

OBAMACARE RULING

The United States Supreme Court will rule in June on the constitutionality of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, popularly known as ObamaCare. How it rules may have grave consequences for religious liberty.

If the Supreme Court knocks out the entire legislation, then the issue of forcing Catholic non-profits to pay for abortion-inducing drugs in their insurance coverage is eliminated. If it knocks out the individual mandate, but keeps the rest of the legislation, then we are still stuck with the religious liberty problem. Why? Because the high court agreed to accept this case before the Health and Human Services mandate forcing Catholic entities to violate Church teachings was issued. Of course, if the entire legislation is upheld, we are also stuck with this problem.

No matter what happens, we are still faced with a federal government that has decided to define religious institutions as those that hire and serve people of their own faith. This interpretation essentially deprives Catholic social service agencies, hospitals and colleges of a religious exemption from burdensome federal laws: one of the great things about Catholic institutions is that they do not discriminate. And now we are being punished for not doing so!

All we are asking for is to be left alone. For over 200 years, the federal government has never tried to redefine what constitutes a religious entity. Until now. How the high court rules will affect the nature of the bishop's response and what we can expect next.