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Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz explains why there was no CCHD collection in his diocese this year

LINCOLN, Nebraska, November 24, 2009 (LifeSiteNews.com) -- Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz of Lincoln, Nebraska explained in an interview with LifeSiteNews.com today his reasons for dropping the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) collection in his diocese, saying that CCHD head Bishop Roger Morin was “a little bit too dismissive” of concerns brought against the organization.

Bishop Bruskewitz is one of five bishops confirmed so far to have chosen not to take up the collection this year for the national CCHD, the USCCB’s domestic anti-poverty arm. The others included Bishop Victor Galeone of St. Augustine, Florida; Bishop John O. Barres of Allentown, Pennsylvania; Bishop Robert C. Morlino of Madison, Wisconsin; and Bishop Robert J. Baker of Birmingham, Alabama. In addition, at least three other U.S. bishops have called for reform of the CCHD.

“We question the ideology of [CCHD],” the bishop explained in the interview, “and ... we are shocked at the scandalous participation with the ACORN organization and also the participation with other organizations of questionable moral values or standards.”

The organization came under fire in the months leading up to this past weekend’s national collection due to reports documenting how numerous grantees have promoted or are promoting activities contrary to Church teaching, including abortion, contraception, and same-sex “marriage.” In fact, the Reform CCHD Now coalition announced last week that \$1.3 million is allocated to questionable groups. Additionally, critics have charged CCHD with favoring “left-leaning” groups in the spirit of infamous community organizer Saul Alinsky.

CCHD ceased funding ACORN (the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now), a liberal network of community activism groups, last year due to concerns about “financial management” and “political partisanship.” CCHD had given ACORN over \$7 million in grants during the previous ten years. ACORN came under renewed scrutiny this year after sting operations caught several ACORN offices condoning child prostitution and sex trafficking.

“It’s so extremely controversial,” the bishop said about CCHD. There have been “many negative resonances about it from people throughout the diocese and beyond the diocese,” he said, adding that the “controversial character made it appear that [CCHD] was not effective” in meeting its purposes.

His diocese doesn’t “rule [CCHD] out entirely,” he said, but he would only reconsider the collection if there were “some changes in the organization itself, or its purposes, or its goals.”

The collection “served very little purpose for us,” he said, noting that the Lincoln diocese has not received funds from CCHD. “We do have a very extensive Catholic Social Services, St. Vincent de Paul activity here in the diocese,” he said, “which supplies the needs of those who are impoverished, of those who need assistance to come out of poverty.”

Bishop Roger Morin, chairman of the USCCB’s subcommittee on the CCHD, delivered a passionate plea in defense of the organization at last week’s USCCB plenary meeting. While pledging their commitment to ensure grantees’ respect for Catholic teaching, he decried the “outrageous” allegations made by CCHD’s critics that it funds pro-abortion or anti-family organizations.

But Bishop Bruskewitz expressed displeasure with Bishop Morin’s report, saying the bishop did not adequately consider the criticisms brought against the CCHD.

“I didn’t think [the report] took into account sufficiently the negatives that have been bantered about with regard to the organization,” he said. He said Bishop Morin was “obviously defending the organization he had been involved in different areas,” and now for which he’s the chairman.

The report, further, “lacked some of the interests” that concerned people “have brought to the fore,” he said. “I think he was perhaps a little bit too dismissive of them.”

Nevertheless, he maintained that he has “no objection” to people supporting CCHD should they choose. If “people [who] like this organization ... want to send money to it, even from my diocese, they can,” he said. “But I’m not going to take up the collection.” ❧

The Hypocritic* Oath?

Abortion Has Consequences for Mental Health

By Michael Pakaluk

Imagine that in a certain country there was a pain-killing drug that patients really wanted to take because it improved their mood.

The legislature of this country had passed a law, however, saying that, in view of this drug's power, physicians could prescribe it only if a dose of the drug would stave off some serious threat to a patient's health. In fact, for someone to get this drug at all, two physicians had to sign a certificate averring that, if the patient did not receive it, then his health would be seriously at risk.

Now imagine that since the time the drug was discovered, and the law passed, various studies had been carried out suggesting that the drug was actually harmful to someone's health. There was evidence that even one dose seemed to increase substantially a person's risk of developing various kinds of serious health problems.

