is not to be that source without making clear who is.*

Meanwhile, Notre Dame's lawyers returned to court earlier this week to refile a petition for a temporary injunction, citing the U.S. Supreme Court's recent decision to grant relief to the Little Sisters of the Poor, who have refused to comply with the HHS contraception mandate.

## Slide 16

### Summary

- We defined "religious freedom".
- We know a little bit more about religious freedom in America and the persecution of people around the world for their religious beliefs.
- We got an update on the challenges to our religious freedom included in the HHS mandate.
- We understand the Church's teaching on religious freedom.
- Now we just have to decide as faithful Catholic youth what we are going to do to protect our constitutional First Amendment rights.

## Slide 17

### Closing Prayer for Protection of Our First, Most Cherished Liberty

*Almighty God, Father of all nations,*

*For freedom you have set us free in Christ Jesus (Gal 5:1).*

*We praise and bless you for the gift of religious liberty,  
the foundation of human rights, justice, and the common good.*

*Grant to our leaders the wisdom to protect and promote our liberties;*

*By your grace may we have the courage to defend them, for ourselves and for all those who live in  
this blessed land.*

*We ask this through the intercession of Mary Immaculate, our patroness,  
and in the name of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
with whom you live and reign, one God, forever and ever. Amen.*



## Agenda – Religious Freedom & Conscience Rights



- I. Sign-in and enjoy drinks/snacks
- II. Welcome
- III. Opening Prayer -- Prayer for Protection of Life and Freedom

*Father, we praise you and thank you for your most precious gifts of human life and human freedom.*

*Touch the hearts of our lawmakers with the wisdom and courage to uphold conscience rights and religious liberty for all. Protect all people from being forced to violate their moral and religious convictions.*

*In your goodness, guard our freedom to live out our faith and to follow you in all that we do. Give us strength to be bold and joyful witnesses.*

*We ask this through Christ, our Lord.*

*Amen.*

- IV. Icebreaker: *Freedom of Expression*
- V. Presentation: *Religious Freedom*
- VI. Evangelization/Catechesis
- VII. Outreach Planning
- VIII. Closing Prayer -- Prayer for Protection of Our First, Most Cherished Liberty

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*For freedom you have set us free in Christ Jesus (Gal 5:1).*

*We praise and bless you for the gift of religious liberty,  
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and in the name of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
with whom you live and reign, one God, forever and ever. Amen.*

- IX. Next meeting date / time / location is: \_\_\_\_\_

## Truth Illuminated New Chapter Members

Name of Chapter: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Name:</b>		T-shirt size:
Phone:	Cell phone:	
Email:	Home address:	
School I attend:	Parish I attend:	
Grade (9 <sup>th</sup> , 10 <sup>th</sup> , 11 <sup>th</sup> , or 12 <sup>th</sup> ):	Age:	
Parents'/Guardians' Names:	How I heard about Truth Illuminated:	

<b>Name:</b>		T-shirt size:
Phone:	Cell phone:	
Email:	Home address:	
School I attend:	Parish I attend:	
Grade (9 <sup>th</sup> , 10 <sup>th</sup> , 11 <sup>th</sup> , or 12 <sup>th</sup> ):	Age:	
Parents'/Guardians' Names:	How I heard about Truth Illuminated:	

<b>Name:</b>		T-shirt size:
Phone:	Cell phone:	
Email:	Home address:	
School I attend:	Parish I attend:	
Grade (9 <sup>th</sup> , 10 <sup>th</sup> , 11 <sup>th</sup> , or 12 <sup>th</sup> ):	Age:	
Parents'/Guardians' Names:	How I heard about Truth Illuminated:	