HHS mandate a threat to religious liberty, bishop says

Bishop Donald Trautman on HHS compromise: ‘our position remains unchanged’

In a letter to parishioners through the Diocese of Erie, Bishop Donald Trautman reiterated his stance along with the bishops of the United States against the Obama administration’s support of comprehensive health insurance funding for contraceptives, sterilization, and abortion-inducing drugs.

“I want to underscore the fact that this is not a Republican or a Demo-cratic issue, but rather a fundamental, constitutional issue,” Bishop Trautman said in the letter dated Feb. 9. “All make our own constitutional right to religious liberty and freedom of conscience protected by the First Amendment.”

The public controversy began when Kathleen Sebelius, secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, announced Jan. 20 that instead of requiring religious employers to fill the requirement, the administration’s new rule instead allows religious employers to fill the requirement by using a ‘contraceptive-friendly pharmacy’ to provide the services.

“I refuse to accept a compromise that changes the religious liberty of Catholics and other faithful people in America,” Bishop Trautman wrote. “Therefore, our position remains unchanged.”

In a March 8 letter to parishioners through the Diocese of Erie, Bishop Donald Trautman reiterated his stance on the HHS mandate saying, “As I explained in my Feb. 9 letter to parishioners, our position remains unchanged and is consistent with the teaching of the Magisterium of the Church on religious liberty and free exercise of conscience.”

Trautman said that the mandate is a threat to religious liberty and freedom of conscience protected by the First Amendment.

“Please understand that this issue is much broader than contraceptives,” Bishop Trautman said in his letter. “In addition to the fact that we are morally opposed to contraception, sterilization and abortion, we must stand against this ruling in order to protect the religious liberty and conscience rights of Catholic Americans. There can be no compromise when it comes to truth.”

Sebelius announced the mandate and a narrow religious exemption on June 1, 2011. Under the plan, after Aug. 1 of this year, new or significantly modified health plans will be required to provide all FDA-approved contraceptives, including some that can cause abortion, without co-pay and with no deductibles as part of preventive health care for women.

The announcement that the mandate will not change the HHS ruling on contraceptives is consistent with our position.

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**Right to conscience protection must be enacted into law, says bishop**

A letter to the editor written by Msgr. Robert Smith, chancellor of the diocese, states that the issue of conscience protection is critical.

**Child protection audit finds diocese in full compliance**

A Child Protection Audit at the Catholic Diocese of Erie recently found the diocese in full compliance with all of the Catholic Bishops’ Conferences’ policies.

**Same-sex marriage legalized in Washington**

Bishop William Lori of Bridgeport, Conn., chairman of the bishops’ Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty, said the outcome of the Supreme Court decision is a “tragic day” for all Americans.

**In the U.S.**

Volume 8, Issue 4

Catholic Diocese of Erie

The of FaithLife

serving Catholics in the Diocese of Erie

For more information, call (814) 824-1161.

This is the Portuguese-language edition of the Catholic Diocese of Erie’s weekly newspaper. Contact him at JKoshinskie@ErieRCD.org or 814.824.1171.

Those who do not have access to email are reminded they can call the office during business hours to receive copies. The newspaper is available for free download via the diocese’s website or via its Facebook page.

**Child protection audit finds diocese in full compliance**

Karen Streett

Karen Streett serves as coordinator of Children and Youth and works with parish and school personnel. “Here at St. Mark Catholic Center, she did the same for us,” said Bishop William Lori of Bridgeport, Conn., chairman of the bishops’ Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty. “The programs vary for different age levels,” Streett said. “We discuss a wide range of topics from the moral teachings of the Lord to the impact of our diocesan policy.”

**Pope calls on Syria to address citizens’ legitimate demands**

As a violent conflict in Syria intensified, Pope Benedict XVI called on Syria to begin a process of dialogue and副总经理's empowerment of its citizens’ legitimate demands. In Beirut, Patriarch Ignatius Joseph II Younan of the Syrian Catholic Church warned against topping Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, calling for dialogue to solve the conflict in the country. In St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican Feb. 12, the pope expressed his concern for the “dramatic and increasing episodes of violence in Syria.” At the end of his Angelus prayer, he said it was “praying for everyone who has been killed, injured and affected by a conflict that is ‘increasingly worrisome.’”

**Church officials step up relief efforts to aid quake victims**

Church officials are stepping up relief efforts to provide assistance to victims of an earthquake that struck Negros Oriental province in the Philippines Feb. 9. Jane Darveau, a recipient of commercial relief efforts to feed and water thousands of people who remain isolated after a magnitude 7 earthquake on the eastern part of the island. The quake damaged or destroyed bridges and buildings and triggered landslides. As of Feb. 9, 8, officials death toll was 26, but survivors said there was little hope of finding any of the 71 missing alive. More than 1,500 families were evacuated from their homes.

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BISHOP from page 1

and the author of several books. He visited the diocese Oct. 6 to give a talk at Mercyhurst University on trends that are revolutionizing the Catholic Church.

“Theoretically, there’s no limit to the number of names a bishop can put into the hopper, but typically a bishop from a mid-sized diocese such as Erie might offer two or three names for the provincial list,” Allen said.

The list is then forwarded to the Vatican’s apostolic nuncio to the United States. Any bishop is free on his own to submit names to the nuncio or to the Vatican. Any appointments go to a bell when Archbishop Pietro Sanelli, who served as the nuncio to the United States from 2005 to 2010, was in office. The pope appoints Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò as the new nuncio Oct. 19.