Nonetheless, the doctors in this country still continued to prescribe the drug to their patients, certifying that it was necessary for health reasons, while pocketing handsome consulting fees in the process.

Sounds pretty corrupt, don't you think? A situation ripe for a class-action lawsuit, you might suppose.

Maybe it would even seem unbelievable that professionals, who profess a code of ethics, could act in this way: Certify something as healthy, when they had good reason to think that it was actually bad for their patient's health.

Yet a recent study suggests that this is exactly how doctors in some countries behave regarding abortion.

Conflicted

The study, "Reactions to Abortion and Subsequent Mental Health" (British Journal of Psychiatry, November 2009), by David Fergusson and colleagues, analyzes data collected as part of the Christchurch Health and Development Study (Christchurch, New Zealand), which has tracked and measured on a regular basis 1,265 persons from birth through age 30.

Fergusson found that women in this cohort who have had a single abortion and report feeling conflicted about it (i.e. most of these women) are roughly 80% more likely to develop a diagnosable mental illness than women who in similar circumstances carry their pregnancy to term.

In fact, extrapolating from the data, the authors suggest that at least 5% of the mental illness of women under 30 is ascribable to abortion.

To put this finding in perspective, consider that patients who smoke likewise have roughly an 80% increased risk of a heart attack. That is, abortion seems to be as bad for a woman's mental health as smoking is for her heart.

Fergusson's study does not stand on its own; rather, it confirms earlier findings based on the Christchurch research, as well as other studies. Reviewing the total body of evidence, Fergusson comments that, although there is good evidence that abortion increases the risk of mental illness, "there is no evidence [...] that would suggest that unwanted pregnancies that come to term were associated with increased risks of mental health problems."

Justification

And yet in New Zealand—as well as England and Wales—abortion is typically justified on mental health grounds.

In New Zealand, for example, two doctors must certify that, in the language of the statute, "continuance of the pregnancy would result in serious danger to mental health." Over 98% of abortions are approved on these grounds.

According to the country's Abortion Supervisory Committee, for certifying these abortions, doctors in New Zealand received over \$5 million in consulting fees last year alone.

What is going on here? It is tempting to say that in this practice one sees at work a principle that can be observed in other kinds of fraud and corruption—namely, one corrupt practice tends to engender increasingly brazen corruption.

Abortion itself is, strictly, a corruption of the art of medicine, since it represents the use of medical skill for no genuine medical end (In this respect it is on a par with a doctor administering a lethal injection to a prisoner.)

As a direct attack on the life of an immature human being, it has no genuine medical justification, only a utili-

tarian rationale. Thus it admits of continued practice for utilitarian reasons—as in New Zealand—even when medical reasons are not merely absent for it, but actually countervailing.

Doctors in England show signs of being uncomfortable with the current practice. Back in 1993 the Royal College of Psychiatrists stated that “the risks to psychological health from the termination of pregnancy in the first trimester are much less than the risks associated with proceeding with a pregnancy which is clearly harming the mother’s mental health.”

However, last year that position was rejected and replaced by a new statement which read: “The specific issue of whether or not induced abortion has harmful effects on women’s mental health remains to be fully resolved. The current research evidence base is inconclusive—some studies indicate no evidence of harm, whilst other studies identify a range of mental disorders following abortion.”

The change looks like movement from recommending abortions for mental health reasons, to a position of neutrality; yet it isn’t that, because note how the Royal College now frames the question: What is at issue, they say, is whether abortion, as suspected, leads to mental disorder.

Conclusive evidence

Whether, in contrast, abortion is actually beneficial to a woman’s mental health is not an open question for them: The evidence is conclusive that it is not.

Fergusson’s findings, and the other evidence, have ramifications beyond those jurisdictions in which abortion is typically justified on mental health grounds—since any woman contemplating abortion should at least be given the information that allows her to make a genuinely informed consent.

Indeed, the mental health consequences of abortion are potentially far worse than Fergusson’s study would indicate, for two reasons.

First, Fergusson so far has studied women only up to the age of 30. Yet there is much anecdotal evidence to suggest that a woman’s distress over abortion can actually be triggered by events later in life, such as pregnancy and birth, or the death of family members.

