



United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

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Memorandum

To: Diocesan Communications Directors; Diocesan Pro-Life Directors; Diocesan Marriage and Family Life Directors and NFP Coordinators; Diocesan Social Justice Directors; Diocesan Directors of Evangelization and Catechesis; Diocesan Catholic School Superintendents; Diocesan Youth and Young Adult Ministry Directors; State Catholic Conference Directors

From: Communications Department; Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities; Secretariat of Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth; Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development; Secretariat of Evangelization and Catechesis; Secretariat of Catholic Education; Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty

Date: May 1, 2015

Re: **Fortnight for Freedom Materials – June 21 to July 4, 2015**

In preparation for the [*Fortnight for Freedom: Freedom to Bear Witness*](#), which will take place from June 21 to July 4, 2015, USCCB staff has once again prepared materials that you may use to celebrate the Fortnight. This year's theme emphasizes the link between religious freedom and bearing witness to the truth of the Gospel, keeping in mind the sacrifice of so many martyrs for the faith, both past and present. Please see the revised [logo](#) incorporating this year's theme (in English and Spanish), which we would encourage you to use to promote this upcoming two-week period.

During the Fortnight, our liturgical calendar celebrates a series of great martyrs who remained faithful in the face of persecution by political power—St. John Fisher and St. Thomas More, St. John the Baptist, SS. Peter and Paul, and the First Martyrs of the Church of Rome. In the secular calendar, we anticipate that the U.S. Supreme Court will rule at some point during the Fortnight (likely around June 29) on four cases concerning the legal definition of marriage in the United States.

The materials below are already publicly available (in English and Spanish) through the website www.Fortnight4Freedom.org, so please feel free to distribute widely or provide website links:

1. [14-Day Study Guide on *Dignitatis Humanae*](#) (note that this is the 50th anniversary of the “Declaration on Religious Freedom” from the Second Vatican Council)
2. [Parish Guide to celebrating the Fortnight](#) (including 14 suggestions)
3. A series of examples of [Current Threats to Religious Liberty in the U.S.](#)
4. A series of examples of [International Religious Freedom](#) issues
5. [Why the Religious Freedom Restoration Act Works](#)
6. [Frequently Asked Questions about Religious Liberty](#)
7. [Religious Liberty High School Lesson Plans](#) (included as part of the [2015 Catechetical Sunday materials](#))

8. [Litany for Liberty](#)
9. [Prayers of the Faithful](#) (part of the Call to Prayer for Life, Marriage & Religious Liberty)
10. [Holy Hour Template](#) (also part of the Call to Prayer)

Fortnight 2015 **Talking Points** are attached to this letter as well. You may also find helpful an article by John Garvey, President of the Catholic University of America, on “[Religious Liberty and the Practice of Charity](#)”, and an article by Dr. Thomas Farr of Georgetown University on “[ISIS and Indiana: The Global Crisis of Religious Liberty and Catholic Responsibility](#)”. Both articles link domestic and international religious freedom issues.

The materials listed immediately below should not be posted online but may be distributed to parishes for use during Fortnight liturgies:

1. Ecumenical Prayer Service Outline
2. Intercessory Prayers for Ecumenical Service
3. Passages from Scripture for use during the Fortnight for Freedom
4. Daily Homily Helps (for weekday Masses during the Fortnight)

Additionally, Conference staff is preparing **Sunday homily helps** for both Sundays during the Fortnight (June 21 and June 28). *The Sunday homily helps will be provided in a follow-up communication.*

Further, Archbishop William Lori, Chairman of the USCCB Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty, and Hillary Byrnes, lead staff to the Ad Hoc Committee, will be doing a [myUSCCB](#) “live event” on **Thursday, May 28 at 3 p.m. Eastern** to discuss the Fortnight for Freedom.

Once again, we are planning [two special Masses](#) to begin and end the Fortnight for Freedom. On **June 21** at 10:45 a.m. EDT, Archbishop Lori will celebrate Mass at the Baltimore Basilica (America’s First Cathedral) to begin the Fortnight. On **July 4** at noon EDT, Cardinal Donald Wuerl will celebrate Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. Archbishop Thomas Wenski of Miami will be the homilist at the July 4 Mass. EWTN will televise both Masses nationwide.

Please continue to check the Fortnight website, [www.Fortnight4Freedom.org](#), which will be updated with new content, such as videos, over the coming weeks. Once again, Conference staff is posting ideas from various dioceses on the Fortnight [Diocesan Activities](#) page. Any diocesan staff with questions about the Fortnight should call or email Hillary Byrnes at 202-541-3454 or [hbyrnes@uscgb.org](#). Please also email Hillary with Fortnight event flyers, activities, or websites so that we can add this information to the [Diocesan Activities](#) page.

We are grateful to diocesan staff for all the work that has gone into the Fortnight during the last three years in your dioceses. Please see a sampling of photos from the 2012, 2013, and 2014 Fortnight events around the country here: [http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/religious-liberty/fortnight-for-freedom/fortnight-freedom-images.cfm](#).

Thank you again for your prayers and support for the 2015 Fortnight for Freedom and for your united voices in the promotion and defense of religious freedom, both at home and abroad!