“There’s no doubt it’s important, but it’s more of a leg up or down,” Allen said. “Archbishop Viganò has been in the game since October, so at this point the system seems to be working up and running more or less as normal.”

After receiving the recommendations, the nuncio gathers additional information about potential candidates and conducts his own investigation about their suitability. The list is narrowed and a questionnaire is sent to 20 or 30 people—priests, brothers, religious, laypeople—who know each of the candidates for further review.

Geometry also plays a role in the selection process.

“It’s not a determining factor, but it is a consideration for very common sense reasons,” Father Singer said. “Someone from Pennsylvania is more likely to understand the people, the culture, the necessities of Pennsylvania, the society and the economy. Whereas if someone from the West Coast came to the Diocese of Erie, it would be much more difficult to understand the needs of Pennsyl-vania, for example. You would need much more time just to get to know the people, the place and to understand how they work. There is an advantage to having someone serving in the general area of the country where they’re from. I think Rome tries to do that, but it’s not always possible.”

The nuncio will then submit a list of names—called a tern,—accompanied by extensive background files on the candidates to the Congregation for Bishops. The candidates are then interviewed alphabetically with the nuncio’s preference noted.

The prefect of the Congregation for Bishops is Cardinal Marc Ouellet, who was appointed in 2010. Under Cardinal Ouellet’s leadership, Allen said, things seem to be moving through the system a bit more rapidly.

Cardinal Ouellet is a long-term friend and collaborator of Pope Benedict, going back to the days when they both were part of the “Communion” editorial board and Sociological school. Allen said: “In general, Cardinal Ouellet is well-equipped to identify bishops who broadly share the pope’s outlook and sense of priorities.”

The Congregation for Bishops is made up of 32 cardinals and archbishops from around the world, including five Americans. They study the names sent over by the nuncio, vote and then send a final list of three names to the pope for their consideration. So much information does the pope have on a candidate? The thick background file prepared for each candidate is part of the documentation that goes to the pope. Allen said, along with notes from the discussions in the Congregation for Bishops.

“Of course, with more than 5,000 bishops in the world, the pope can’t know the same level of familiarity with all of them,” Allen said. “In the vast majority of instances, he relies on the recommendations that come from the nuncio and the Congregation for Bishops. In a very few cases, he’ll go outside the taboo based on his own personal knowledge and experience of a candidate; by all accounts, for instance, that’s what happened with the appointment of Cardinal Charles Chaput to Philadelphia.”

As a private audience with the pope, usually on a Saturday, the prefect of the Congregation for Bishops presents the recommendations of the congregation to the Holy Father, who prays over it. A few days later, the pope informs the congregation of his decision. The congregation then notifies the nuncio, who in turn contacts the candidate and asks for a formal acceptance. If the answer is yes, the Vatican is notified and a date is set for the announcement.

Twenty-two U.S. bishops could retire in 2012

By Nancy Frey O’Brien

WASHINGTON — Two U.S. cardinals and 20 other U.S. bishops are expected to be in the running because of their age this year.

According to the Roman Catholic Church, bishops who turn 75 in 2012 are expected to be retired by the pope at the end of February or the beginning of March.

If a newly appointed bishop is not already consecrated a bishop, as was the case when Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso was appointed to the Diocese of El Paso-San Elizario, canon law requires that he take possession of the diocese within four months. If the apostolic nuncio in this case consecrated a bishop, as was Bishop Donald Trautman when he came to the Diocese of Erie from his position as an auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Buffalo in 1988, then canon law requires him to come to the diocese within two months.

That’s because of an “extremely important and solemn occasion which can be accomplished only once in a lifetime,” Father Victor B. Asberry, a priest of the Diocese of Erie, wrote in a letter to the Saltus website.

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All parishes, missions, schools and groups are encouraged to choose a correspondent who can regularly e-mail news items to FaithLife@ErieRCD.org.

People in the News

Father Leo Gallina to receive Pitt-Bradford’s highest honor

BRADFORD – Father Leo Gallina, a native of Bradford and former pastor of St. Boniface, will receive the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford’s highest honor at the university’s 2012 commencement ceremony April 28 in the KOA Arena. In addition to learning a lot of valuable information, the students desired appropriately for the decade—and had fun doing so.

Father Leo Gallina is being recognized for his generous and committed service to Pitt-Bradford. He founded St. Boniface, Seton Catholic students place in PJAS

ERIE – Students from St. Boniface and Seton Catholic School in Bradford walked away as winners at the regional Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science competition at Penn State Behrend in January. In addition to learning a lot of valuable information, the students desired appropriately for the decade—and had fun doing so.

Father Leo Gallina

Bill Grant to direct diocesan stewardship and annual appeals

ERIE – Bill Grant, CFRE, recently resigned as diocesan liaison to the Diocese of Erie as director of stewardship and annual appeals. His primary responsibilities will be to oversee the Catholic Services Appeal. Grant will be assisting in positions with increased diocesan and parochial campaign and capital campaign consultation. His duties will also include working on other fundraising activities on behalf of the diocese, schools and parishes.

Bill Grant

St. Boniface, Seton Catholic students place in PJAS

ERIE – Students from St. Boniface and Seton Catholic School in Bradford walked away as winners at the regional Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science competition at Penn State Behrend in January. The PJAS first-place award winners in botany were: Olivia Altman, 5th grade student, St. Boniface and Logan Russell, 5th grade student, Seton Catholic. Students participated in a wide range of hands-on scientific projects, including examinations of airplane propeller efficiency, investigation of temperature effects on bees, robotics and effects of color on learning efficiency.