Second, Fergusson followed a practice set down by earlier studies and looked at only a limited class of mental illnesses from the standard diagnostic manual (DSM-IV): “major depression; anxiety disorders (including generalized anxiety, panic disorder, agoraphobia, social phobia and specific phobia); alcohol dependence; and illicit drug dependence.”

But seasoned clinicians have pointed out that for women procuring abortion one might expect additionally to see “adjustment disorders” and Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSD), not to mention sub-clinical pain and distress, which would be very real for affected women yet not necessarily captured in a diagnostic category.

So, true informed consent would require women telling a woman who is contemplating an abortion something like: “Studies have suggested that a single abortion increases by as much as 80% your risk of developing certain serious mental illnesses before you reach age 30, and it potentially implies a much higher risk of mental illness in general over a lifespan.” Needless to say, women are not told anything like this.

An incidental fact about Fergusson’s study tends to confirm the suspicion that the research has revealed only the tip of the iceberg. Fergusson determined whether a woman had procured an abortion by accepting that woman’s own reports. Women were asked at roughly three-year intervals whether, in that interval, they had become pregnant, and, if so, what happened with the pregnancy—whether it ended in miscarriage, birth, or abortion. They were also asked the same question retrospectively, about their lifespan as a whole, at 30 years of age.

Note that the replies were given privately and also anonymously, in the sense that the data were collected in such a way that answers could not be mapped to any particular individual.

Yet, curiously, Fergusson found that 32% of the women in his cohort declined to report an abortion—that is, either they did not report, in some interval, an abortion that they later reported retrospectively (at age 30), or they did not report retrospectively (at age 30) an abortion that they had reported in an earlier interval.

Moreover, the women in the study as a whole under-reported the abortions that they had. Through comparisons with data for the general population, it became apparent that women in the study reported (whether prospectively or retrospectively) only 85% of the abortions that they actually procured.

Denial

To translate this point into plain language: In an anonymous study, in which answers are given privately and can cause no embarrassment or public humiliation, nearly half of the women who are asked declined to say that

they had an abortion—even though they were asked directly about their pregnancies and the outcomes, and whether one has had an abortion is not something that can be forgotten or easily overlooked.

Another fact about Fergusson’s study appears strange when compared with this curious fact of under-reporting. He also asked women at the 30-year point to give their judgment on the rightness of their choice to have an abortion. Was it “definitely the right decision,” “definitely the wrong decision,” or was the woman unsure? Fergusson found that 90% of women replied that their abortion was “definitely the right decision.”

These two curious facts—massive under-reporting (which is a form of denial), together with an apparent dogmatism in affirming the rightness of one’s choice of an abortion—would seem to indicate severe interior conflict on the part of these women.

Such conflict, even if it does not lead eventually to outright, clinically diagnosable mental illness, would seem at very least incompatible with mental peace and ordinary happiness.

With fear and trembling one is reminded of Blessed Mother Teresa’s statement that in an abortion two things die: the unborn child, and the mother’s conscience.

As for the medical integrity of the physician who recommends or performs the surgery—that has presumably been dead for a long time. ☞

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**Yes, this is a play on the correct spelling of the Hippocratic Oath.*

Carrot or Stick: Big Nanny Nurse Strikes Out!

By Marie P. Loehr

What's up, Doc?! - Bugs Bunny, Looney Tunes

The House has passed a healthcare reform bill. Astonishing though it may be, the Democrats could not get it passed as intended. Forty pro-life Democrats—yes, Virginia, apparently there are more pro-life Dems than Casey of PA! - refused to vote for it unless their anti-abortion amendment was attached to it. There were shrieks of outrage and much gnashing of teeth by pro-abortion partisans. Of course this still has to be harmonized with the Senate healthcare reform bill, a horse of a different color.

But it is a heartening moment in the culture wars. We can attribute it to general public indignation, to those bishops who have a backbone and stand up for truth, and to prayer. A whole lot of prayin' goin' on, folks . . . But the war is not over. One battle momentarily won a fully victorious war does not make.

