

BISHOPS LAUNCH RELIGIOUS LIBERTY CAMPAIGN

The statement by the bishops launching a religious freedom campaign was well received in the Catholic community. Those who work against our religious rights tried to downplay it. But they did not succeed—it was too impressive to ignore.

Internationally, the declaration calls attention to the “assassinations, bombings of churches, torching of orphanages,” and other acts of violence against Christians. At home, it spells out the threats to religious liberty at all levels of government.

At the federal level, the Obama administration’s redefinition of what constitutes a religion is alarming, and its determination to force Catholic non-profits to fund abortion-inducing drugs is equally ominous.

State immigration laws such as those in Alabama that make it illegal for priests to minister to illegal aliens are obscene. Just as draconian are attempts to limit the authority of bishops by having the legislature determine the locus of decision-making; this was tried in Connecticut.

Cities like Boston and San Francisco have punished Catholic foster care and adoptive services because Catholic agencies don’t approve of gay marriage. New York City is no better when it seeks to deprive poor inner-city minorities of using empty public schools on Sundays for services.

Perhaps most profoundly, the bishops reaffirmed Catholic teaching on unjust laws. “An unjust law cannot be obeyed,” they said. This was a clear signal to those at all levels of government that Catholics are prepared to exercise civil disobedience, if necessary. Don’t push us.

The bishops have chosen a two-week period from June 21 to July 4 as a time to rally Catholics to participate in this religious liberty campaign. We urge all our members to support their bishop in this important endeavor.