

SEBELIUS CATHOLICISM

DISRESPECTS

In an article titled “Our Rule Respects Religion,” Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius recently wrote in the *USA Today* that “we specifically carved out from the [healthcare] policy religious organizations that primarily employ people of their own faith.”

Sebelius knows very well that Catholic agencies have a long and distinguished record of hiring and serving non-Catholics, so to say that they can only qualify for an exemption by turning away those who are not Catholic from Catholic schools, hospitals, hospices, orphanages, shelters for battered women, and the like, is a plea for *discrimination* and an insult to Catholics and non-Catholics alike.

She was wrong to say that the administration’s rule is identical to that of states like California. As Carol Hogan of the California Catholic Conference said, her state’s rule is not identical. Moreover, in states like Wisconsin, which are weighing various options on extending exemptions to religious entities, they are in a holding pattern until it is clear how Obamacare flushes out nationally. It was a non-starter for Sebelius to compare the contraception mandate to similar mandates in state law: each of these states allowed for religious employers to self-insure or some other avenue to ensure that they would not have to cover services that conflict with their religious tenets.

Sebelius did not address the fact that Obamacare allows at least two religious groups an exemption—the Amish and Christian Scientists. So why does the policy discriminate against Catholics?

At the recent National Prayer Breakfast, President Obama said

that “We can’t leave our values at the door.” Someone needs to tell him that this moral imperative includes Catholics.