The first thing we need to remember about this bill is that Congress can pass bills, the president can sign them into law, the bureaucrats can translate its vague general principles into a myriad of rules and regulations, onerous or otherwise. But no bill is written in granite, imperishable. These are the laws of men, and subject to revision or recall.

The Democrats have been quite nervous about public response to whatever they propose and/or pass, remembering the ill-fated bill passed under Dan Rostenkowski's tutelage. Purporting to provide all sorts of medical benefits for senior citizens, as the Senate bill currently does—despite the taxes required to fund it—Rostenkowski's bill ended up being repealed, after senior citizens, vociferously irate, chased Rosty down the street in lynch mob style. They had found out the real cost of the bill and its provisions, not to mention their raised premiums, among other points not evident until the bill was signed into law. This is the ubiquitous law of unintended consequences!

So we need to consider, in conclusion to this excursus into government, healthcare, and the dangers of socialized, socialistic medical treatment... *What's up, Doc?* What's the carrot, what's the stick, and who wields these incentives and disincentives. Who holds what over our heads?

Traditionally, of course, carrot and stick refer to a method of getting a horse or a mule to move forward. Sometimes the carrot was all that was needed. Sometimes the driver had to alternate the carrot pleasure with the stick punishment. Sometimes only the stick would be effective.

What does the carrot stand for, in our little schematic?

If we, the people, are the mule, then the congressional carrot is the lowered [maybe, maybe not] cost of medical care, following the Medicare pattern. It is the opportunity to have the technological benefits of modern medicine—diagnostic, surgical, and pharmaceutical—without having to choose bankruptcy or death. It is the societal benefit of universal health care, proper to advanced civilization and culture. A doctor in every pot, a pot for every doctor! And carrots on the side—so healthy for the eyes, all that beta-carotene and lutein, you know.

What does the stick stand for, in the case of “we, the people—mule”?

It stands for mandates, sanctions, penalties, fines, medical and patient conformity to government codes. It stands for veterinary medicine applied to human animals. It is an ever increasing bureaucracy, required to administer this latest entitlement. Its image is contained in a recent lab visit, finding out that butterfly syringes were now locked up. Why? Because the bean-counters decided that too many people believed they were less painful for drawing blood, so requested too many! Painlessness is too expensive, apparently. It'

's nit-picking over techniques, procedures, and tools to do them properly.

The stick is the temptation to beat the mule to death, if he won't obey the mandate to get with the program, and giddy-up!

For the physician, the carrot is less obvious. Is there one? For the mediocre physician it's a guaranteed professional position. For the truly fine and motivated doctor it's always about helping the patient, serving others, sometimes at his own time and expense, outside the confines of the system. Service is paramount—that is a carrot to a dedicated physician.

The stick is the constant eye of Big Brother government and Big Nanny Nurse, looking over his shoulder. Will he be able to operate outside the confines of the socialized system to help the truly needy, or exceptional patient? Since government considers itself a god who is all things to all men, government – no one else—provides all, is EVERYthing to the patient and doctor, freedom in veritas and caritas is highly suspect and unlikely. Another stick for the doctor is that a socialized, socialist system rarely permits doctors and patients to become bonded or expect

continuity. You take what you're assigned, doctor or patient, when you're assigned it.

We know this from military healthcare, ordinarily. We know it from a look at Canadian healthcare through more objective eyes and experience than rhapsodic U.S. media and leftists. We know it from the failings and failures of Soviet healthcare. A look at its orphans and orphanages is one case in point. Solzhenitsyn's "Cancer Ward" is another.

But we the people, mule or not, have carrots and sticks, too. As Rostenkowski, among others over the years, found out . . .

We have the right to vote, the right to petition, the right to e-mail, text, letter and phone campaign for or against any politician or bill that violates our conscience, Constitution and Catholicism—or any other religious belief. Our vote for, our support for, certain people and programs is the carrot for the government mule. Our vote against, our refusal of support, our solidarity with one another to defeat onerous or offensive programs, bills, laws is the stick to keep the government mule in line.

In stirring the episcopal, as in bishops, mule to truth, love and service, the carrot is our financial support, our outspoken support and praise and thanks for their standing up for Christ, and our heartfelt prayers. The stick to move them out of their government feed troughs and political swill is our withdrawal of financial support for any program that joins forces with the leftists and collectivists, our insistent letter campaigns—whether the bishops and their minions respond or not—to call them and recall them to their true vocation, our prophetic witness in all veritas and caritas, calmness and firmness.

It is an ongoing war. It must be fought in season and out of season, always in the crucified Christ. It must be fought with charity toward the medical personnel often forced to do the government will by stick, not carrot. It must be fought with the stick of sanctions against the politicians and bishops, using financial support or withdrawal judiciously, but always in the peace of Christ. It must be fought as Christ lived his public life, dealing one on one with everyone involved, to convert individual hearts, to set Christ's wildfire alight.

We are called to be spiritual physicians, to take the pulse of those who serve us, and act accordingly. We are called to encourage good healthcare and discourage Herodian healthcare.

We might look at unmitigated obamacare as Elmer Fudd, rifle at the ready, determined to rob Bugs to feed Elmer. Wait! you object. Isn't Bugs stealing Elmer's carrots? Is he the ox that treadeth the corn, the rabbit who eateth the carrot? Or is Elmer the engorging federal government cheating Bugs out of his proper share of the carrots he needs to survive? We could argue this until Daffy Duck comes home. Yet, let's face it. That wascally wabbit often reveals the true sense of American defiance against government "divine right rule." He also has a proper Catholic skepticism facing secular progressivism and distortions of truth and love. Seen in this light, what is a rabbit warren, but a primitive form of catacombs—for protection and propagation of the faith, or baby rabbits.

But the one thing needful is to raise Bug's question, early and often. *What's up, Doc?* Stick or carrot, evil or good, collectivism or Christ . . . our choice, and no one else's. Certainly not Big Daddy's. Certainly never Big Nanny Nurse's. That's the bottom line, drawn in the garden earth, right next to the rabbit hole!

But down the rabbit hole is another story . . . ☞

Health Reform Still Full of Thorny Problems for Catholics

By Bishop Robert Vasa

Reprinted from December 3, 2009 Catholic Sentinel, the official newspaper of the Archdiocese of Portland and the Diocese of Baker.

BEND — The debate over affordable health care for America has now moved to the Senate and it is as yet quite unclear what will finally result.

The Catholic support for the Stupak Amendment, which brought the Hyde Amendment's prohibition of the use of federal funds for abortion into the legislation, should not be interpreted as a complete support by the Church of everything else in the health care reform legislation. For instance, the proposed health bill continues to provide abortion payments in cases of rape and incest and when the life of the mother is threatened. This is contrary to Church teachings about the inviolability and dignity of every pre-born human being regardless of the circumstances of their origin.

The legislation aims at further developing school-based clinics that provide, as well as appropriate medical interventions, contraceptives and referrals for abortion. This is a completely unacceptable use of Catholic tax dollars. It is surmised that the states with assisted suicide, presently our own Oregon and Washington, will be provided with some federal funds for "counseling" for patients who might be candidates for this "medical service." This too is unacceptable. There has been a program of federally funded abstinence education and the present proposal abolishes this while funding sex education. These sex education programs generally provide information on "how to" while avoiding pregnancy rather than "why not." Whether this component is linked to abortion or not, and it probably is, the Church certainly opposes this approach to sex education. There may be some conscience protections in the bill particularly with regard to direct and intentional as well as elective abortion, but this is grossly inadequate. Catholic and Christian physicians and nurses, as well as all men and women of good will, as well as private or religious health care institutions, need to be free from coercion relative to the so-called "medically necessary" abortions, contraception, sterilization, and other "services" that do not respect the value, sanctity or integrity of human life. Such adequate conscience protections are not currently included.

There are other more global issues that make the health care reform legislation problematic. The provision of health care is done in the context of a sacrosanct relationship — that between the patient and the physician. This is both a personal and a professional relationship and the physician has the right and the need to be free to diagnose and prescribe for the patient a mode of treatment that is morally and medically sound. There is already a degree of interference in this relationship by way of a variety of mechanisms, but the reform legislation seems to heighten that interference. Further, the reform legislation moves in the direction of a monolithic system with many coverage mandates and little option for families to change the coverage provisions of their personal health care plan or to form pools that reward healthy behaviors. Many plans, for instance, are mandated to provide contraceptive coverage and any Catholic family who would wish to have this coverage excluded from their plan would be prohibited from doing so. They are thus forced to pay for a provision they oppose for religious reasons and that would, in this plan, be available to their minor children without parental consent. This intrusion into the heart of the family is likewise offensive.

Needless to say, the legislation is seriously flawed and though there might have been some small sense of victory with the Stupak Amendment there are still very serious concerns about the impact that this legislation could have on the provision of health care in America. It is not expected that we will be able to configure the plan in such a way that it would be entirely consistent with Catholic moral and social principles but we must work to assure, at very least, that we are free to live our faith in a way consistent with our faith tradition. The inclusion of a comprehensive conscience protection clause would go a long way in assuring that freedom.

My life, however, has not been entirely consumed by health care discussions. I did make one confirmation trip to Pendleton and Pilot Rock on a very gusty weekend. If the Holy Spirit comes in the midst of a strong, blowing wind then he certainly had ample opportunity to arrive this weekend. The class of youngsters at each parish was not large and, as we have come to expect, a majority of them were of Mexican descent. It is not always obvious

that the sacrament has its desired effect but the Holy Spirit often works in the way that yeast works in bread. There is not necessarily an immediate, enthusiastic response but slowly over a period of time the yeast begins to work, expand the dough and make of it something newly alive and wonderful. Undoubtedly, the Holy Spirit did come to these confirmands and he will abide with them and gradually incorporate into the lived realities of their lives those gifts of wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord.

On the way home I took a route that is a bit slower but much more interesting. I traveled through Heppner, Condon, Mayville, Fossil, Clarno, Antelope, Willowdale, Madras, Redmond and then home. The panoramic views caused me to question why I did not take this route more often. The gusty wind made the trip feel a little like a lengthy battle but this did not in any way impede the delight of the views. Since it was so gusty there was a perpetual parade of tumbleweeds racing across the fields and occasionally across the road. The barbed wire fences were stacked with captured tumbled refugees, which looked very much like prisoners straining at the limits of their encampment.

Occasionally the wind would carry one of the captured lot out of the confines of the wire and allow it to race, like a calf freed from its pen, bounding and leaping across the field enjoying its newfound freedom.

I thought that the escapees looked wonderfully free but on further reflection they were not free at all. They were driven uncontrollably by the wind and were as much prisoners of the wind as they were of the fence. The way of God is freedom, while being driven by the winds of our times is the real enslavement. ∞

The Manhattan Declaration

The Manhattan Declaration is grassroots petition circulating among Christians. It articulates some of the moral principles that have traditionally driven American jurisprudence but today are under attack. Several prominent bishops have given strong support to this movement ...and urge all Catholic citizens to consider similar support.

STATEMENT OF THE DIOCESE OF PHOENIX

Re: The Manhattan Declaration

November 20, 2009

The Most Rev. Thomas J. Olmsted, Bishop of Phoenix, has signed the *Manhattan Declaration: A Call of Christian Conscience*, which was released today. This document crafted by Christian religious leaders affirms the sanctity of human life from the moment of conception, upholds the dignity of marriage as being between one man and one woman, and supports the continuing struggle for religious liberty and rights of conscience. The *Manhattan Declaration* was released today in a nationwide effort to enlist the support of all Christians for these fundamental values on which the United States was founded.

“As Catholics, we seek to be good citizens of our country and faithful members of the Church. Thus, we respect the human dignity of everyone, including people of different faiths, or no faith at all,” Bishop Olmsted said. “Not only do we gladly embrace our identity as followers of Christ and seek to put our faith into practice in public life, but we also join with others of good will in this privilege and duty. I am especially pleased when we can join with other Christians in promoting and defending vital issues of our day, which have come under increasing attack. The *Manhattan Declaration* provides an avenue for those who hold moral principles, based on the Bible and traditional Christian teaching, to speak with a united voice for the good of our nation, including its most vulnerable citizens. I invite all Catholics of our Diocese to go to the website and to express your support for this Declaration.”

Those interested in supporting the declaration or getting more information on this national effort can go to the *Manhattan Declaration* website at: www.ManhattanDeclaration.org. (Full text below)

Archbishop Chaput: Manhattan Declaration will ‘galvanize’ Christians in difficult times

Denver, Colo., Dec 7, 2009 / 03:11 am (CNA).- In an exclusive interview with Catholic News Agency, Archbishop of Denver Charles J. Chaput has explained his reasons for signing the *Manhattan Declaration*. He said the Declaration should “galvanize” Christians and others in defense of pro-life issues, the nature of marriage and religious freedom.

“I was glad to be invited to sign the Declaration, and glad to sign because I believe in its content,” Archbishop Chaput told CNA. He described it as a “straightforward” statement defending the sanctity of life, religious liberty and the definition of marriage as a union of husband and wife.

“In a sensible world, none of these things would be in question. But we no longer live in a sensible world,” he commented.

The archbishop thought one of the goals of the declaration is to “galvanize good people,” beginning with Christians but including others, in order to organize to work to change the direction of the country and to “resist” when necessary.

Archbishop Chaput commented that the signatories of the Declaration did not create the political environment that “forced it to be written.”

“The signers didn’t create the Declaration’s urgency or its timing. Others did that for them,” he told CNA.

He said the effort was provoked by those who want to “force” religion out of the public square, to “redefine” marriage and human sexuality, or to “sacrifice” women and unborn children on the “altar of a fraudulent ‘right’” to abortion.

Asked about the claim that the *Manhattan Declaration* neglects social justice issues, Archbishop Chaput pointed to the “outstanding” track record of the Catholic Church and other religious communities in serving the poor, the immigrant, the homeless and the infirm.

In his view, the claim that the Declaration neglects such issues is “without merit” and “designed to distract.”

To the argument that the Declaration violates the separation of church and state because it features Christians

telling the government what to do, the archbishop replied: “In the United States, citizens ‘tell government what to do’ all the time. It’s called democracy.”

Nothing in the U.S. Constitution bars religious communities, religious leaders or individual believers from taking a “vigorous role” in public debate, he added.

“In fact, the American system depends on exactly the opposite: In order to survive, our democracy requires citizens to advance their beliefs energetically and without apologies in the public square.”

The archbishop explained that he was not involved in the development of the *Manhattan Declaration*, but said he knows and respects many of the other signatories. He reported that the main Catholic input for the Declaration was provided by Princeton University’s Professor Robert P. George.

The *Declaration’s* signers want people to realize “how difficult” the present moment in U.S. history is, he added.

“Our rights and liberties are never really guaranteed by words on a piece of paper. We guarantee them ourselves, under the sovereignty of God, by struggling for what we believe.”

Real hope has “a cost in sweat and hard work,” Archbishop Chaput said to CNA.

“Now and always, we need to trust in God; and then we also need to act. Right here, right now, in this country, the work of organizing and struggling in the public square for what we believe belongs to us. That means all of us, and each of us.” ☞

The Catholic bishops that have signed the document so far are:

1. **Bishop Sam Aquila** – Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Fargo, ND
2. **Most Rev. Robert J. Baker, S.T.D.** – Bishop of Birmingham, Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama
3. **Most Rev. Charles J. Chaput** – Archbishop, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Denver, CO
4. **Most Rev. Salvatore Joseph Cordileone** – Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Oakland, CA
5. **Most Rev. Frank J. Dewane** – Bishop of the Diocese of Venice in Florida
6. **Most Rev. Nicholas DiMarzio** – Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn
7. **Most Rev. Timothy Dolan** – Archbishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of New York, NY
8. **Most Rev. Joseph E. Kurtz** – Archbishop, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Louisville, KY
9. **His Eminence Adam Cardinal Maida** – Archbishop Emeritus, Roman Catholic Diocese of Detroit, MI
10. **Most Rev. Richard J. Malone** – Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland, ME
11. **Bishop Robert C. Morlino** – Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Madison, WI
12. **Most Rev. John J. Myers** – Archbishop, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Newark, NJ
13. **Most Rev. Joseph F. Naumann** – Archbishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Kansas City, KS
14. **Most Rev. John Nienstedt** – Archbishop, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, MN
15. **Most Rev. Thomas J. Olmsted** – Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Phoenix, AZ
16. **His Eminence Justin Cardinal Rigali** – Archbishop, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Philadelphia, PA
17. **Most Rev. Michael J. Sheridan** – Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Colorado Springs, CO
18. **Most Rev. Allen Vigneron** – Archbishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Detroit (Detroit, MI)
19. **Most Rev. Donald W. Wuerl** – Archbishop, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington, D.C.
20. **Most Rev. David A. Zubik** – Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh, PA

New Mexico State Law

As we gear up for a new legislative session, New Mexicans will once again be discussing whether the State needs to expand its concept of marriage to safeguard the ordinary rights of its citizens. Looking at the *Equality New Mexico* website (<http://www.eqnm.org>—a homosexual activist site), it would appear that not only are those rights well protected but that there are many additional measures on the books to assure homosexual relationships, per se, are protected. *Equality New Mexico* cites:

- New Mexico Adoption Law—New Mexico permits single LGBT individuals and same-sex couples to adopt. In some jurisdictions a person can adopt his or her same-sex partner's adopted child.
- New Mexico Birth Certificate Law, Gender Identity Issues —New Mexico permits post-operative transsexuals to amend their sex on their birth certificates.
- New Mexico Custody and Visitation Law—Courts typically will not consider a parent's sexual orientation in custody and visitation determinations unless it is shown to adversely affect or harm the child(ren). There have been no cases dealing with transgender parents. Courts will allow a former same-sex partner (with no legal or biological relationship to the child(ren)) to petition for visitation.
- New Mexico Donor Insemination Law—New Mexico law permits unmarried women to undergo donor insemination.
- New Mexico Hate Crimes Law—State law covers hate crimes based on gender identity and sexual orientation.
- New Mexico Marriage/Relationship Recognition Law—No provision of New Mexico explicitly addresses same-sex marriages celebrated in another jurisdiction. The state offers domestic partnership benefits to state employees.
- New Mexico Non-Discrimination Law—New Mexico law protects against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.
- New Mexico School Law—New Mexico law does not address school issues relating to sexual orientation or gender identity.
- New Mexico Sodomy Law—The New Mexico sodomy law was repealed in 1975.
- New Mexico Surrogacy Law—New Mexico law permits surrogacy agreements.

Whatever arguments homosexual activists may have for seeking the “right” to same-sex marriage, lack of adequate legal protections doesn't seem to be among them. ↪

Marxist Liberation Theology Isn't "OK"

Vatican City, Dec 7, 2009 (CNA) - In a meeting with a group of Brazilian bishops on Saturday, the Holy Father warned of the dangers of Marxist liberation theology and noted its grave consequences for ecclesial communities.

During the *ad limina* visit, the Pope recalled that "last August marked 25 years since the Instruction "*Libertatis nuntius*" of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, on certain aspects of liberation theology. The document "highlights the danger involved in the uncritical absorption, by certain theologians, of "theses and methodologies that come from Marxism."

The Pope warned that the "more or less visible" scars of Marxist liberation theology, such as "rebellion, division, dissent, offenses, anarchy, are still being felt, causing great suffering and a grave loss of dynamic strength in your diocesan communities."

For this reason, he exhorted all those who in some way feel attracted or affected by "certain deceitful principles of liberation theology" to re-visit the instruction and be open to the light that it can shed on the subject.

Benedict XVI also recalled that "the supreme rule of faith of the Church in effect arises from the unity that the Spirit established between Sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture and the Magisterium of the Church, in such reciprocity that they cannot subsist independently of each other," as John Paul II explained in his encyclical "*Fides et Ratio*."

The Instruction "*Libertatis nuntius*" was published on August 6, 1984, with the approval of Pope John Paul II, by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Its purpose was to focus the attention of pastors, theologians and all the faithful on the deviations of certain forms of liberation theology that are dangerous for the faith and for the Christian life and that are based on Marxist thought.

It warned that the grave ideological deviations of Marxist liberation theology inevitably lead to the betrayal of the cause of the poor and that a Marxist analysis of reality leads to the acceptance of positions that are incompatible with the Christian vision of man. ☞